# OPEN CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED MULTI-STAKEHOLDER HIGH-LEVEL BODY (para 93(a) of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation) 22 February 2021

#### Summary report

1. In the framework of the Open Consultations hosted as part of the IGF 2021 planning process, a meeting was held with Ms. Maria Francesca Spatolisano, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs and Officer in Charge of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology. This was followed by a consultation on the Multi-stakeholder High-Level Body (MHLB) proposed in the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The discussions were moderated by Ms. Yu Ping Chan, Office of the Tech Envoy and Mr. Chengetai Masango, IGF Secretariat<sup>1</sup>.

Paragraph 93(a): Creating a strategic and empowered multi-stakeholder high-level body, building on the experience of the existing multi-stakeholder advisory group, which would address urgent issues, coordinate follow-up action on Forum discussions and relay proposed policy approaches and recommendations from the Forum to the appropriate normative and decision-making forums.

## I. Meet with Ms. Maria Francesca Spatolisano, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs and Officer in Charge of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology

2. Ms. Spatolisano started her intervention by praising the IGF for having served as a platform for multistakeholder dialogue on Internet governance (IG) and for having managed to break down silos between stakeholders. She noted that the IGF mandate and the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation can significantly contribute to advancing joint efforts to harness technology for good and sustainable development. The Office of the Tech Envoy is committed to bringing the Roadmap's recommendation to reality and to working towards strengthening cooperation, developing capacities in digital policy and ensuring technology works for people. The Office is also committed to supporting the evolution of the IGF as a forward-looking and purposeful platform, while maintaining its open, inclusive, bottom-up and multistakeholder nature. Ms. Spatolisano also commended the MAG for its role in the IGF process, and noted that, while the annual meetings are critical to exchange ideas, we must also think beyond them. The MHLB proposed in the Roadmap is an opportunity to reach out to those

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The full transcript and video recording is available at:

https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/content/igf-2021-first-open-consultations-mag-meeting-day-1-section-3

that have an important role to play in the IGF ecosystem but have not been part of it so far. A consultation is being launched on para 93 (a) of the Roadmap to gather further input on the MHLB, from both UN member states and the broader community.

3. Ms. Spatolisano's intervention was followed by comments from meeting participants, who:

- Welcomed the creation of the Office of the Tech Envoy and asked its mandate/terms of reference, work plan and budget to be made publically available.
- Noted that the IGF should serve as the main policy discussion platform for taking forward all the goals and recommendations of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, in a multistakeholder, open, transparent and bottom-up fashion.
- Called for avoiding duplication with other UN processes.
- Called for further involvement of parliamentarians in the IGF processes, including the MHLB.

4. Ms. Chan added that the mandate of the Tech Envoy flows from the Roadmap, and that stakeholders are welcome to further contribute to the Roadmap's workstreams. The Roadmap is not intended to create anything new, but rather to bring together what is already being done by various UN agencies within the overall framework of the Secretary-General's vision for how the international community and the UN can better support member states in dealing with digital challenges.

## II. Open Consultation on the proposed Multi-stakeholder High-level Body

5. An open consultation then followed on the proposed MHLB. Ms. Chan gave a brief overview of the process that led to the development of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and how the MHLB fits into the Roadmap. Mr. Masango then invited participants to comment on the MHLB, noting that an online questionnaire is to be made available to collect further input. (Later edit: The questionnaire is <u>now available.</u>)

3. Ms. Concettina Cassa, former Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) member, and Ms. Livia Walpen, Swiss government, gave a presentation of the proposals put forward by the MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) on how to operationalise the MHLB. The group outlined three possible approaches for the MHLB:

- A New body within the IGF, separate and complementary to the MAG. This group would have some 25 members and strong linkages with the MAG. There would be equality and no hierarchy between the MAG and the MHLB.
- **B 'MAG Plus' approach** with an in-depth reform of the MAG. The MHLB would not be a new body, but would be integrated within the MAG, as a leadership sub-group of 5–6 people.
- C Two-tiered multistakeholder IGF leadership structure including the MHLB and the MAG. This approach envisions a single structure bringing together the MHLB and the

MAG. The MHLB would provide strategic leadership, while the MAG would continue to focus on the IGF programme.

#### □ See the <u>WG-Strategy proposal.</u>

4. Several calls were made for discussions to continue on the three approaches proposed by the MAG WG-strategy. Among the approaches proposed by the group, there were some comments in favour of approach B, followed by comments in favour of approach C.

