

**Report on the Implementation of the Outcomes of the  
World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)**

**2024 Input from the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**

**I. Executive Summary**

The upcoming 19<sup>th</sup> IGF, to be held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 15-19 December 2024 will mark the ninth global gathering of the Forum since the renewal of the IGF's mandate for 10 years by the UN General Assembly<sup>1</sup>. As a unique multistakeholder platform for discussing digital public policy, the 19<sup>th</sup> IGF's overarching theme, *'Building Our Multistakeholder Digital Future'*, recognizes the critical juncture of the Forum in 2024, taking place a few months after the adoption of the Global Digital Compact at the Summit of the Future, and one year before the WSIS+20 Review in 2025, when the IGF's mandate will be considered for extension.

Preparations for the 19<sup>th</sup> IGF have focused on bottom-up and inclusive programme development through traditional public consultations, capturing rapid changes in the digital landscape and evolving views on the role of digital technologies in societies. This has responded specifically to the urgent need to harness technologies and address their risks for a sustainable, equitable, and peaceful digital transformation. It has also addressed ongoing challenges raised by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and issues of digital cooperation, rights, and security online.

The 19<sup>th</sup> IGF preparatory phase has sought to enhance and expand diverse multistakeholder engagement, building on the remarkable success of the 18<sup>th</sup> IGF. During the 2023 Forum in Kyoto, Japan, more than 9,000 delegates from 178 countries<sup>2</sup> participated in over 300 sessions. 6,279 participants attended onsite, making the 18<sup>th</sup> IGF the largest-ever physical gathering in the Forum's history. Under the overarching theme, *'The Internet We Want – Empowering All People'*, the IGF was once again a key platform for advancing digital policy discussions on a truly global scale.

The IGF is also a year-round process whose intersessional impacts resonate beyond the annual meetings. Work carried out by the Secretariat and multidisciplinary contributors on a spectrum of issues responds to critical questions and fills policy gaps year after year, with activities leading into the 19<sup>th</sup> IGF focused on AI, Cybersecurity, Internet Fragmentation, and Meaningful Access. The continued growth this year of IGF parliamentary and youth networks, of grassroots national, regional and youth IGFs (NRIs) with representation in close to all UN member states and of voluntary, issue-specific dynamic coalitions, stands as an enduring endorsement of the IGF model. Meanwhile, the IGF's Leadership Panel, now in its third year, has raised the Forum's profile and been instrumental in strategic agenda-setting.

Expanding stakeholder engagement, including under-represented groups and into vital political and institutional decision-making spheres; fostering new policy discourses; and strengthening working

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/125](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/125)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot\\_download/300/26575](https://www.intgovforum.org/en/filedepot_download/300/26575)

modalities to make the IGF ever-more accessible and visible constitute the main areas of progress for the Forum over the past year.

## **II. Analytical Overview**

Since the 2012 report by the CSTD Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, the IGF has used its recommendations as a framework for progress. These recommendations are to improve the IGF's: tangible outcomes and overall visibility; working modalities, including open consultations, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and the Secretariat; funding mechanisms; participation and capacity-building; and links to other Internet governance-related entities.

While significant progress was being made in these areas, further processes emerged that drew from the initial CSTD recommendations and centrally positioned the IGF in broad UN digital policy agendas. These include the Secretary-General's *Roadmap for Digital Cooperation* and the newly adopted Global Digital Compact (GDC). The former suggests a "strengthened and enhanced Internet Governance Forum Plus" as a potential model for addressing gaps in global digital cooperation. It outlines specific measures for "making the Internet Governance Forum more responsive and relevant to current digital issues".

In the GDC, Member States acknowledge "the importance of the Internet Governance Forum as the primary multi-stakeholder platform for discussion of Internet governance issues"; support the Forum, including its funding; and agree to build on WSIS processes, "in particular the Internet Governance Forum".

As one of the major outcomes of WSIS, the IGF Secretariat's work aims to ensure that the IGF facilitates the implementation of all the agreed action lines, including, but not limited to, C1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in promoting ICTs for development; C4: Capacity building; and C11: International and regional cooperation.

