Charter [CHARTER LINK]

Youth Coalition on Internet Governance

(YCIG)

Revised charter

Ratified:

26 April 2017

www.youthcig.org

PDF: YCIG Charter (2017) – Ratified

PREAMBLE

This document constitutes the revised charter of the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG), which replaces the original charter that was adopted on 18 November 2009. Its purpose is to detail how the coalition is organized, outline membership eligibility, define its leadership structure, and stipulate the rules and regulations pertaining to the election of its Steering Committee (SC).

CHAPTER I: NAME & HISTORY

ARTICLE I: NAME

The official name of this Dynamic Coalition (DC) of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is the “Youth Coalition on Internet Governance,” and its official acronym is “YCIG.”

ARTICLE II: ABOUT & HISTORY

The YCIG is an open, non-commercial group, which is stakeholder neutral, that encourages youth collaboration and enriches youth participation in local, national, regional, and international Internet governance discussions, negotiations, strategies, and processes. It is also a neutral space for youth interested in learning about, participating in, and advocating for
Internet governance-related issues in general as well as the IGF as a platform for engaging with all stakeholders on equal footing in particular.

Youth activists and youth organizations from civil society, government, and the private sector officially launched the YCIG during the 4th Internet Governance Forum, which was held from 15-18 November 2009 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. It was registered as an IGF Dynamic Coalition to advocate for the voice of children, young people, and young professionals in Internet governance-related fora, negotiations, and processes. It was established with the understanding that it is imperative that youth be included in such processes and its associated decision-making, share ideas and best practices from local and regional perspectives within the global Internet governance community, and enhance the implementation of relevant, agreed-upon frameworks and strategic initiatives.

CHAPTER II: VISION, MISSION, & PRINCIPLES

ARTICLE I: VISION

We envision an open, accessible, and free Internet where all individuals, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social status, or geographic location, can participate fully in the debates, negotiations, and decision-making processes surrounding Internet governance (IG), digital rights, information and communications technologies (ICTs), and digital policy at the local, national, regional, and global levels to ensure a more robust and inclusive cyberspace.

ARTICLE II: MISSION

Our mission is to engage in Internet governance-related discourse, specifically within the global IGF as well as within national, subregional, and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs), on equal footing with other stakeholders in order to amplify youth voices and promote the interests and concerns of youth in Internet governance discussions, negotiations, strategies, and processes. We believe youth should be involved in all processes of the IGF and recognized as full-fledged stakeholders within existing stakeholder groups. As such, the YCIG also strives to enable more young people to join the discussion and overcome obstacles they face in doing so, such as monetary, experience, skill set, and network-related challenges.

ARTICLE III: AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The YCIG aims to empower youth who want to actively participate in the IGF’s intersessional activities and initiatives, by supporting the IGF, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), and the IGF Secretariat in facilitating the active involvement and engagement of more young people on an equal footing with other stakeholders in Internet governance discussions, negotiations, strategies, and processes. We endeavor to mobilize
stakeholders and influence public opinion regarding youth interests to engender more fair and balanced discussions, especially since youth typically hold less power in decision-making processes even though youth in particular are significantly impacted by long-term decisions and outcomes. By exercising collaboration across generations and stakeholder groups, the YCIG is committed to maintaining open, transparent, inclusive, and meaningful youth representation and participation, and garnering support for youth participation globally in terms of boosting both financial support and capacity building. The YCIG also strives to be a hub for introducing youth and newcomers to Internet governance, while also offering a community and encouraging them to actively contribute to discussions and assume important participatory roles in this space.