5. Some participants noted that there have already been multiple consultations and there is a broad base of input to build on. As such, it is now time to take action instead of having another round of consultations. Many others considered that it is important to consult broadly on the establishment of the MHLB, as it has major consequences for the IGF and the community. There were calls to create additional spaces to discuss the MHLB proposal (in addition to the online questionnaire), and to make sure that the issue is brought to the attention of political leaders (and not only those traditionally involved in Internet governance (IG) processes).

6. There were comments in support of the MHLB as the body to link discussions at the IGF with the decisions taken elsewhere (within the private sector, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), governments). In such a role, it could better bridge the gap between deliberative spaces and decision-making spaces, while also strengthening the participation of different stakeholders. It would also help make better use of the IGF's many outputs and raise the profile of the IGF (something that so far the MAG and the Secretariat have had limited resources to dedicate to). Moreover, the MHLB could provide the space for some strategic discussions about the role and activities of the IGF, as we are moving towards the IGF Plus model. Other comments suggested a different approach: the MHLB being in charge of bringing to the IGF table the 'big' IG decision-makers (e.g. big states, big regions) to openly discuss policies within the global multistakeholder community.

7. Some comments noted that the MHLB should not be a separate, new body. The IGF does need stronger leadership, but if the new body is separate to the IGF and the MAG, it could undermine the IGF and take attention from it. A new body would not be accountable to the IGF community and not have a responsibility for strengthening the IGF. Moreover, appointing a body of high-level people would not be in line with the multistakeholder nature of the IGF.

8. Some opposition was expressed towards a MHLB that would presumably be empowered to translate and prioritise IGF discussions and policy recommendations for intergovernmental or normative bodies to make a decision on. Such a body would undermine the IGF

multistakeholder policy discussions, and downgrade the importance of the IGF, particularly within the UN system. Instead, support was expressed for strengthening the MAG and providing for better outward messaging of the IGF's policy discussions (without feeding recommendations into intergovernmental bodies but ensuring that the IGF remains the premier global forum for multistakeholder dialogue on Internet public policy issues).

9. Several participants called for the MHLB not to be disconnected from the IGF community or from other institutions and processes of the IGF ecosystem. Key principles such as multistakeholderism, transparency, inclusivity and dialogue should be safeguarded. A new structure could create a top-down approach to digital cooperation and undermine the IGF's legacy if not designed properly. Calls were made for the MHLB to be established in accordance with the IGF's open, multistakeholder nature, while ensuring coordination with other parts of the broader IG community, the MAG, the Office of the Tech Envoy and the UN Secretary-General.

10. Concerns were expressed that the role of the MHLB would overlap with the role of the MAG, thus potentially leading to confusion, rivalry, new bureaucracy and costs. To avoid this, having the MHLB integrated within the MAG would be preferable by some, as an executive committee potentially composed of one senior person from each stakeholder group plus the MAG Chair. This would serve several purposes: (a) provide senior representation; (b) provide strategic leadership to develop the IGF Plus model; (c) ensure accountability to the wider MAG and the wider community; (d) ensure that efforts and resources are joined.

11. Others pointed out that the MHLB is expected to have functions different from the MAG (with the MAG remaining focused on programme development), and, as such, it would make sense to have it constituted as a different body within the IGF. In this case, the MAG experience should be used; for instance, have the same bottom-up nominations from all stakeholder groups, and ensure the body is accountable and transparent to the multistakeholder community. The MHLB would also be served by the IGF Secretariat, with the IGF Trust Fund as the source of funding.

12. According to some suggestions, if the MHLB is constituted as a body separate from the MAG, it would be important to have overlapping leadership to avoid duplication and lack of coordination (for instance, the Chair of the MHLB would serve as Co-chair of the MAG and the other way around). Also, the work of the MHLB would have to be closely integrated and coordinated with the work of the MAG, with clearly defined and distinct roles for both. To ensure that there is no competition or undermining of roles between the MHLB and the MAG, it would be important to carefully consider issues such as how each body is formed, how it is named, what is expected from it, and where it sits (within the IGF ecosystem).

13. On the composition of the MHLB, some comments were made that the body should include high-ranking officials from governments (e.g., foreign ministers, interior ministers), CEOs of private companies, etc. Others suggested that it would be more helpful if the MHLB includes experts, people ready to take up work and who have experience operating within the processes and bodies that they will be reaching out to.

