

# United Nations Nations Unies

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Dear Colleagues,

When I met virtually with all Members of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) on Tuesday, 16 June 2020, at the Second Open Consultations and MAG meeting, I highlighted that the IGF is now halfway through its 10-year mandate, granted to it by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 70/125, and that it is both timely and critical for us to reflect on past success and lessons learned.

I also made reference to the launch of the road map of the Secretary-General for digital cooperation (A/74/821). In my Note to the Secretary-General, as part of UN DESA's follow-up to the road map, I reiterated that the road map provides an important impetus to, and timely guidance for, international cooperation for harnessing digital technologies for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Indeed, the need to strengthen the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has always been on the agenda of MAG, as well as the meetings of many Internet governance related institutions and stakeholders. The areas as set out in Para 93 of the road map are pertinent to guide renewed and more focussed efforts to enhance the impact of the IGF, including in the seven action areas outlined in the sub-paragraphs of Para 93. In this regard, it is worth reiterating that we need to build on the successes and lessons learned of the IGF, as well as recent efforts to enhance its impact. Among these efforts are the following:

- 1) A strengthened MAG is instrumental to reinvigorate its role not only in planning and programming the annual meetings of the IGF, but also to effectively address urgent issues through the multistakeholder, inclusive, bottom-up approach, and to follow up on outputs and outcomes of the IGF to the appropriate normative and decision-making forums. The contribution of Cybersecurity Best Practice Forum (BPF) to the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments (UN GGE) in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security earlier this year is an excellent example. (Para 93 (a));
- 2) The annual IGF sessions should continue to be streamlined, with focused discussion on priority areas, centred on public policies and emerging issues. This approach, building on progress and experience gained in recent years, with reduced number of main sessions, open forums, workshops and others, will allow for a more focused clustering of themes and issues (Para 93 (b));
- 3) As seen at the Berlin IGF in 2019, the high-level segment was strengthened, and a parliamentary track was instituted. This good practice should continue and be better integrated into the future IGF sessions, and also ensuring continuity between the annual sessions. UN DESA is committed to support the participation of parliamentarians and others from different stakeholder groups, especially those from developing countries. With the commitment of the Governments of Ethiopia and Japan as the host countries in 2022 and 2023 respectively, increased participation of developing countries in Africa and Asia is expected. (Para 93 (c));
- 4) A longstanding drive in support of national, regional, and youth IGF initiatives (NRIs) has resulted in a dramatic growth of NRIs in recent years, reaching a total of 130 as of

- May 2020 (Para 93 (d)). UN DESA is committed to working with all stakeholders to further strengthen these processes at the local and regional levels, including through supporting capacity development and bringing in their collective work into the global IGF ecosystem. I urge the MAG to further integrate intersessional work and annual meetings both among the NRIs, and between the NRIs and the global IGF (Para 93 (e));
- 5) I encourage the MAG to continue the conscientious effort to harmonize the intersessional activities of the Dynamic Coalitions, Best Practice Forums and the NRIs to strengthen linkages and coherence between sessions, as well as with other intergovernmental and international bodies (Para 93 (e)) - as the UN Secretariat Department mandated to support intergovernmental processes, UN DESA is uniquely placed to contribute to this effort;
  - 6) The last two years have also seen an encouraging growth in financial contributions to the IGF Trust Fund that is administered by UN DESA. I intend to build on this momentum and will initiate a fundraising campaign in support of the work of the IGF, on a multi-year, multi-donor basis (Para 93 (f));
  - 7) The ongoing efforts of improving communications outreach of the IGF has been bolstered with additional resources supporting the IGF Secretariat. The visibility of the IGF and its branding, as noted in the road map, should be further strengthened (Para 93 (g)).

To ensure policy linkage between the IGF and the intergovernmental processes, DESA in the past few years has also arranged for the Chairperson of the MAG to address the annual Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum) and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as well as events organized by UN specialized agencies. Collectively, we will continue to do more.

With the effective and the passionate leadership of the MAG Chair Ms. Anriette Esterhuysen and the committed efforts of all of you as MAG Members, I believe, together, we will meet the increased expectations to build the IGF as a more effective, relevant and inclusive platform to inform and advise global, regional and national polices on Internet governance. Under the personal leadership and guidance of the Secretary-General, let us work together to advance the implementation of the road map and to enhance the broad impact of a strengthened IGF.

Thank you.



LIU Zhenmin  
Under-Secretary-General