The YCIG will realize its aims by meeting the following objectives:

- Foster an environment of strong and sustainable youth-led initiatives on Internet governance by communicating with and providing outreach to youth, youth-led organizations, and other relevant stakeholders interested in joining and contributing to the IGF community;
- Advocate youth positions during the IGF, especially during sessions and workshops;
- Implement solutions that address any gaps or inadequacies in the existing Internet governance frameworks vis-à-vis youth positions;
- Ensure youth are included as speakers in relevant IGF sessions and workshops, and advocate for mandated youth participation on the MAG as well as any associated fora and processes;
- Provide a community for youth and young professionals interested in Internet governance to collaborate together as well as serve as a resource for other DCs and IGF initiatives, such as the Best Practice Forums (BPFs);
- Encourage the MAG and IGF Secretariat to adopt a range of more inclusive forms of dialogue and meeting formats that enable youth participation through mandates, policy changes, and/or other methods;
- Support youth initiatives within the IGF ecosystem, especially during national, subregional, and regional IGFs (NRIs), and youth IGF initiatives in particular; and
- Encourage more youth participation in Internet governance processes by providing opportunities for meaningful engagement through discussions, interactive sessions, remote participation, and/or other methods.

ARTICLE IV: PRINCIPLES

The principles underlying the activities of the YCIG include but are not limited to:

1. Access to information via the free and open Internet is a fundamental and universal human right;
2. Internet governance processes are fair, open, accessible, inclusive, bottom-up, transparent, and accountable, and should remain so;
3. Multistakeholderism and diversity is recognized, promoted, and practiced internationally;
4. Decision-making should be based on the principles of collaboration, dialogue, and consensus building.  

5. Processes and stakeholders are accountable for their positions, expressions, and actions; and  

6. Youth voices should be respected, included, and recorded in all policy and decision-making processes.

CHAPTER III: MEMBERSHIP & ELIGIBILITY

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

The YCIG is a space open for all youth and other relevant stakeholders who are committed to amplifying youth voices, championing youth issues, and implementing solutions that support and address youth concerns and causes internationally.

ARTICLE II: ELIGIBILITY

A. Membership

1. The YCIG has two categories of membership: voting members (full members) and non-voting members (observers).

2. Full members may join and actively participate in all YCIG activities as long as they are individuals within the age range of 13-35 years. Once a member falls outside of this age range, they will become an observer. Anyone outside of this age range, including any person younger than 13 years of age, can also join as an observer pending they are willing to lend their support to the work of the YCIG.

3. Observers are encouraged to join and actively participate in all YCIG discussions, but they do not have the right to vote.

4. All full members and observers must subscribe to the YCIG mailing list.

5. The YCIG membership shall be encouraged to introduce themselves on the YCIG mailing list upon joining the consistency.
6. All full members and observers shall update their contact information annually before the annual election via a check-in procedure (see: Ch. V, Article V: D.1-3).

B. Full members shall have the following rights:

1. Stand for election to any vacant position on the YCIG Steering Committee or another elected office within the YCIG mandated by community consensus.

2. Nominate full members to Steering Committee positions, which are also elected by fully members, with timely notification of all elections, and publicly post all names nominated to the YCIG mailing list (this is further detailed in Ch. V, Article V).

3. Initiate proposals for policy development or public comment, and obtain expressions of support for such proposals.

4. Be given timely notice of all nominated positions and afforded an opportunity to comment on them.

5. Submit agenda items to any meetings.

6. Share information via the YCIG mailing list.

C. Observers shall have the following rights:

1. Comment on proposals for policy development or public comment, and offer non-binding advice.

2. Be given timely notice of all nominated positions and afforded an opportunity to comment on them.

3. Submit agenda items to any meetings.
4. Share information via the YCIG mailing list.

CHAPTER IV: STEERING COMMITTEE

The Constituency of the YCIG shall have a Steering Committee (SC), elected by YCIG full members, which is responsible for the overall administration of the constituency and charged with coordinating the activities of the constituency in line with its designated roles and responsibilities.

ARTICLE I: TERM OF OFFICE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A. The term of office of the Steering Committee shall begin when the outgoing SC transitions to the newly elected SC at the close of the annual YCIG meeting at the global IGF.