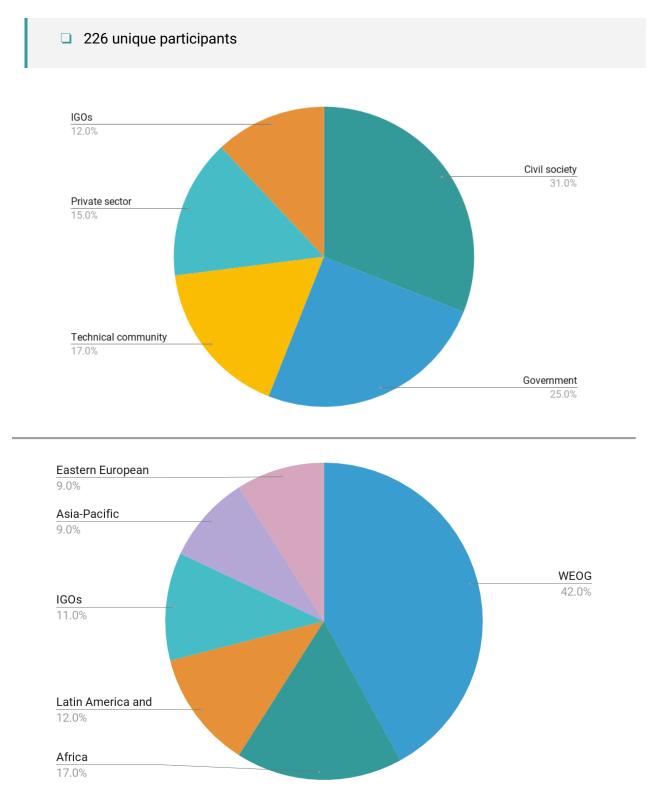
14. A comment was made that most of the functions proposed for the MHLB are included in the Tunis Agenda as part of the IGF mandate and that the MAG has tried to meet many of those functions. Over time, as the IGF activities expanded, the MAG became more of a programme committee, a management body, also because there were limited resources available to meet all the functions. In this context, if we want to identify an amplifier for the messages and work of the IGF, that should be a role for national and regional IGF initiatives and several other community efforts (e.g. Internet Society chapters). There are already many multistakeholder bodies and activities – where activities take place and actions are implemented – that could help amplify the IGF messages.

15. Ms. Chan added the following clarifications responding to some of the points raised:

- The Office of the Tech Envoy is aware that there have already been numerous consultations. This new consultation on the MHLB is aimed to give an opportunity to those who have not provided input before to do so; it would also serve to conclude and wrap up the process, so that a proposal is developed and presented to the UN Secretary-General for consideration and action.
- It has never been envisioned that the MHLB is separate from the IGF or detracting from the IGF structure and community. The MHLB would be a necessary part of the IGF structure, and this is why in the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation it is included in the paragraph related to the IGF. There are also no intentions to replace the MAG. The idea is to preserve the multistakeholder nature of the IGF, making sure that the Forum remains the premier body for IG discussions.
- Further discussions are indeed needed on the extent to which the MHLB would take key IGF discussions and outcomes to other international fora. On the question on what the next steps would be following the consultation on the MHLB, Ms. Chan noted that the goal would be to try and see if an action-oriented proposal comes out of the consultation.

16. Mr. Masango noted that the <u>online questionnaire</u> would be distributed to UN member states missions in New York and Geneva, and that the broader community is invited to provide input as well.

Annex I Statistics on meeting participation



# Annex II List of participants

		African Group	
Civil society			
Moustapha	Abakar Abdramane	House of Africa	Chad
Idriss adamou	Adamou	Chad youth IGF	Chad
Felix	Ameka	Leiden University Centre for Linguistics	Ghana
Kwaku	Antwi	Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation	Ghana
Abdeldjalil	Bachar Bong	House Of Africa	Chad
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Chenai	Chair	world wide web foundation	Zimbabwe
Fedhi	Channan	Love Matters Africa	Kenya
Anriette	Esterhuysen	Association for Progressive Communications	South Africa
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Ndunge	Kiundi	APC	Kenya
N'guessan Yvette	Koffi	Fgi Côte D'ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire
Ayaovi Olévié Agbenyo	Kouami	Intic4dev/Afralo&Gnso-ncsg-ncuc-ncuc	Togo

