

Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Synthesis Paper

Open Consultations

Geneva, 22 November 2010

Contributions and Comments on

Taking Stock of The Vilnius Meeting/ MAG Questionnaire

I Introduction

1. This background paper is intended to provide input into the open consultations to be held on 22 November. It draws on stakeholder contributions posted on the IGF Web site as well as on oral comments. Two contributions commented on the Vilnius meeting and nine responded to the questionnaire on the functioning of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group.
2. All of the contributions can be found, in full, on the IGF Web site. Those materials should be consulted by anyone seeking a more comprehensive picture of the stakeholder positions. Readers are encouraged to read the original contributions posted on the IGF Web site
3. Due to the limited number of contributions this paper cannot be seen as a representative for the views by the wider IGF community, but it is hoped nevertheless that it will be useful for stimulating the discussion.
4. In a first section, this paper looks at what worked well and what worked less well at the Vilnius meeting. In a second section, it summarizes the responses to the MAG questionnaire.

II Taking stock of the Vilnius Meeting

A What worked well

5. In general, stakeholders praised the Vilnius meeting as the best IGF meeting so far. One contribution found the meeting “highly illuminating and informative, and we left the IGF with deeper knowledge and understanding of a number of issues, and having forged new or better relationships with other stakeholders”.¹ The same contribution gave an overall assessment of the IGF and noted that “the greatest value of the IGF is that it fosters debate, dialogue, and the sharing of best practices, thus leading to shared understanding and development of solutions. Unlike other forums, it allows

¹ The Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA)

participants to address important questions of economic and social development in a non-threatening, non-operational environment, with far better global representation of stakeholders, thus better contributing to capacity building and enhanced cooperation. The IGF successfully embodies the Tunis Agenda design. The objectives, format and structure of the IGF permit Internet operators, such as CIRA, to participate, learn from and directly influence valuable policy and governance discussions. The IGF's multi-stakeholder, de-centralized internet governance structure, void of decision-making obligations, has not only been key to the development and innovation associated with the Internet but will also be key to its success in the future. The spreading of the IGF model to regional and national IGF processes is also a witness for its validity."

6. The programme was found to be improved, compared to previous years. In particular it was appreciated that the workshops were better integrated into the schedule in Vilnius and that there were a number of innovative workshop formats and themes this year. The improved linkages with national and regional IGF type initiatives were appreciated. Also, the round table room setting in some of the meeting rooms was found to be conducive to facilitating the discussions.

7. As a major innovation, this year real-time transcription was provided from all the meetings. In conjunction with the live video and audiocasting of all meetings this facilitated remote participation. There was much praise for the Vilnius remote participation, in particular the remote hubs, including the training of facilitators.

B What worked less well

8. As in previous years, many participants felt that the programme was too dense. One contribution suggested incorporating more 'white space' into the schedule. This could "create room-spaces and opportunities for (continuing) meetings or generating new directions for discussion as they emerge on the ground; consolidating horizontal and vertical avenues for further collaboration".²

9. While it was noted that remote participation was much improved, it was also suggested that there needed to be better coordination for starting up the remote facilitations for each of the day's workshops and for dealing with other technical problems.

10. More comments related to organizational aspects such as the shuttle services, the availability of low cost food, the noise spillover from the workshop rooms as well as the quality of the real-time transcriptions from the workshops.

² Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition

III The MAG Questionnaire

To follow-up on the 12 May 2010 MAG meeting, the Secretariat put out a request for comments on six questions.

1. Has the work of the MAG been consistent with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda and subsequent decisions?
2. How best to nominate non governmental members for the MAG?
3. How best to nominate the MAG Chair?
4. How best to organize open consultations?
5. How best to link with regional meetings?
6. How best to link with international processes and institutions?

1. *Has the work of the MAG been consistent with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda and subsequent decisions?*

11. Most of the responses found that the work of the MAG had been consistent with its mandate. UNESCO sees in the IGF an effective continuation of the “WSIS spirit”, and describes the IGF as being at the forefront in promoting an advanced multistakeholder practice. The MAG had succeeded in finding inclusive ways for the IGF to function. It had drawn on the resources of all stakeholders and was able to evolve based on experience and the consultations with the participants. The MAG had thus succeeded in building a successful IGF platform during the first five years of the mandate.

12. Most responses to the questionnaire felt that while the MAG had done well during the term of the first mandate, it was now at a crossroads and much more needed to be done. Some areas for improvement were identified and some concrete suggestions for improving the work of the MAG were put forward, such as:

- That the MAG appoint, from among its members, a coordinating team to focus on specific tasks. Such a group could help the Chair and Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat in facilitating the work.
- The MAG needed to have a clear definition of its role beyond its function as a programme committee. To improve the MAG’s functioning, some of the following tasks were proposed to be included in its work:
 - Inter-sessional work
 - Selection of key issues for more focused work
 - Establishing working groups on issues
 - Production of background papers
 - The MAG should seek to engage with other UN and international forums in public policy areas affected by the internet.