B. It will extend for one (1) year, and terminate at the following YCIG meeting at the global IGF.

ARTICLE II: STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A. The Steering Committee shall consist of five (5) individuals, each representing a respective region outlined in the geographic requirement of the Steering Committee (based on the United Nations’ regional grouping[15]):

1. African Group;
2. Asia-Pacific Group;
3. Eastern European Group;
4. Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC); and
5. Western European and Others Group (WEOG).

B. There shall be no designated hierarchy among Steering Committee members.

C. Elected Steering Committee members will serve a one (1)-year term with the absolute limitation of two (2) terms. No YCIG full member can serve more than two (2) terms, including two (2) consecutive terms or two (2) non-consecutive terms.

ARTICLE III: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

A. Specific duties of the Steering Committee include but are not limited to:
1. Overseeing the establishment and management of the YCIG membership database required by the YCIG charter;

2. Arranging official YCIG meetings and their facilities, both in-person and remote meetings, including but not limited to the annual in-person YCIG meeting at the global IGF (see: Ch. IV, Article II) and meetings of the Steering Committee;

3. Creating and disseminating meeting agendas and meeting reports in order to promote accountability and transparency, where all documents, minutes from Steering Committee meetings, and decisions taken will be published on the YCIG mailing list and YCIG website;

4. Overseeing YCIG membership recruitment, onboarding, and retention;

5. Serving as the first point of contact for the IGF Secretariat, MAG, other members of the IGF community, and other stakeholders within the Internet governance ecosystem regarding the YCIG in general as well as youth initiatives inside the IGF ecosystem in particular;

6. Establishing and managing the YCIG website as well as administering all other YCIG communications channels (see: Ch. IV, Article I); and

7. Communicating information, consultations, resources, and other related opportunities to the YCIG membership.

CHAPTER V: STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

ARTICLE I: ELECTION CYCLE

A. The election cycle shall be initiated at least six (6) weeks but not more than eight (8) weeks prior to the annual YCIG meeting at the global IGF by the outgoing Steering Committee.
B. The election cycle will terminate after the new Steering Committee is announced prior to the annual YCIG meeting at the global IGF.

ARTICLE II: ELECTION TIMELINE

A. The Steering Committee shall announce to the YCIG membership that elections shall take place via the YCIG mailing list.

B. The Steering Committee shall initiate the check-in procedure (see: Ch. V, Article V: D.1-3) as well as issue an open call for the Election Committee (see: Ch. V, Article III).

C. The call for the Election Committee shall extend for two (2) weeks.

D. The Election Committee shall then open the call for nominations to the Steering Committee, which will extend for the duration of two (2) weeks.

E. Once the deadline for nominations passes, the Election Committee will announce the candidates to the YCIG membership via the YCIG mailing list.

F. The Election Committee shall then announce the voting period, which will for extend for duration of one (1) week at least one (1) month prior to assuming office.

G. The Election Committee shall announce the newly elected Steering Committee, including both new SC members and any re-elected SC members, via the YCIG mailing list prior to the annual YCIG meeting at the global IGF.

H. New Steering Committee members and any existing Steering Committee members that may have been re-elected assume office at the close of the annual YCIG meeting at the global IGF (see: Ch. IV, Article I: A).

ARTICLE III: ELECTION COMMITTEE

A. An Election Committee (with at least three (3) and no more than five (5) individuals) shall be formed no later than four (4) weeks before the election cycle ends and work on a voluntary basis.

B. Both full members and observers are eligible to be Election Committee members.

C. The term of the Election Committee will be effective from the formation date until the announcement of the election results.

D. Election Committee members will be automatically disqualified from any candidacies, nominating, or voting during the respective election cycle.
E. The outgoing Steering Committee reserves the right to assign YCIG full members and observers with their consent when no volunteers are forthcoming in order to ensure the expedient execution of the election.