Looking ahead to the WSIS+20 Review and the possibility of its extension in 2025, the IGF is both recommitted to its mandate – which it has fulfilled and, in many respects, surpassed, in tandem with the evolution of digital issues – and recommitted to the continuous progress suggested by the above processes.

### **Improving Tangible Outcomes and Visibility of the IGF**

The past year has seen the Forum continue to increase its visibility and high-level engagement, including that of governments. In 2023, Government representatives of 105 countries attended the IGF onsite, as well as eighty-seven high-level experts, more than thirty of whom were speakers in topical high-level sessions. The high-level track in 2023 consisted of five sessions across the meeting's first and second days, focused on 'data free flow with trust' (DFFT), mis- and dis-information, WSIS+20 and the future of digital governance, digital technologies for accelerating the SDGs, and AI. Ceremonial segments at the 2023 IGF were presided over by the highest-level leadership from the United Nations, represented by Secretary-General António Guterres, and of the host country, represented by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan. Prime Minister Kishida was also a keynote speaker at the special session on AI at the meeting.

The parliamentary track at the 18<sup>th</sup> IGF added to previous years' gains by enhancing preparatory activities and the number of participating legislators. Thirty-eight countries were represented by over 80 legislators in Kyoto. Continuing intersessional parliamentary activities that keep legislators engaged year-round – prior to Kyoto, IGF parliamentary workshops were held in Africa and Asia-Pacific – in 2024, further

workshops were held in Central Asia and Latin America, with events set to take place again in the African region. A collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNESCO also resulted in key opportunities for dialogue and capacity-building on AI among legislators. The outputs issuing from the parliamentary track annually and intersessionally fulfil the commitment laid out in the *Roadmap* to establish such tracks to ensure “more actionable outcomes”. The increased collaboration with the IPU and national parliaments also follows Action 55 of the recently adopted Pact of the Future, which calls for, amongst other, a deepened “UN engagement with national parliaments in the UN intergovernmental bodies and processes, in accordance with national legislation, including through building on the efforts of the UN and the IPU to engage parliamentarians to maintain support for the implementation of relevant UN agreements and resolutions”.

Media visibility of the IGF continues to enjoy an upward trajectory. The 2023 Forum saw wide-ranging, mainstream print and broadcast publicity, with coverage in all major Japanese as well as several international news outlets. The IGF’s social media presence, a key tool for broadcasting the breadth of IGF activity, remains particularly strong by institutional standards, including through a campaign this year to gather video testimonials of IGF impacts.

The “Kyoto IGF Messages”<sup>3</sup> resulting from the 18<sup>th</sup> IGF were widely disseminated, while the *Internet We Want*<sup>4</sup> framework produced by the Leadership Panel, revised this year with public inputs, continues to be an influential statement of principles for the future of the digital ecosystem.

Participation from all quarters and levels of the IGF in GDC-related processes over 2024 was notable. The Leadership Panel Chair, Vice-Chair, and MAG Chair, as well as dozens of active IGF stakeholders on behalf of NRIs or intersessional policy groups, provided statements at all open sessions hosted by the GDC’s co-facilitators, reflecting the representation and visibility of the IGF in global policy settings.

## **Working Modalities**

As part of improved working modalities, the *Roadmap* has recommended a “more focused agenda for the Forum based on a limited number of strategic policy issues”. The 2023 programme aligned closely with GDC objectives for optimal coherence and contribution to the process. The 2024 programme has taken an issue-driven approach centred on four critical themes, ‘Harnessing innovation and balancing risks in the digital space’; ‘Enhancing the digital contribution to peace, development, and sustainability’; ‘Advancing human rights and inclusion in the digital age’; and ‘Improving digital governance for the Internet We Want’, and features a reduced number of sessions.

