

INTERSESSIONAL EVENT

10 July 2023

Summary Document

Purpose of the Intersessional Event

Intersessional work and National, Regional, Subregional and Youth Initiatives (NRI) are vital components of the IGF community. Like the global IGF, they all adhere to the main IGF principles of being open, inclusive, non-commercial with multistakeholder participation in line with a bottom-up decision-making process. Through substantive activities and discussions on multiple topics related to Internet governance in between the annual IGF meetings, intersessional work and NRIs enrich global IGF theme-based conversations benefiting from academic research, policy analysis, and lived experiences of numerous communities.

The intersession event aims to bring together all components of the broader IGF community to provide input to the IGF 2023 programme. The event invited the expertise of all NRIs, Best Practice Forums (BPFs), Policy Networks (PNs), and Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) to unpack the IGF 2023 subthemes and discuss connections with their work. Integration is key to the strategic vision for future IGFs and one of several effective measures toward WSIS+20 consultative process and renewal of the IGF's mandate. The event was also an opportunity to raise awareness of their work to the broader community.

This document summarizes the input provided by each active working group. Presentations, including annexes, are available at the end of each WG's summary.

Working Group 1 on Digital Divides and Inclusion

Dynamic Coalitions allow the wider IGF community a rich insight into the complexity – and often intersectional nature – of digital divides, both as concerns the factors that contribute to them, and the inequalities they create or deepen in societies.

Each takes a different perspective, focusing on specific questions, actors, tools, but then brings together experience and ideas that can help inform decision-making, but share a vision of an Internet that is centred on people, and delivers on development while leaving no-one behind.

They can, through their work, surface key principles for inclusion – the need for connectivity to be both equitable and meaningful, the need to focus on wider development goals and individual needs, rather than tools and profit, the value of digital public goods, and the value of working with and empowering existing development stakeholders.

Key recommendations include reinforcement of work, such as that done by Policy Networks, to gather good practices, to mainstream DC initiatives such as accessibility training, to build consensus around definitions of meaningful access, to reassess the success of Internet governance in terms of the change it realises, to keep the focus on an Internet for All, and to build broad action coalitions.

The presentation of WG 1 is available [here](#).

Working Group 2 on Cybersecurity, Cybercrime and Online Safety

On behalf of the ad hoc working group, containing one BPF and four Dynamic Coalitions, Wout de Natris reported.

The overarching theme focused on better cooperation, a request for more coordination, expecting this creates synergies that will lead to improved and more influential IGF outputs.

Cyber security and safety are an important topic at the IGF and this shows also in the intersessional work. "The Internet we want" is for most people and organisations an Internet that is safer, more secure, trustworthy. The IGF can have a greater role and provide concrete and practical guidance, created in intersessional work.

We invite the MAG and Secretariat to look at our work from the perspective that intersessional work equals IGF tangible output. To improve this work, active coordination is required, and the MAG and Secretariat are uniquely placed to coordinate between the event and the intersessional work, e.g., by involving intersessional groups in the preparation phase of main sessions and by pointing individual workshop organisers to relevant intersessional activities. This provides for opportunities to share outputs more broadly and to create synergies that will strengthen the position of the IGF. This is worked out in detail in our presentation and our (projected) outcomes in the annex.

The presentation of WG 2 is available [here](#).

Working Group 3 on Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

As the world moves towards being data driven, and a wealth of information generated by individuals based on their digital footprints, artificial intelligence (AI) will have a critical role in creating and disrupting business models leveraging Big Data. This includes every sector, and even how we consume and decide. We believe that AI will have a key role in deciding the fate of many sectors. While AI is important, it is equally important for us to understand AI in a total perspective. The large language models (LLMs), and thanks to the chat GPT like products, we need to be careful about when, where, and how we need to leverage AI. AI can be used discreetly, and as IGF we should drive the thought leadership on a holistic perspective on artificial intelligence, how it can impact the future and what are the issues that we should address.