F. Consensus among the volunteered full members and/or observers would be conducted if more than five (5) individuals volunteer. If consensus cannot be reached, a random draw by the existing Steering Committee among the pool of active full members and observers shall facilitate the decision-making process.

ARTICLE IV: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELECTION COMMITTEE

A. The role of the Election Committee is to administer the election according to the adopted election process and election cycle of the YCIG, which includes but is not limited to the following tasks that may arise during the process:

1. Announce the list of eligible voters among the pool of active YCIG full members;

2. Open the call for the nomination of candidates;

3. Announce the confirmed candidates;

4. Organize question and answer sessions between candidates and the YCIG membership;

5. Administer the voting process and select the voting platform;

6. Screen the submitted nomination forms;

7. Identify any non-valid nominations or votes; and

8. Announce the election results.
ARTICLE V: STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTION PROCESS

A. Nomination to the YCIG Steering Committee

1. The nomination period shall last for two (2) weeks after the formation of the Election Committee and before the commencement of the elections.

2. The exact nomination period will be specified within the election calendar to be reached by the Election Committee through consensus.

3. Only full members of the YCIG can nominate themselves or other eligible full members to be a candidate by sending the Election Committee the nomination form (see: Appendix A) within the nomination period.

B. Candidate eligibility

1. The Steering Committee elections in any election cycle are open to active and eligible full members of the YCIG who have joined three (3) months prior to the election date. It is ideal that the candidates demonstrate active participation and contribute to the YCIG.

2. Candidates are required to indicate the acceptance of their candidacy once nominated by submitting a candidate statement containing information on their age, gender, country of residence, and the geographic region they intend to represent (see: Appendix B) to the Election Committee within the nomination period.

3. Only full members that will be able to remain full members for at least one (1) year before reaching the maximum age limit of 35 years is eligible for election to the Steering Committee.

4. If any candidate(s) elected do not comply with the above requirements, their candidacy(ies) will be automatically disqualified and another election shall be called upon if any position(s) on the Steering Committee become(s) vacant.

C. Voting rights of full members

1. Full members of the YCIG who have joined three (3) months prior to the election date are eligible to vote and shall be confirmed by the Election Committee prior to the election announcement (see: Ch. V, Article V: D.1-3).
2. The duration of the election will not exceed two (2) weeks and shall be conducted virtually as per the announced election calendar.

3. Each eligible voting member will have one (1) vote, respectively, for each regional group.

4. Voting via proxy is not allowed.

5. Full members who are eligible to vote may choose to abstain from voting by choosing “Abstaining Vote.”

D. Election procedure

1. Two (2) months before each annual election, the Steering Committee will initiate the check-in process. The Steering Committee shall send an email via the YCIG mailing list to all full members and observers, active or suspended, asking them to update their contact information, including email address and country of residence, age, and regional grouping, before the election.

2. If, after reasonable attempts fail to reach a full member or observer, and confirmation of contact information cannot be completed, that full member or observer will be moved to a list of inactive full members and observers.

3. Once the check-in process is completed, the election process shall commence.

4. The election process lasts from when the announcement of the election schedule by the Election Committee until the final results of the winners are publicly announced to the YCIG membership via the YCIG mailing list.

5. The Election Committee will administer the entire election process and ensure it is conducted in a smooth, transparent, and fair manner as per the announced schedule.
Prior to the nomination period, the Election Committee shall announce the exact dates of the election calendar to the YCIG membership.

6. The Election Committee shall compile the eligible full members that have been nominated and assemble a ballot (see: Appendix C). The Election Committee will then administer the elections using an electronic form (such as but not limited to Google Forms\textsuperscript{18}), which will ensure each vote is confidential, to all full members that checked in.

7. The check-in procedure will ensure the anonymity of each vote, as only those who check-in will be given a link to the ballot, but their response will not be directly tied to the individual’s email address.

