

IGF 2026 Youth Engagement Update: IGF 2026 First Open Consultations and MAG Meeting

Youth engagement continues to be a key priority for the IGF in 2026, with activities focused on strengthening youth participation in digital policy discussions, fostering connections with policymakers, expanding opportunities for community engagement, and building capacity on emerging digital issues.

IGF 2026 Youth Track

A central pillar of this work is the IGF Youth Track, which remains fully community-led. Youth participants continue to shape the annual theme, workshop formats, content, and speaker selection. For 2026, the community selected AI Governance as the overarching theme, allowing each regional workshop to explore issues within this topic of particular relevance to its region. The Youth Track consists of four hybrid workshops hosted in conjunction with EuroDIG, Africa IGF, Asia-Pacific IGF, and LACIGF, all leading to the Global Youth Summit at the annual IGF meeting in Nairobi in December.

The first workshop was successfully held at EuroDIG in May, bringing together 70 participants, including youth representatives, a Member of Parliament, a senior civil society expert, and a youth moderator. In response to community feedback, the Secretariat also launched a new workshop report format designed to make Youth Track outputs more accessible, engaging, and impactful. Preparations are now underway for the next workshop, which will take place alongside the Asia-Pacific IGF in November.

Stronger connection between Youth and Policymakers

The Secretariat is also responding to calls from the youth community for stronger engagement with policymakers. As a first step, an Italian Member of Parliament and Special Representative on AI at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly participated in the EuroDIG Youth Track workshop, helping to bridge discussions between youth and decision-makers. The Secretariat additionally facilitated a bilateral exchange between the parliamentarian and representatives of the Italian Youth IGF. Building on this experience, discussions are underway with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly regarding future collaboration, including potential engagement between the IGF Youth Community, the Assembly's network of young parliamentarians, and its newly appointed Special Representative on Youth. Similar efforts are planned for upcoming Youth Track workshops in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

New IGF Youth activities

To further strengthen community participation, the Secretariat is preparing an open meeting for the approximately 700 subscribers to the IGF Youth mailing list. The meeting will provide an opportunity to introduce ongoing activities, gather feedback, and identify priorities for future

engagement. One proposal currently under consideration is the establishment of a series of IGF Youth Webinars, driven by community interests and covering topics ranging from emerging technologies and digital policy to career development and interactive, youth-led workshops.

Youth IGF AI Foresight Capacity Development Programme

Finally, the Secretariat, in partnership with GIZ, has developed a new Youth IGF AI Foresight Capacity Development Programme. This pilot initiative is designed for youth IGF organizers and focuses on strategic foresight methodologies and their application to AI governance. Combining online and hybrid learning components, the programme aims to equip youth IGF organizers with practical tools that can be applied in local and regional Youth IGF activities. Interest has been strong, with more than 80 applications received for approximately 40 available places for this first pilot. The programme is scheduled to begin in October 2026.