



ICC BASIS – IGF 2016 TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2017

Internet Governance Forum 2016, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

As the global business community reflects on the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) held in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, 6 – 9 December 2016 we are also thinking about the key areas of improvement to consider in planning the 12th IGF meeting to be hosted by Switzerland in 2017. Based on business' participation in past IGFs, the multistakeholder advisory group (MAG), and various other multistakeholder activities, we submit this paper which takes stock of IGF 2016 and provides suggestions for improvements for the years ahead.

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1. Themes/programme

Highlights

- The overarching theme of IGF 2015 was *Enabling Inclusive and Sustainable Growth*. This theme successfully broadened the dialogue on global Internet governance as it was neatly linked to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda. This theme was reflected throughout the IGF programme which included the main session on *Sustainable development, Internet and inclusive growth* as well as the session on *Assessing the role of Internet governance in the Sustainable Development Goals* and many workshops

drawing on sustainable development themes. This provided a timely link to the broader UN agenda and highlighted the direct connection between the Internet, information communication technologies (ICTs) and sustainable development.

- Giving the opportunity to the community to “select” the sub-themes of the IGF through the workshop proposals was a much welcomed idea that aligned well with the bottom-up, open nature of the IGF.

Recommendations

- Further opportunities must be sought to link the IGF to wider UN discussions.
- Ideas to engage communities, organizations, businesses and different sectors that may not be directly involved with Internet governance but either impact it or are impacted by it may be considered while discussing structure and programme for 2017.
- The topic of digital economy and jobs should continue to be discussed at the IGF to monitor and evaluate progresses made.
- There should also be continued discussion on ‘connecting the next billion’ as this is an area where all stakeholders need to come together and come up with ideas.
- IGF should push for more fact-based sessions and promote non-ideological discussion on the different issues.
- As Day 0 seems to be an integral part of the IGF, there needs to be discussion on the goal of Day 0 and the MAG role in event selection, and also transparency on the events, at least to all MAG members, as part of the IGF program discussion. Given the full agenda of the day, it should be considered to refer to Day 0 as Day 1.

2. Main sessions

Highlights

- Content focused sessions help extend appeal to non-IGF regulars and in particular government and business, where attendance has been lower, main sessions oriented to substantive exchanges on topics of broad interest that focus on practical examples of applying policy or principles to address challenges in various circumstances that allow for capacity building across the range of discussants and participants – as was done in the Sustainable development, Internet and Inclusive Growth session.
- Workshop rooms on certain substance issues were overflowing while the main session room was less well attended –perhaps understanding where the strong draw was to content in workshops could help guide the discussion of content appeal in larger sessions for 2017 planning.
- The main session on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) employed an alternate format to encourage discussion. Panelists’ remarks pointed to specific examples and case studies specific to each SDG, which provided insight into ICTs’ role in sustainable development.
- The idea to provide National and Regional IGF Initiatives (NRIs) a platform for sharing their work and establishing a tighter connection with the global event. However the session featured far too many speakers and topics which did not allow time for any meaningful dialogue or participation from the floor so the format may need to be reevaluated.

Recommendations

- Main sessions lend themselves well to content rather than IGF process discussions, since audience participants are more likely to engage on substance of wide appeal.
- Main sessions should be selected by the MAG by respecting the existing criteria. Main sessions should not be a duplication of workshops and should feature a diverse and

balanced panel of experts on the discussed topic from all stakeholder groups.

- Instead of automatically designating a main session to IGF groups or activities such as DCs; BPFs, or even NRIs; organizers should consider first what the content of the session would cover, the breadth of appeal and then allocate the session to the most appropriate format option. Some main sessions that have not been as well attended would be better adapted to the workshop or open forums format. The MAG should be as focused on securing broad content appeal for a wider IGF audience in the main session programme along with diversity of representation and perspective.
- Main session organizers should pay careful attention to the time allocated for panel discussions, so that this does not stifle discussions or interventions from the floor/remotely.
- If a main session aims for a mapping exercise where structured input and/or answers to specific questions are expected from the audience, this should be communicated well in advance, so that participants know to expect this and can prepare their interventions.

3. Workshops

Highlights

- The workshop rooms provided an open and interactive setting for discussion.
- The technical assistants and facilities in the workshop rooms helped make remote speakers' participation fluid.

Recommendations

- The timeframe and pace of workshops should be improved to allow for enough time for discussions and interventions from the floor. Having a limit on the number of speakers or time allocated per speaker might help.
- The workshop selection process should be improved in order to reduce the number of workshops on the same topics and rather encourage workshop proposals on emerging issues and topics new to the IGF.
- When categorizing workshops under a specific theme for the schedule more attention should be paid to the workshop description, not just the title and tags, to avoid any confusion.
- Clarity on expectations and timeline for submitting workshop reports should be communicated in advance of the event.
- Allowance for "flex workshops" for topics of interest (e.g. fake news) that come up after the workshop submission deadline should be considered.
- Lightning sessions were a nice addition this year, but they should be staged further away from large gathering areas where noise can make hearing/participation difficult.