The IGF Leadership Panel was appointed by the Secretary-General in August 2022 responding to the *Roadmap*’s recommendation to create “a strategic and empowered multistakeholder high-level body” tied to the Forum. In little over two years, the fifteen-member Panel has vigorously carried forward its mandate by focusing on the amplification of the IGF’s activities and outputs, providing strategic advice to and working closely with the IGF MAG. The Panel has met several times, notably with in-person meetings in Riyadh and informally in New York over the course of 2024, in addition to periodic virtual meetings.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://intgovforum.org/en/content/kyoto-messages>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.intgovforum.org/en/content/the-internet-we-want>

2024 saw improvements with regards to fundraising, extending a period of greater funding stability relative to earlier years in the IGF’s mandate. As components of an “innovative and viable fundraising strategy”, outreach to new and underrepresented donors was undertaken.

## **Participation & Capacity Building**

2023 was a record-breaking year for IGF annual meeting participation. Over 9,000 stakeholders joined discussions at the 18<sup>th</sup> IGF, including nearly 6,300 onsite in Kyoto. This amounted to the highest number of in-person attendees in the IGF’s history, following on the highest-ever number of session proposals received in advance of the meeting.

The Secretary-General’s call for action expressed at the 13th IGF stressed that the Forum must increase its efforts to draw “weak and missing voices” into its work. Over the course of the 2024 cycle, capacity development efforts have focused on: thematic workshops; support to IGF National, Regional and Youth Initiatives (NRIs), IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs), and schools on Internet governance; as well as fostering the integration of unrepresented communities. In 2023, 125 individuals from least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDs) were able to meaningfully participate in IGF through financial support to attend the annual meeting. In 2024, a projected 150 people will receive this support.

The IGF’s emphasis on youth has gone from strength to strength. Thousands of young people have participated in the IGF 2024 Youth Track, led by Youth IGF coordinators and international youth-focused organizations in dialogues on empowering young leaders for trusted AI. Young people also continue to be integrated in key parts of the IGF meeting, including its high-level and parliamentary track, and as MAG members. As with the steadfast development of a dedicated Parliamentary Track, the IGF Youth Track is an affirmation of the indispensability of this group’s perspectives and priorities in digital decision-making.

The dynamism and demand around these tracks have inspired the creation of new IGF stakeholder engagement activities in 2024 dedicated to international judiciaries and the digital global business community, both critical constituencies in digital policymaking.

## **Cooperation with Other Internet Governance Related Entities**

In 2024, through its intersessional policy and capacity building activities, as well as through the network of NRIs, the IGF continued to strengthen ties with digitally-focused or digital governance-related organizations globally, from dedicated Government agencies, regional Internet registries, universities and policy processes like NetMundial, to political blocs, like the G7, the African Union Commission and European Union Commission, where IGF is a regular participant in its High-level Group on Internet Governance. Cooperation within the UN System continues to expand, with an increasing number and variety of UN agencies – like OHCHR, UNESCO, UNDP, UNIDIR, UNICRI, UNCTED, UNOCT, UNICEF, UN Women, UN University, and UN regional commissions – contributing to the IGF’s intersessional open consultations and annual meetings, and with the IGF’s affiliation to the GDC Core Group and Cyber Hub. Through the WSIS and GDC processes, the IGF maintains close ties with the ITU, UNCTAD and the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology (OSET).

## **III. Brief Description of Innovative Policies, Programmes and Projects, plus Future Actions with regard to Issues Raised in Part Two (1-2 pages)**

*One tangible way for the IGF to enhance and increase the participation of developing countries is through the National, Regional and Youth IGFs (NRIs) which have been emerging spontaneously ever since the IGF was convened in 2006. They are independent in their work, and organized in accordance with the core IGF principles of being multistakeholder, bottom-up, inclusive, open, transparent and non-commercial. Since the 10th IGF, the number of NRIs has grown tremendously and the total number of officially recognized initiatives has more than doubled from 43 NRIs at the end of 2015 to a current record of 172 [recognised NRIs](#). The NRIs are active and immensely useful contributors to the IGF community's intersessional activities. The linkages between the NRIs and the IGF have increased significantly, due to many joint work activities such as the organization of sessions held during the annual IGFs; work on organizing collaborative sessions; developing publications containing guidelines and best practices on how to establish and run a successful NRI; as well as collaboration on developing youth-specific workshops and activities intersessionally and during IGF annual meetings. Records from the [NRIs regular fortnightly meetings](#) also serve as valuable and tangible inputs to the global IGF; providing more local and issue -perspectives to policy challenges.*