8. The voting process must ensure the confidence of its voters. All reported results that are publicly shared shall omit any details that can be used for identification. Election Committee members are also prohibited from disclosing details of election voting results during and after the election cycle ends in which time the term of their role ends.

9. Simple single majority voting rule will be administered to identify the winners – i.e., the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in their respective regional group will win the election.

10. The Election Committee shall announce the election results to the YCIG membership, along with clear information on the number of total votes, the respective valid votes of each candidate, and the number of abstentions and invalid votes, within seven (7) days from the last day of the voting period.

11. The Election Committee shall ensure that vote counts are accurate and audited, and all members of the Election Committee must agree upon the results before the final announcement of the election results.

12. The procedure for a call for a second round of elections (if applicable, such as in the event of a tie), is stipulated by the following:
a. If the number of candidates and the number of vacancies of the respective region match exactly, no voting is required and the specific candidate will automatically be elected.

b. If there is a tie among candidates within the same region, a follow-up round of voting for the specific vacancy shall be called by the Election Committee immediately within seven (7) days of the result announcement.

c. In case there is no candidate from a specific region, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes among the whole pool of non-elected candidates will be elected to fill the remaining vacant seat.

d. In the event of an invalid or illegitimate result due to the non-compliance of the election process, the entire election result will be void and the Election Committee shall call for another election immediately no later than two (2) weeks after such announcement.

13. If any elected Steering Committee member(s) withdraw from the race or are disqualified due to individual ineligibilities, the Election Committee shall call for another round of elections for the respective vacancy(ies) immediately and by no later than two (2) weeks.

CHAPTER VI: COMMUNICATION

ARTICLE I: YCIG WEBSITE & COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The communication between the YCIG membership will be conducted, whenever possible, in face-to-face meetings (including remote participation where available), or, more frequently, through online channels.

Although individuals are permitted to communicate in any one of the official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), all official communications issued by the YCIG will be in English. The YCIG membership is encouraged, however, to translate official YCIG communications into other languages and disseminate among their networks.

The coalition’s main communication platform is the official YCIG website and the primary communications channel is the official YCIG mailing list.

ARTICLE II: FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

The YCIG will convene at least once per year for a face-to-face meeting to discuss a prepared agenda. Efforts will be made to provide for remote participation for those unable to attend the face-to-face meetings in-person. As a registered IGF Dynamic Coalition, the YCIG has a
meeting slot at each global IGF to bring together youth stakeholders from across the IGF to identify and discuss relevant issues, and network together to build a stronger youth voice in Internet governance discussions, negotiations, strategies, and processes.

CHAPTER VII: CHARTER MODIFICATIONS

ARTICLE I: MODIFICATION PROCESS

Amendments to the YCIG charter can be suggested by any interested full member of the YCIG via the YCIG mailing list, followed by discussion over the mailing list. If consensus about voting on the charter amendment is reached, the Steering Committee will initiate a ratification vote among the YCIG membership. If the amendment passes, the Steering Committee will then update the charter by incorporating the amendment within the relevant chapter.

Appendix A

Nomination form template

Nominator
First name: _________________________
Last name: _________________________
Email address: _________________________
Age: _________________________
Organization/affiliation: _________________________

Nominee
First name: _________________________
Last name: _________________________
Email address: _________________________
Age: _________________________

Organization/affiliation: _________________________

By marking the following box with an X, I declare that:

[ ] – I am a full member of the YCIG

Appendix B

Candidate biography template

First Name:

Last name:

Gender:   [ ] Male

[ ] Female

[ ] Other

Regional group you intend to represent (see: YCIG Charter, Ch. IV, Article II: A):

[ ] African Group

[ ] Asia-Pacific Group

[ ] Eastern European Group

[ ] Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)

[ ] Western European and Others Group (WEOG)

Nationality:
Country of residence:

Age:

Organization/affiliation(s):

Short Bio (up to 400 words):

Candidate Statement (up to 400 words):

By marking the following box with an X, I declare that:

[ ] – I am a full member of the YCIG

Appendix C

Voting ballot template

Please vote for representatives from each regional group, one vote for each group.

