INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM
BEST PRACTICE FORUM ON GENDER & DIGITAL RIGHTS

- Virtual Meeting II | 04 July 2022 at 15:00 UTC -

SUMMARY REPORT

Action items and next steps
- Share the work plan via email.

- Set up a collaborative document for the collation of reference material pertaining the BPF focus areas for 2022.

- The BPF community will share references of speakers and experts to be invited for the next discussions.

- Next meeting: **25 July 2022, 15:00 UTC** – zoom link to follow.

Participants

Amrita Choudhury, Daphnee Iglesias, Onica Makwakwa, Debora Albu, Dona, Jannett Ibañez, Sumbal Bashir, Sushil Singh, Umut Pajaro Velasquez, Nicolas Fiumarelli, Margaret Waithiegeni, Rebeccah Wambui, Dora Mawutor, Saba Tiku, Stefan Berres, Folli Herbert Amouzougan, Tope Ogundipe, June Parris, Abiona Ahlonsou, Frédéric Cohen, Martin Traore Burkina, Arjita Mital, Folli Herbert Amouzougan, Abdoul Aziz, Almameh Gibba

Notes

0. The second meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Best Practice Forum on Gender and Digital Rights (BPF Gender) was hosted online on 04 July 2022 at 15:00 UTC. The meeting's purpose was to present a draft of this year's work plan, with a timeline, and collect inputs from the community on the proposed activities and final report.

1. Introductions: firstly, there was a tour de table for introductions as there were participants joining the community for the first time.

2. BPF work plan: Daphnee Iglesias proceeded to present the draft work plan, starting by highlighting 2022 IGF's overarching theme "Resilient Internet for a shared sustainable and common future". The BPF Gender focus areas, in connection with the main IGF process, are:

• Analyze the impact of regulations from a gender justice perspective taking into consideration the work done by the United Nations Special Rapporteurs for freedom of expression and opinion, violence against women, and human rights defenders

• Assess the impacts of the diminishing privacy and the hyper-fiscalizations of women and LGBTQI+ people online

• Assess the role of Privacy and Freedom of Expression provisions on female and LGBTQI+ groups online identities

Hyper-fiscalization thorough regulation was chosen as scope for this year's process, meaning the analysis of any over-regulatory practice that might represent changes in ensuring freedom of expression, preservation of online identities, safety and civic spaces, and criminalization of activities of historically marginalised communities. With this approach the BPF expects to raise awareness of how some regulations are pervasive and directly affect the well-being of women and LGBTQIA+ communities; as well as bring an intersectional perspective to the IGF agenda of urgent/necessary transformations for a gender-sensitive ecosystem.

The proposed report flow for 2022's product entails an introduction; a thorough section on the concept of hyper-fiscalization; analyses of community-proposed case studies on privacy, freedom of expression and violence against women/LGBTQIA+, and criminalization of activism; links with Global Digital Compact; recommendations and conclusion. Besides deciding on the case studies, the BPF community is also invited to discuss methodology/metrics and additional experts to bring in. Finally, an engagement with the Global Digital Compact is pushed forward: the deadline for submission is 30 September and it would be interesting to have the community inputs sent in and registered as part of the Compact.

3. Discussion: Umut Pajaro Velasquez opens up the discussion by bringing attention to the definition of fiscalization and regulation, brought up in previous meetings. The concern is how to apply the definition, based on government or internet companies, as this can influence the selection of case studies. As per Amrita Choudhury's reply, our goal is to look at regulations only and how they impact communities. Throughout the development of the work, if we come across certain platforms which are part of huge and significant violation cases we may add it - but this is not the focus now as we are limited in time.

Debora Albu shared her thoughts on the possibilities of work for this year: on freedom of expression, she believes it is really important to connect to the work from BPF's previous year on gendered disinformation. The participation of specialists in the BPF meetings was crucial for the good output report produced and they could continue to contribute this year as well. On activism (women human rights' defenders - WHRDs), she can be the focal point for UN Women's collaboration as the organisation has been working on different projects globally; e.g., there are projects in Brazil and Colombia which could support the identification of case studies.

Onica Makwakwa shared about the work done by the Web Foundation on hosting focus groups on online gender based violence and will share the report on online violence against women politicians and activists. She believes that as a community we do not need to reinvent the wheel, but it is better to take a look at some of the work that has been done and attempt to compile a report based on that, starting from pre-existing work as reference points. If there is something that particularly stands out from either one of the reports, then we can put in a little bit more time to dig deeper into creating some type of a case study.

Amrita Choudhury suggests the creation of a Google Doc where people can put in the reference material which can be analysed by everyone. Daphnee Iglesias will open the document and circulate it in the mailing list.

Nicolas Fiumarelli explains that in the GDC website there are some recommendations connected to gender, but mostly around women empowerment and digital literacy components - the topic of hyperfiscalization is missing. Over the chat he suggests that maybe a proposal to GDC to include a few more statements/cases on fiscalization and the focus areas identified in the slides is a good approach (from chat: https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/case-example/121). He also suggests finding speakers on the topics discussed and lastly to connect gender and artificial intelligence, in the area of biases.

Onica Makwakwa reiterates the current challenge of shrinking spaces for women's voices online, tagged along with harassment, and content moderation policies that need to be contextualised and country-based. It is still difficult to propose a solution but as the work moves into platforms' moderation against hate speech and harassment one needs to embrace that there has been a lack of localization and motivation for such - which in turn creates for silence for women (e.g., labelling of gender-based violence as "anti-men" content) and obliges women online to keep several identities as a way to mitigate damage when they are blocked from platforms. It is crucial to think through content moderation in gendered spaces and how the Internet can be a space women can both access and enjoy freedom of expression. Content moderation was brought in to help them and is actually kicking them out of engagement.

Amrita Choudhury agrees and adds the situation repeats itself in India; content filters exist to take bad content down but proactively monitoring the content becomes an issue if those deciding on the topic are biased. These are all legitimate concerns that can be looked at in the report.

Dona adds that the issues can be looked at from a jurisdictional perspective, not so much from a regulation perspective - how jurisdiction works in case of online abuses, not forgetting the mental issues that follow it. She gives the example of a recent incident where a woman based out of Canada had put up something that was considered offensive to Hindus; protests in India have followed.

Rebeccah Wambui is working collaboratively with someone on a piece on the digital harassment of women in Kenya, fuelled by male bloggers, whose accounts despite being regularly reported, remain intact.

4. Meeting Slots: next meeting on **25 July 2022, 15:00 UTC** – zoom link to follow. In case any member has any issues with the timing, please do share and the co-facilitators will try to accommodate. Additionally, please reflect on particular speakers you would like to bring in to discuss these issues with the community; kindly inform Daphnee via email with the details on why the reference person should be at the BPF to speak.