*In the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 7 August 2018 [on the recommendation of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (E/2016/31)]<sup>5</sup>, member states welcomed the continuous progress made with regard to the intersessional work of the Internet Governance Forum in the different modalities of connecting and enabling the next billion online, dynamic coalitions and best practice forums, as well as the contributions being made by both national and regional Internet governance forums.*

In 2024, the IGF furthered its issue-specific policy work with respective [Policy Networks](#) on Internet Fragmentation (PNIF), Meaningful Access (PNMA) and Artificial Intelligence (PNAI), the latter inaugurated in 2023. Since its launch, the PNAI has successfully harnessed the strong popular momentum and interest behind AI-related issues to bring visibility to its activities.

[The IGF's Best Practice Forums \(BPFs\)](#), meanwhile, continue to offer unique platforms to investigate topical Internet policy challenges by collecting community input and experiences in a flexible and bottom-up manner. The BPFs gather knowledge that exist with different groups, organizations, experts and individuals, made available as a useful resource for the broader community in the form of tangible Best Practice outcome documents. The BPF processes create temporary platforms for people to discuss, interact and collaborate on one specific Internet governance issue. They foster interaction between existing stakeholders and stakeholder groups and community members from all geographic regions.

Through substantive outreach efforts and continued calls for input and contributions, the BPFs enabled more diverse and varied participation in IGF processes, including from a richer variety of regions and stakeholder groups. By continuously involving new people in their work, BPFs also contributed to enlarging the global footprint of the IGF. In 2024 one BPF was chartered exclusively on Cybersecurity. BPFs work throughout the year in an open and inclusive way via open mailing lists, regular virtual meetings and workshops during the annual meetings.

Extending and developing on a process which began in 2015 with their first-ever main session at the IGF, IGF Dynamic Coalitions (DCs) coordinated their efforts throughout 2024 leading up to the IGF's annual meetings. Through their regular monthly virtual meetings, and [adoption of common work standards](#) (open archives, open membership, open mailing lists), their activities have become more synchronized, all while coalitions continue to work independently as multistakeholder expert discussion groups on a variety of topics. In 2023, the DCs agreed on a [Charter](#), which outlines the principles and common guidelines of the Dynamic Coalitions, such a basic principles, obligations, membership governance, and mission and vision

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2018/28](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2018/28)

of the DCs. The Charter is reviewed every year to reflect new realities that impact DCs' operations, a better understanding of the DC's needs, and evolving policy landscapes. As with other parts of the IGF Community, DCs are growing steadily, with 31 in 2024.

*Some specific efforts undertaken to improve working modalities included:*

Important for the IGF's longer-term efforts to improve its processes is the MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy), whose purpose is to develop proposals of action implementable in the short, medium and long term on how to strengthen the IGF and position it strategically vis à vis developments in digital cooperation. The working group has driven the MAG's collaboration with the IGF Leadership Panel on [IGF inputs](#) and relationship to the GDC process, and is at work on a proposed "Vision for the IGF Beyond 2025". The MAG Working Group on Workshops Process (WG-WSP), as in the last four years, has contributed significantly in 2024 to the qualitative success of the 19<sup>th</sup> IGF programme, comprised of traditional workshops and other sessions. Two additional new working groups were approved in 2024. The working group on youth engagement ([WG-Youth](#)) supports the MAG in developing actions to strengthen youth engagement in the IGF and to ensure their participation in the ever-changing digital landscape, and the working group on multilingualism (WG-Multilingualism) ensures the translation of IGF documentation to keep non-English speakers informed of IGF developments.