

## Comments on IGF Program Shaping Proposal

Submitted by Rasha Abdulla

Acknowledging the work done by the Ad-hoc group on IGF Program Shaping, I would like to share the following comments with my fellow MAG members. The comments are in the order they appear on the proposal.

### - Draft proposes:

- **NEW:** clearly indicate the (policy) question their WS will be addressing (per the CSTD WG on IGF Improvements recommendations), note: this could replace the previous years “Relevance” field;

### - My comment:

I don't think any replacement is necessary. The existing criteria basically already says the same thing. Relevance is the first of four criteria used to evaluate workshops, and it reads: "1. Relevance: Is the proposal relevant to Internet Governance and to the IGF main theme for that year? In other words: Does the proposal highlight the importance of the issue?" Perhaps what we can do is change the language used to explain relevance to be along the lines of “How does your topic relate to Internet governance? Which sub-theme are you addressing in terms of policy?”

### - Draft proposes:

- Strongly advise that, to help ensure balanced perspectives, workshop proposals submitted by two or more different stakeholder groups (e.g. technical community, government, civil society, private sector) from more than one geographical region, will be privileged.

### - My comment:

Actually the existing criteria stresses on diversity in stronger terms than this. It states: “Is the list of speakers diverse enough (in terms of gender, geography, stakeholder group, policy perspective, and/or persons with disabilities)? Are the speakers qualified to tackle the topic? Are there speakers from developing countries? Are there speakers/organizers who are first-timers?”

I think the impression should be that two of any criteria is not enough; if there are five speakers on a panel, they should represent much more than two stakeholders, geographies, etc. I would think the expectation should be that no two speakers would be of the exact same background (for example, you can't have two European businessmen or two Asian female civic society reps), each speaker should add at least

one if not more aspect of diversity to the panel. I think diversity is of utmost importance, and should be stressed in strong language.

- Draft proposes:

- The MAG will review the workshop proposals preliminarily approved and will create specific tracks broadly in line with themes proposed in the workshop proposal process, following community interest and ensuring an equitable and balanced program across all stakeholder groups.

- My comment:

I know Lynn has clarified this in an email to the group, but I would like to stress that having an equitable program across all stakeholder groups should not be at the expense of the quality of the proposal or the diversity of the speakers listed. I'm sure this is what the proposal means, but it would be good to state it as such.

- Draft proposes:

- Interactive sessions, focused on responding to concrete policy questions, will be privileged.

- My comment:

I'm not sure how these sessions will be "privileged." Again, one of our four criteria is format, and it states: "Is the Workshop description consistent with the format listed (for example, if the format is Debate, then does the proposal describe how the debate will be set up, with timings, etc., indicated; are all sides of the issues represented)?" We have established a numerical system based on four existing criteria (relevance, content, diversity, format); and we have agreed to evaluate each session format separately, but to say that we will "privilege" other formats over traditional ones will be, in my opinion, quite confusing to us and to the community as it is not integrated within the quantified evaluation.

- Draft proposes:

- IGF Messages will also be produced for all Main sessions (tracks). This message development would be the responsibility of the session rapporteurs under the control of the IGF Secretariat with consultations with the host country, MAG Chair, and main session organizers.

- My comment:

With all due respect, the phrase "under the control of the IGF Secretariat" worries me. I would hate to see the IGF be politicized in any way, shape, or form, and I would

like to see guarantees for maximum freedom of expression to the session rapporteurs if we are to implement the IGF messages as an ongoing part of IGF.

#### **Other general comments:**

- I support the suggestion made by many to limit speakers, I suggest five speakers per session. I believe the speakers listed should all be confirmed, i.e. they have been approached and expressed interest in the session. I propose if possible that the system automatically sends an email to each listed speaker asking them to confirm (through clicking on a link maybe) that they have indeed been approached and intend to be there. I also hope we can find a way to implement the rule of no speaker should be listed on more than three sessions.
- Grouping MAG reviewers by theme/sub-theme is a good idea, and should be helpful in suggesting mergers, etc., and maybe also in spotting speakers on more than three sessions if we can't do this electronically (I really hope we can).
- If I understand the question directed to the WG on Workshop Evaluations correctly, this is about whose name/country/stakeholder group appear as submitter, correct? I can't speak for the WG of course, but my initial reaction is why do we need this to begin with? Why can't we just have a "corresponding proposer" to communicate with, who would also be responsible for session report, etc., but then the session would be listed in the names of all entities on the speaker list. I think it would give the MAG a better image of the percentage of participation in the IGF by the different stakeholders.