4. Intersessional work

Highlights

- The intersessional work on Policy options for connecting and enabling the next billion – Phase II continues to be a strong example of how the IGF can gather, catalogue, and share valuable tangible outputs without being prescriptive.

Recommendations

- There should be more concerted efforts to archive the outputs of the intersessional work stream and BPF documents in a manner that is accessible and searchable to the lay user who may not be familiar with the IGF.
- IGF resources are not as unlimited as the appetite for groups to come together to work

on new issues. The MAG should discuss and consider a mechanism to anticipate how to deal with the increased interest in DCs, BPFs as well as MAG working groups. These activities all compete for the same limited IGF staff support, and at times stakeholder representatives support, all of which only stretch so thin. Perhaps having a turnover policy where new ones take place of those that have completed their cycle rather than having an open-ended opportunity to add these onto the annual IGF work programme.

5. Practicalities and logistics pre-IGF

Highlights

- The professionalism and support of the staff working at the IGF Secretariat was appreciated both on the ground and in the run-up to IGF 2016.

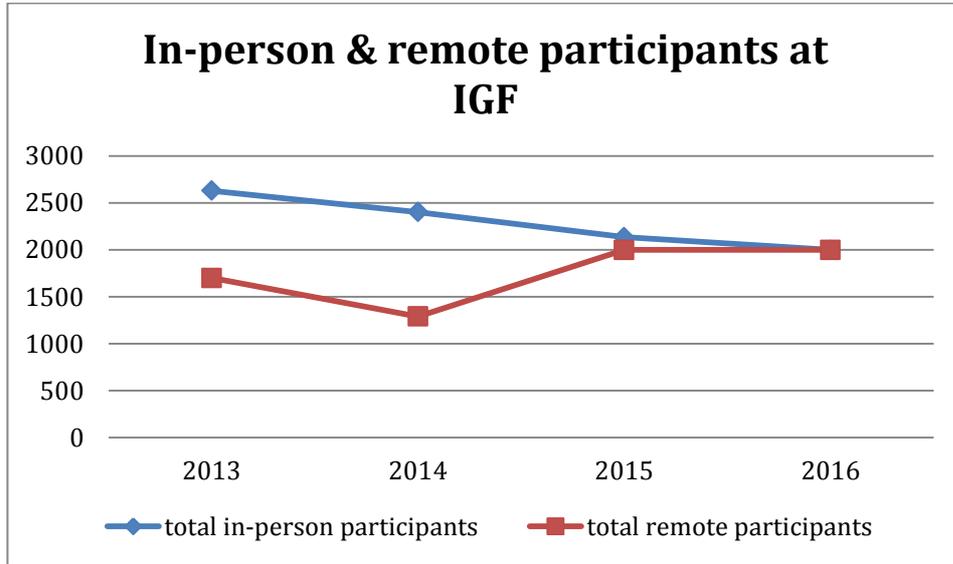
Recommendations

- The posting of practical information needs to be done earlier on the IGF website to allow people to plan ahead. Dates and location for the IGF should be confirmed as early in the year as possible.
- The idea of customized wall art for the booth was very well received and the cost of it was fair. The cost of hiring other booth items, however, was expensive compared to previous years. The budgetary constraints of booth holders should be kept in mind and more affordable options should be offered for more to be able to take advantage of the village space.
- Information about shipping deadline, labeling, specificities of local postal services should be offered in a timely fashion so that booth holders can plan ahead.
- When the IGF schedule is being finalized, attention should be paid to sessions on similar topics overlapping and speakers' and moderators' schedule conflicts. Main session and workshop organizers should work closely with the IGF Secretariat to try to assure that there is no overlap of speakers/ moderators on the overall calendar, so that sessions in which the same speakers are participating do not happen concomitantly. Ideally, speakers/ moderators should be given enough time to attend and get to sessions they committed to, not having to leave one session before it ends to attend the other.
- More efforts should be made to encourage participation from businesses and governments. Regional, sectoral and stakeholder diversity is important.

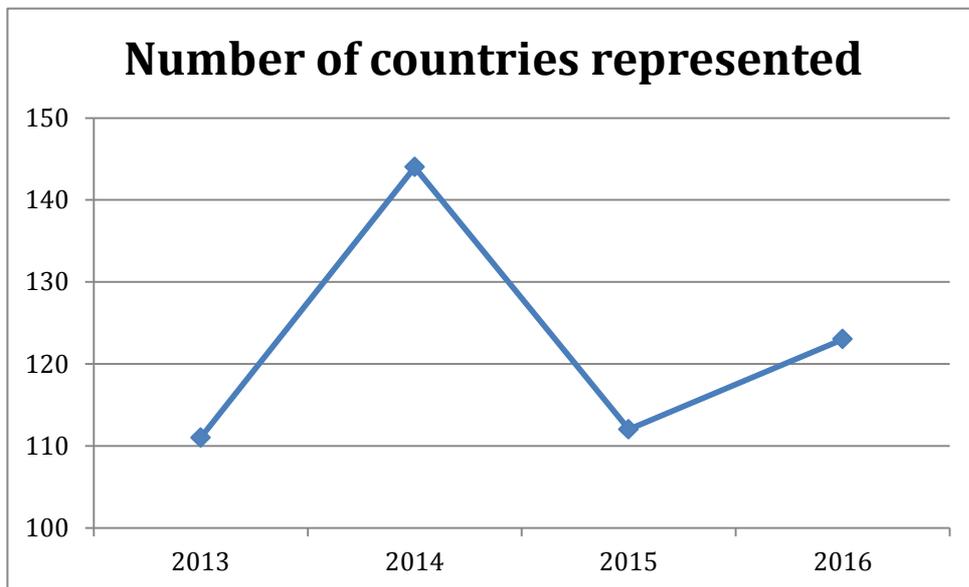
6. Practicalities and logistics on the ground