Other recommendations suggested creating a coordinating team. Various possible liaison tasks were defined for a MAG coordinating group including:

- Fundraising
- Regional meetings
- Remote participation

- Evaluation
- Providing feedback to stakeholders
- Providing facilitation during the annual meetings.

Several options were offered to improve the stakeholder representation in the MAG:

- Clearly delineated annual or bi-annual rotation procedures.
- One recommendation suggested establishing a process by which one-third of the MAG members would be rotated each year in an automatic manner, so that the composition of the MAG would be completely turned over every three years.
- One option presented was that each MAG member would serve for a renewable two year term with one third rotated every two years.
- Opening up all MAG meetings to observers, both face to face and remotely.
- Greater representational parity among the stakeholders.
- Direct lines of accountability to the constituencies.
- Greater representation of marginalized groups in the MAG so that the IGF would be able to prioritize those issues that were most important to those groups.

13. One response proposed a reduction of the MAG size to increase efficiency of its work. It was also suggested that the MAG be encouraged to publish its ideas for multistakeholder comments and participation earlier in the process, in a variety of other institutions, processes and forums, both online and offline.

2. *How best to nominate non-governmental members for the MAG?*

14. Several of the respondents wrote that the current system of recommending people to the IGF Secretariat has worked well. However there were also a number of new suggestions on how to select the MAG. These included:

- Representatives from the non-governmental stakeholder groups could be constituted into a group working with the IGF Executive Coordinator, to review the proposed lists of representatives put forward by the non-governmental stakeholder groups.
- A call could be made to all members of the UN, asking for MAG nominations. The United Nations Secretary General could then choose the members from this list of nominees according to various diversity criteria.
- Civil society could establish an umbrella group, such as the Civil society Plenary that existed during WSIS, for choosing Civil Society MAG members according to a predefined diversity and regional criteria. It was also suggested that the Internet Governance Caucus could possibly serve this function either alone or in cooperation with other designated groups. Others wrote that no single organization should be responsible for either selecting or nominating a stakeholder group's representatives.
- Institutions involved in Internet governance, such as the DiploFoundation,

- could be consulted in the selection process.³
- The Internet technical community should be formally recognized as a stakeholder in the IGF process.
- While the stakeholder groups should nominate representatives for the MAG, it was recommended that individual nominations should also be possible.
- One suggestion included inviting members of other organizations with Internet governance issues, but which were not yet involved with the IGF, to participate in the MAG.

15. There were several suggestions for nominating committee processes including, the establishing an independent nominating committee. In this case a call for statements of interest would need to be made on a wide enough basis to reach all of the civil society participants, and others, involved in Internet governance issues. This style of nomination could be given an initial trial of two years.⁴ Another suggestion was made that the retiring members of the MAG, based on rotation, could constitute a nominating committee.

16. Several comments argued against continued use of the so-called “black box approach” to selecting MAG members from the lists of suggested members and recommended the creation of a more transparent, accountable and bottom up approach. Some commented that the use of the black box method for nongovernmental members of the MAG might give governmental actors a way to influence the choice of nongovernmental representatives.⁵

17. Whatever model was picked, several contributors noted that there was no single organization that represented all of the non-governmental stakeholders and that several organizations would need to be approached in order to generate diverse nominations. This condition also applied in the event a nominating committee was established to select MAG appointees.

Several other recommendations were made in regards to the composition and participation in the MAG, including the following:

- No MAG member serve more than three years in a row and a reappointment should only be possible after a two year absence from MAG participation.
- The special privileges of Intergovernmental organizations and the role of special advisers to the Chair be eliminated.
- There should be greater representation of young people, especially from developing countries.

3. *How best to nominate the MAG Chair?*

18. Several contributions praised MAG Chair Nitin Desai and hoped he would remain in this position. If, however, he were to be replaced, it was recommended that there be a transition period and that a search be led by the

³ Diplo

⁴ IISD

⁵ ISOC India

outgoing Chair and Executive Coordinator of the IGF Secretariat in consultation with the community and that a final selection of the new Chair be made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.⁶ It was recommended that Terms of Reference be developed and that a nominating committee be created to propose names to the Secretary-General.⁷

19. One proposal was that MAG members should elect their own Chair for a one year non renewable term in rotation among the stakeholder groups. Another suggestion was that each of the stakeholder groups appoint a vice-Chair from among their members in the MAG, and that this group of vice-Chairs together with the outgoing Chair and the Executive Coordinator of the Secretariat would then select the Chair. It was further recommended that if MAG members served a three year term, then for those destined to be Chair, the first year could be spent just as MAG member, the second as a vice-Chair and the final year as Chair.⁸

20. One comment made the point that if the MAG Chair was not selected by the MAG members themselves, then a formal consultation process should be used. This formal consultation process could include present (and past) Chairs of MAG, the Secretary-General, the Chair of ICANN, the president of ISOC, representatives of civil society as well as the business and academic communities, and other UN and International Organizations who are IGF participants as well as governments.