**African Group**

[ ] Candidate A

[ ] Candidate B

...
[ ] Abstain

**Asia-Pacific Group**

[ ] Candidate C

[ ] Candidate D

...

[ ] Abstain

**Eastern European Group**

[ ] Candidate X

...

[ ] Abstain

**Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)**

[ ] Candidate Y

...

[ ] Abstain

**Western European and Others Group (WEOG)**

[ ] Candidate Z

...

[ ] Abstain

By marking the following box with an X, I declare that:

[ ] – I am a full member of the YCIG

**Full member criteria** (YCIG Charter, Ch. III: Membership & Eligibility)
Full members may join and actively participate in all YCIG activities as long as they are individuals within the age range of 13-35 years. Once a member falls outside of this age range, they will become an observer. Anyone outside of this age range, including any person younger than 13 years of age, can also join as an observer pending they are willing to lend their support to the work of the YCIG.

Footnotes

[1] The communication from the first charter revision drafting previous process, which was not completed but led to the process that approved this document, is available at: https://groups.google.com/d/msg/ycig/ieJjKQ71Tv4/sFjKXnwtBgAJ, and the public comment records are available at: https://groups.google.com/d/msg/ycig/0LuNkWmA7aw/iy98tmj9CAAJ.

[2] The charter revision process was initiated in January 2017 and concluded in April 2017, and was facilitated by an Interim Steering Committee via the YCIG mailing list. The timeline include the following milestones: First draft: Feb. 13; comment period: Feb. 13-28; second draft: March 21; Third draft: March 28; Final draft presented to YCIG: April 1


[11] The multistakeholder model refers to collaboration between the technical community, academia, the private sector, government, civil society, and other stakeholders on equal footing, as outlined in chapters 69-72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html), which was the outcome document of the 2003-2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that established the IGF. For more information, see: https://www.internetsociety.org/doc/internet-governance-why-multistakeholder-approach-works.

Note that the term “YCIG membership” refers to both full members and observers.

This age range was derived after vigorous and prolonged discussions on the YCIG mailing list in March and April 2017 (see: https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/ycig/I2SGJz5Yy44 and https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/ycig/MENcF5a87C8) and based on rough consensus (see: https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2418). Given that updating the age range was one of the primary reasons why the YCIG initiated the charter revision process, the rationale for selecting the 13-35 age range takes into account the fact that since the YCIG is addressing youth from across age groups and regions, it is important to consider the fluidity of youth as it relates to various regional, developmental, and cultural contexts. For instance, the definition of youth varies between regions (e.g., the Council of Europe’s definition considers youth as any person between the ages of 15-30 years (see: http://pjp.eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668203/Analytical+paper+Youth+Age+Bojana+Perovic+4.4.16.pdf/eb59c5e2-45d8-4e70-b672-f8de0a5ca08c), while the African Union defines youth as anyone between the ages of 15-35 years (see: https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/african_youth_charter_2006.pdf)). Regarding the specific age range, 13 is, generally speaking, the age when young people can legally sign up for the majority of Internet services (e.g., see: https://www.welivesecurity.com/2016/09/12/age-kids-able-access-online-services/), while 35, as the upper limit, takes into account non-European/Western contexts of what constitutes youth. Moreover, formal definitions of youth from institutions like the Council of Europe do not necessarily reflect youth voices, as they were not created by youth. Since anyone can join the YCIG and participate as an observer regardless of their age, this age range constitutes maximizes inclusivity while respecting regional and developmental diversity.


As determined by the check-in procedure (see: Ch. V, Article V: D.1-3).

Observers of the YCIG are not eligible to vote.

https://docs.google.com/forms/.


http://youthcig.org/.

https://groups.google.com/d/forum/ycig.