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Avis	MOMENI	PROTEGE QV	Cameroon
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Christian	Nzhie	B. outsourcing	Cameroon
Sara	Petrollino	Leiden University Centre for Linguistics	Italy
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Manal	Ismail	The National Telecom Regulatory Authority of Egypt (NTRA)	Egypt
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Khaled	Koubaa	Facebook	Tunisia
Lloyd	Mwashita	AfriPAV Solution	Zimbabwe
Atemnkeng	Richard	Nkemnkia Community Development empowerment international Foundation	Cameroon
Technical com	munity		
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Hariniombona	Andriamampiono	N/A	Madagascar

na	na		
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Sherif	Hashem	SUNY Polytechnic Institute	Egypt
Herman	Ramos	Internet Society IGF Youth Ambassador Program	Mozambique
Brett	van Niekerk	University of KwaZulu-Natal	South Africa
		Asia-Pacific Group	
Civil society			
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Sunar	Chhabilal Sunar	Bageshwori Asal Shasan Club (BAS Nepalgunj)	Nepal
Amrita	Choudhury	CCAOI	India
Juliana	Harsianti	Global Voices	Indonesia
Rajat	Mukarji	Broadband India Forum	India
Agun	Pratama	FHUI	Indonesia
Ernest	Zhanaev	Human Rights Researcher	Kyrgyzstan
Government			
Peti	Farani	Ootr	Samoa
Sumair	Gul	Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations in Geneva	Pakistan
Yoichi	lida	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan	Japan
Ananda Raj	Khanal	Nepal Telecommunications Authority	Nepal
Hario	Kuntarto	Ministry Communication and Informatics Republic Indonesia	Indonesia
Unaena	Lameko	Office of the Regulator	Samoa

Milan Raj	Nepali	Insurance Board, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal	Nepal
Angeline	Peteru Seiuli	Office of the Regulator	Samoa
Temukisa	Tuilaepa- Toomata	Office of the Regulator	Samoa
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Jennifer	Chung	DotAsia Organisation	China
Muhammad Aimal	Marjan	Baz International Consultancy Services	Afghanistan
		Eastern European Group	
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Roman	Chukov	Russian Center for Promotion of International Initiatives	Russian Federation
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Raquel	Gatto	Gatto Consulting	Brazil
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Bruna	Santos	Data Privacy Brasil Research Association	Brazil
Alfredo	Velazco	Usuarios Digitales	Ecuador
Government			

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Esquinca	Magali	Permanent Mission of Mexico	Mexico
Cristobal	Melgar	Permanent Mission of Peru in Geneva	Peru
Maricela	Munoz	Misión Permanente de Costa RIca	Costa Rica
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Frédéric	COHEN	UN DESA	France
Richard	Delmas	SEMANTIS	Belgium
Federica	D'Esposito	Università degli Studi di Salerno	Italy
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Andreas	Hautz	jugendschutz.net	Germany
Sandra	Hoferichter	EuroDIG	Germany
Tereza	Horejsova	DiploFoundation	Czechia
Gorgol	Katarzyna	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung	Poland
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Markus	Kummer	IGFSA	Switzerland
Théo	Lecarpentier	JEF Europe	Belgium
Sherwood	Moore	Hyperledger Climate Accounting Special Interest Group	United States
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loanna	Noula	Internet Commission	Greece

Christopher	Painter	Global Forum on Cyber Expertise/Global Commission on Stability of Cyberspace	United States
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Courtney	Radsch	Committee to Protect Journalists	United States
Rainer	Rodewald	EuroDIG	Germany
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Birgitta	Hoggren	US Mission Geneva	United States
Laura	Mannion	DCMS	United Kingdom
Juuso	Moisander	Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	Finland
Finn	Petersen	Danish Business Authority	Denmark
Chrystiane	Roy	Mission Permanente du Canada	Canada
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Alexander	Schaerer	Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs	Switzerland
Frode	Sorensen	Norwegian Communications Authority	Norway
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Désirée	Wappler	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	Switzerland
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Andrew	Campling	419 Consulting Ltd	United Kingdom
Mark	Carvell	Independent analyst; EuroDIG Associate Member	United Kingdom

Berry	Cobb	BAC in Black Consulting	United States
Amali	De Silva-Mitchell	Coordinator Dynamic Coalition Data Driven Health Technologies	United Kingdom
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