

IGF Consultations: IGF 2016 Taking Stock

January 2017

A) Taking Stock of 2016 programming, preparatory process, community intersessional activities and the 11th annual IGF: What worked well? What worked not so well?

> What worked well

Substantive discussions

- Following the WSIS+10 review process and the recommendations from the CSTD for the improvement of the IGF, important work has been done to generate tangible outputs through the second round of the Best Practice Forum process and the policy options for Connecting the Next Billion. Both formats are reinforcing the inclusive participation, bottom up and multistakeholder approaches that are in the heart of the IGF, both at the event itself and throughout the year.
- Daily IGF reports prepared by the Geneva Internet Platform's Digital Watch with the help of ISOC ambassadors were extremely useful in keeping up to date with key highlights and insights from a variety of IGF sessions. Beyond the immediate practical value of the publication, it also plays a role in generating a sense of common "IGF culture", allowing participants to follow IGF outcomes beyond the sessions they were able to physically attend.

Schedule

- The inclusion in the agenda of "lightening sessions" has been successful, allowing exchange of information into very specific topics to happen in a horizontal way.
- New session formats aiming more participative discussions (e.g. break-outs) have been successful as it makes best use of the expertise in the room.
- The use of the app "Sched" is a very practical tool to manage session participation into the attendant perspective.

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- The availability of a wide-range of food options at lunchtime, snacks and beverages throughout the day was appreciated to accommodate different schedules.
- The booth setting as a "village" worked better than previous iterations in hallways, with good quality booths and frequent interactions. Besides, there were several other places available to make small meetings.
- Bilateral rooms, while not always easy to find, were widely available through advance booking.



- The local organizer's cultural side events were welcome, adding a nice traditional flavor with local music, dancers and exhibitions
- We would like to compliment the IGF Secretariat staff, which were very supportive and efficient.

> What worked not so well

Substantive discussions

- Overall the agenda attempted to cover too many topics which gave an impression of lack of focus. This was reflected by the numerous main sessions with sometimes overlapping purposes.
- In the same vein, the overall theme of the IGF was too broad, as a result workshop and session proposals covered too much ground.
- As noted in our past contributions, there is an overlap in terms of content between the IGF Opening and the High-Level meeting on day zero.

Schedule & Content

- The IGF schedule had several workshops running in parallel with similar topics. Moreover, some sessions seemed to be lacking a well planned organization (lack of clarity of the objectives, lack of opportunities to speak from the audience).
- There is a need to talk about new topics and issues. Several sessions had the same main topic that has been discussed in the previous years. If there is still a need to discuss them, having a background documentation to do not repeat the same discussions.
- The broad scope of the IGF agenda sometimes leads to superficial discussions. Having a greater focused agenda will allow fruitful discussions and better tangible outcomes.
- Some of the main sessions, including Day zero and opening sessions, had too many speakers and a series of long speeches. Having a more interactive session with pitch talks and then exchange with the audience could lead to a more dynamic and rich discussion session.
- The gala was not open to everyone this year, contrary to previous editions

Logistics & Operations

- There was very limited participation of high-level governmental officials.
- There was limited participation from Asian & African countries representatives, including on site and remote attendance.
- The late change of conference venue made for a long ride to and from hotels that had been booked early.
- Information about media presence should be made available well in anticipation of the event, in order to facilitate media coverage.
- IGF Village could be closer to the meeting rooms in order to allow even more interactions.
- Visas for the host country - we had many challenges securing visas, despite assistance from the Mexican government. Visas on arrival for IGF attendees would be easier, as in past practices.



- Too many workshops in parallel and too often the rooms were too small, forcing people to skip sessions they wanted to attend.

B) Suggestions for improvements in 2017? (programming, preparatory processes, community intersessional activities and improvements for 12th annual meeting)

Focused discussions

- We invite MAG members as they develop the program to focus on a main topic for 2017. They should not attempt to cover all Internet-related topics but rather select a timely issue.
- A possible focus area could be one or several of the SDG and how ICTs contribute to accelerating their implementation.
- The program should take advantage of Geneva's added value in terms of the presence of a wide range of international organizations and the strong network of Internet governance organisations.

Dates & location

- We have concerns with the high prices for accommodation in this location, as well as with the meeting dates which are late in the year. We strongly encourage the host country to make sure that affordable accommodation is widely available, in particular for civil society and developing country participants and to possibly reconsider the dates of the meeting.

Session formats & agenda shaping

- The agenda shaping should encourage break-out sessions, and allow more creative and interactive sessions, which are by structure more participatory.
- The overall length of the IGF should be reduced, three days would be sufficient.
- In Sched, it would be useful to have a fuller display of information per sessions, and keep the updated information, in particular session speakers which were often missing from the descriptions.
- There should be fewer main sessions and they should be made more attractive. Maybe less competition with workshops and other activities, a more creative format, and promoting better the sessions in the program.