One of the key areas that we should look at AI is 'Responsible AI.' The Dynamic Coalition on Digital Health and the Dynamic Coalition on Internet and Jobs is looking at leveraging technology and how to address the digital divide in terms of jobs, Internet, and health.

At the Dynamic Coalition on Environment, we are looking at how do we leverage data and AI to address biodiversity and to address various issues around retaining the environment because use of these technologies also has a carbon footprint. So, we think AI will have an important role to play. We cannot wish AI off. We should not fear AI. But we should look at leveraging AI for a better future.

It will be of importance to pay attention to potential economic dislocations AI may cause, and at what pace these processes will occur. The rapid uptake of these new technologies could have consequences for societal and political cohesiveness and functionality, and such developments warrant attention and potentially proactive countervailing measures. To preserve and enhance social stability it would be ideal to encourage the development and deployment of AI tools that can enhance the creativity and productivity of human agents and that do not merely displace

human tasks. More input from the stakeholders is also necessitated in order to better align SDG realizations with these developments.

Recent advances in generative AI also brought forward several novel discussions regarding its wider application areas and its potential positive and negative impacts for society. Some of the key issues that require further attention in a global stakeholder dialogue might include the following domains: explainability, reinforcing biases, transparency, and more.

AI and emerging technologies continue to evolve and shape the future of multiple industries. Their potential to improve efficiency, solve complex problems, and enhance our daily lives makes them key areas of focus for research, development, and innovation. However, it's important to address the ethical, legal, and societal challenges that come with their adoption to ensure a positive and inclusive future. My research focus is converging and integrating Artificial Intelligence with emerging technologies like Blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) to create super technologies that takes into consideration the limitations of each technology and supplements it with the strengths of another.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies offer several potential areas for collaboration in research, advocacy, and policy implementation. Some key possibilities are in Interdisciplinary Research, Data Sharing, Ethical Guidelines and Standards, Policy Development and Regulation, Public Awareness and Education, International Cooperation, Impact Assessments and Evaluation, and Inclusivity and Diversity.

Working Group 4 on Global Digital Governance and Cooperation

The section on Digital Cooperation was well participated and stimulated a great discussion. The evolution of the IGF in the last years includes not only the annual event but also the intersessional activities including the DCs, NRIs and BPFs observing that the work done by the IGF on Digital Cooperation could be an added value for the GDC processes.

Several raised the need to assess the gaps in the IGF current scope and inclusion saying that this analysis could be an important step towards defining strategies towards strengthening the IGF. Others highlighted the need to assess and measure the IGF results.

There was a proposal to activate an open dialogue within the IGF community, driven by the MAG and the Leadership Panel, to compare the main differences between the IGF and the Digital Cooperation Forum. This dialogue could be an opportunity to reflect on the possible overlapping between the two forums. Based on the results of the discussion there could be a proposal of a closer integration between the DCF and IGF or an upgrade of the IGF mandate so that it could drive the GDC processes

It was highlighted how fragmented cooperation is in the IG and in the global digital cooperation ecosystem saying that we need more collaboration at all levels. Between states and within states. With and among all stakeholder groups, parliaments, law enforcement agencies, governments, industry bodies and social movements and within the UN system. More collaboration is needed with technical Internet coordination bodies. It was noted that the IGF is central for the configuration of such collaboration. It is only through real multistakeholder and

multilateral collaboration that we can create not just a common vision, but also a framework for holding states and companies accountable for digital development and for governance to contribute to address structural inequalities, strengthen democracy, reinforce the enjoyment of human rights and mitigate the impact of the environmental crisis.

It was asked to transform Internet governance to Digital Governance through a conscious process developed by the UN processes as it happened for the Internet governance definition.