21. It was also suggested that any changes in the method of selecting the Chair should not change the role of the Chair, that is, to facilitate the MAG's effective operation as a de facto multistakeholder bureau for the IGF that is responsible for facilitating the fulfilment of the mandate in the Tunis Agenda. There should also be continuity in the positions of Chair and Executive Coordinator of the IGF, and that the functions be performed impartially, free of political or geographic objections.

4. *How best to organize open consultations?*

22. A number of views were expressed in respect to how to organize the open consultation meetings. There was a call for increased remote participation, using the already developed hub structure, including remote moderators, in order to enhance equitable participations of developing and developed countries from all regions of the world. It was also stressed in one set of comments that in doing outreach for the consultations more attention needed to be paid to including young people and women, especially those from developing countries, in the process.

Many of the contributions discussed the location of the consultation meetings:

- Several comments held the view that the consultations should remain in Geneva.
- Others agreed that at least one consultation a year should remain in

⁶ ICC

⁷ APC

⁸ ISOC

Geneva, but suggested holding at least one other consultation in a different location.⁹

- One comment made the point that wherever the meetings were held, they should be seen as online meetings with the main location being one of many among the hubs.
- One recommendation was to hold at least one meeting a year virtually so that all stakeholders could participate equally.
- Another recommendation was to hold all consultations virtually.

23. Greater use of online facilitation tools such as social networking tools, as well as traditional tools like email, could be used in order to increase the reach of the consultations. Continued use of real time transcription and audio streaming, as well as early circulation of agendas was also seen as critical to the open consultations. Finally, it was pointed out that attention needed to be paid to fund-raising to enable greater participation from developing countries.

5. *How best to link with regional meetings?*

24. Strengthening of the links between the IGF and the national and regional efforts was seen as significant. Part of this strengthening included capacity building to ensure that the stakeholders had the same levels of awareness of Internet governance. It was also considered important that the regional and national IGF efforts have the same neutral nature with the same quality of discussions. Several comments discussed the importance of regional and national meetings having full multistakeholder participation.

25. One response recommended that the regional and national IGFs be fully integrated with the IGF. It was also suggested that in order to increase the linkages with the regional and national IGF meetings, summaries of each of these meeting should be presented at open consultations as well as at the annual IGF meeting.

26. Others discussed the importance of maintaining an informal relationship between the IGF and the regional and national efforts and warned against formalizing that relationship. The regional meeting's importance was seen as a pathway for agenda setting and issue framing, with the outcomes of regional meetings clarifying and sharpening discussions by making the issues more concrete. One comment indicated that the regional and national meetings should not be subordinated to the IGF, but should develop their own character and voice.

27. There was a comment that consolidating the information about the regional and national initiatives onto a centralized website would be helpful. This information would help broaden participation and could include:

- Plans and schedule for future regional and national efforts;
- Summaries from those meeting.

28. It was recommended that the regional and national meetings continue

⁹ ISOC India

to be given the opportunities to report and to meet as they had at the Vilnius meeting at future IGF meetings.¹⁰

6. *How best to link with international processes and institutions?*

29. There was a recommendation that a stronger link to the WSIS follow-up process be established particularly in the lead up to the 2015 WSIS implementation review. It was suggested that the IGF Secretariat could launch a systematic outreach process to other involved institutions, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Education For ALL (EFA) or Human Rights (HR). Possible activities included IGF association with World Press Freedom Day. Additionally it was recommended that the IGF open consultations with many other related international processes and events going on, like the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), ICTD (International Conference on ICT and Development) and others.¹¹

30. There was a renewed suggestion that the IGF produce "messages" or "recommendations" similar to those produced by some national and regional IGFs initiatives such as the East African IGF and EURODIG. These messages could then be forwarded to other institutions, giving those institutions an opportunity to respond or to get involved directly in the IGF.¹² Various other methods were suggested such as newsletters and using social networks to connect with other institutions.

31. Another suggestion was the encouragement of organizations that have not yet participated in the IGF to do so, in order to enable awareness of their respective organizational processes, work programmes and Internet governance issue within the IGF. It was suggested that during other international meetings related to ICT issues, the IGF Secretariat should request an opportunity to present the updates about the IGF process. Additionally it was recommended that rapporteurs could be appointed, whose task it would be to summarize relevant discussions at the IGF and to forward them to external institutions, and to act as liaisons for feedback from those institutions.

¹⁰ BYTC

¹¹ UNESCO

¹² IGC