

MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy

Online Meeting 44
15 September 2022 at 14:00 UTC

Summary Report

The 44th virtual meeting of the IGF MAG Working Group (WG) on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on 15 September 2022 at 14:00 UTC. The meeting was moderated by Titti Cassa. The list of participants and the recording of the meeting is available upon request.

The co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the agenda:

Agenda:

1. IGF involvement in the GDC
 - a. Meeting with the Envoy on Technology
 - b. Follow up activities related to the GDC communique
2. WSIS+20 action plan
3. Update from the IGF Secretariat (IGF 2022 etc.)
4. Update on behalf of the Office of the Envoy on Technology
5. AoB

Discussion:

IGF involvement in the GDC

Although Member States had not taken any explicit decision to change the GDC timeline, Yu Ping Chan noted that the Office of the Tech Envoy anticipates that the Global Digital Compact development process will now be extended following their decision to postpone the Summit of the Future which has now been pushed back to September 2024). This may mean that the December deadline for inputs will be extended.

The 'Pact of the Future' (the wide-ranging document that will be agreed via the Summit of the Future) and the 'Global Digital Compact' will likely be two separate documents, with different modalities relating to their preparation. Yu Ping noted that earlier stakeholder input is received, the better chance of a multistakeholder development process, before multilateral negotiations begin in earnest.

Poncelet Ileleji noted that the long time frame might mean that negotiations have to be re-opened, and wondered whether it will be possible to re-submit updated contributions closer to the deadline if circumstances change. Yu Ping agreed that it likely would be

possible, and also noted that the GDC, being separate to the Summit of the Future, may be of a more multistakeholder nature, but that it would be important to push for this with the Member States. The Summit event itself will be constrained by the modalities (which seem to be primarily multilateral) that have been agreed for it.

Mark Carvell noted that the EuroDIG process is currently scheduled to collect input by 7 October, but that this now seems too early. He suggested there may be a possibility to keep to the timeline and try to finalise the GDC by the Ministerial meeting planned for 2023, as in effect a separate process from that of the Summit. Titti noted that other NRIs have also begun processes to facilitate input, and there is a question mark over those.

Yu Ping was not hopeful that the UN Member States would agree to finalise the GDC by next year, given that the Summit has been pushed back to 2024. She also noted that there are a lot of other activities at UNGA in 2023 that will likely take priority (though a strong push from member states might change this). Finally, she noted that it would be useful to begin thinking about how WSIS+20 interacts with the GDC.

Wout de Natris asked about the Ministerial and its role. Yu Ping noted that this is not yet fully clear, but that it may provide an opportunity to present all the inputs received relating to the GDC. Mark asked about when we might expect to know the timelines/deadlines relating to the Ministerial. Yu Ping advised to providing the input early next year, and suggested people might consider whether they want to have an event at the UN to highlight these inputs, and also to focus on bottom line elements when it comes to negotiating language rather than long reports.

a) Meeting with the Envoy on Technology

Paul Mitchell has received a reply to the invitation, and there is a willingness to meet - they are currently working with the Secretariat to finalise a date.

Yu Ping also noted that the Tech Envoy is holding a public town hall event in October (when he will be in Geneva). Chris Buckridge noted that while this event had been shared to the MAG, it may still be useful to have a more focused meeting to consider the respective roles, priorities and relationships of the MAG, the Leadership Panel and the Tech Envoy.

b) Follow up activities related to the GDC communique

Chris will review the text of the communique in light of the recent announcements regarding the Summit of the Future, and coordinate to have the communique published as soon as possible.

WSIS+20 action plan

Chris noted that he had shared a “scratch pad” to the mailing list for working group members to collect thoughts in relation to the IGF WSIS+20 Action Plan, including the plan to launch a call at this year’s IGF for NRIs to start formulating input to the WSIS+20 development process.

Update from the IGF Secretariat (IGF 2022 etc.)

There were no Secretariat staff present.

Update on behalf of the Office of the Envoy on Technology

There was no need for further updates from the Office of the Tech Envoy.

AoB

The next call will be held at 14:00 UTC on 29 September.