Some reflections were shared on where Internet Governance ends and Digital Governance begins observing that they seem to be so interlinked that it is impossible to separate them even if at times, some issues or processes will need a stronger emphasis on the Internet, whereas at other times a stronger emphasis on broader digital governance.

The presentation of WG 4 is available [here](#).

Working Group 5 on Avoiding Internet Fragmentation

Internet fragmentation and its different aspects is being discussed by IGF intersessional activities and National, Regional and Youth Initiatives (NRIs).

The Policy Network on Internet Fragmentation ([PNIF](#)) is an IGF intersessional activity to further the discussion on and to raise awareness of the technical, policy, legal and regulatory measures and actions that pose a risk to the open, interconnected and interoperable Internet.

In 2022, based on community discussions in open webinars, the PNIF developed a Framework for Discussing Internet Fragmentation to serve as a general guiding and orienting tool for continuing the dialogue about fragmentation and bringing in more people and stakeholders, allow a more holistic and inclusive debate, and at the same time create a space for focused discussion and work towards concrete solutions, policy approaches and guidelines.

Dynamic Coalitions have differing views on fragmentation as they focus on different topics. For example, the DC-Core Internet Values focuses on the Internet Network itself.

The presentation of WG 5 is available [here](#).

Working group 7 on Data Governance and Trust

Data governance is a crucial aspect of Internet governance. By realizing data governance trust in automated systems, digital tools and the Internet is built. Therefore, it is not a one-time project, but a continuous practice that requires collaboration, communication, and coordination across different functions and levels, which should be put in spotlight. With the advance of the Internet and the emergence of new technologies based on increasingly data-intensive tools, it is becoming important for constructive discussions to be held by all Internet Governance stakeholders on the issues of Data Governance and Trust.

Against this backdrop main challenges in the age of emerging technologies are to be identified, having in mind if and how they arise from a diversity of laws and regulations around the globe, also consider timespan between implementation and dissemination of regulations and technical innovation. With regard to different experiences and existing strategies possible solutions are to

be discussed and disseminated. In this context the work of several dynamic coalitions creates a fundament, on which also in the future the IGF community will strive for solutions.

The presentation of WG 7 is available [here](#).

Working Group 8 on Human Rights and Freedoms

Human Rights and Freedoms were at the core of issues addressed at the first World Summit of Information Society in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) and they have remained important topics at the IGF since Athens in 2006. Since the origins of the Internet, the principles of access and freedom, among others, have been presented as a unparalleled way to uphold human rights. As the online world has evolved and continues to evolve at a pace and in ways few may have predicted, good Internet Governance continues to be held up as a powerful instrument to realize human rights. However, it is also recognised as a source for restricting human rights and curtailing freedoms.

The complexity and reality of digital environments both influences and is influenced by technical, economic and political developments that require us constantly to reassess our approach to the diverse range of human rights in and through digital environments.

With the overarching theme “The Internet we want – Empowering all people” human rights and freedoms shall be addressed appropriately in this year’s IGF program. Nonetheless we need to continue not to take human rights and freedoms in the digital environment for granted, thus ourselves run the risk of overlooking conflicts. Human rights must not be played off against each other, therefore we need a balanced approach and can built on the intersessional work of Dynamic Coalitions and Best Practice Forums

Several intersessional activities are dedicated to aspects of human rights and freedoms e.g., the Dynamic Coalition on Children’s Rights in the Digital Environment, Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values, Dynamic Coalition on Gender and IG., Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles. Examples of output of these DCs’ work are the Charter of Human Rights & Principles for the Internet or the Declaration of Rome to which the DC on Children’s Rights has contributed notably. Also, the work of the Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability and the work of the DC on Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected address issues of Human Rights and Freedoms, f.e. the DCAD Accessibility Guidelines. Over all the work of the DCs has resulted in, or will result in reports, good practice guidelines, and/or toolkits, which are announced in the annex to the presentation.

The presentation of WG 8 is available [here](#).

The list of participants of all working groups can be found [here](#).