Highlights

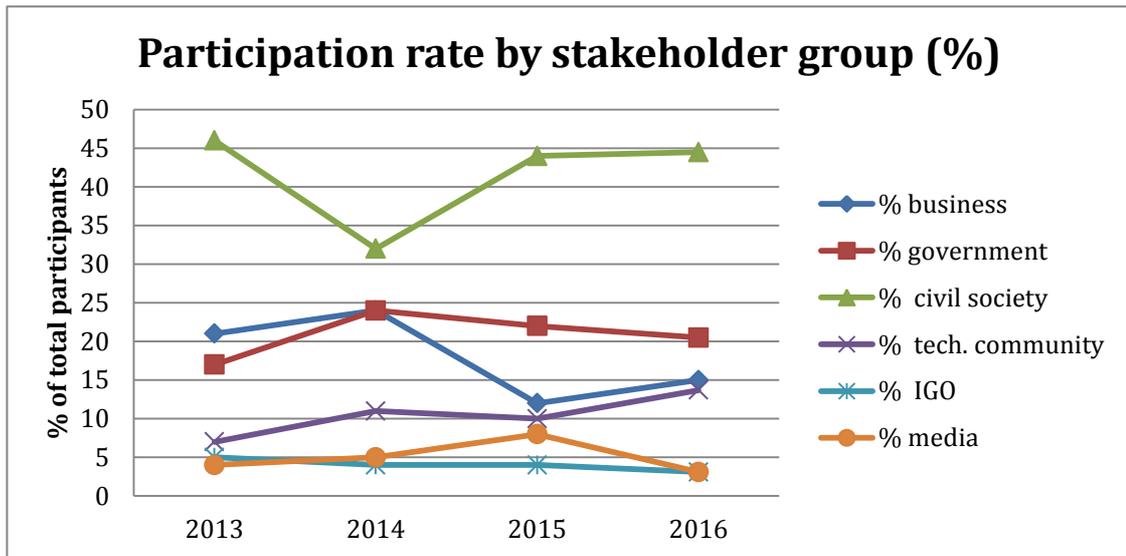
- At approximately 2000 onsite delegates participating, the overall attendance of the event is good, relatively stable compared to 2015, but a considerable drop compared to previous years:



- By-country participation has improved since last year, but is a considerable drop compared to 2014:



- Participation of government representatives is declining, and business participation – although improved since last year – is also at a low.



- Staff in the conference centre was outstanding and extremely helpful and efficient. The professionalism and enthusiasm of the volunteers is to be commended.
- The IGF village was well equipped. The booths looked very nice and the coordinators catered for every need.
- Finding one's way around the IGF 2016 conference centre was not always straightforward; this was well managed with the help of the very accommodating and friendly staff and the well placed signs.
- The facilities and rooms were accessible to all, which is a very important necessity and was very well received.
- The host country made a laudable effort in providing interpretation, including sign language. Providing the option of interpretation for workshops made the sessions more inclusive, however it was not an option all session organizers could afford.
- The strong Internet connection was noted and very much appreciated.
- The facilities and technical assistance in the bilateral, workshop and main session rooms was outstanding. The staff also effectively assisted remote moderators and remote speakers' and participants' interventions.
- The lunches and refreshments provided were timely and offered a good selection of food. The large dining spaces were comfortable and spacious for participants and large delegations. The meal vouchers were affordable and their distribution went smoothly.
- It was very much appreciated to have fresh water, coffee, tea, and snacks close to the meeting rooms all throughout the day.

Recommendations

- The conference venue itself was isolated from the hotels, but this was manageable thanks to the shuttle bus service and affordable public transportation services. For the future IGFs it should be kept in mind that attendees should be able to come and go easily between hotels and the conference venue, thus host cities should be chosen depending on the availability of fast, affordable and easy transportation.
- Creating a "study hall" space at the IGF venue that allows for a quieter room with plugs for participants to work in should be considered, especially when the conference venue is far from hotels.

- Notice should be given in ample time about parts of the IGF activities taking place outdoors (IGF village, Open Forums, etc.) so that participants can anticipate adequate attire.
- The venue for the IGF should be selected to allow for sufficient and large enough workshop rooms and bilateral rooms to accommodate the large number of interested participants. In order to provide participants with an opportunity to still follow sessions that have no more space in the room, organizers should consider adding one or more “overflow rooms” where participants can follow the session webcast on screens and participate quasi-remotely.
- Bilateral rooms should be well suited for closed meetings and in-depth conversations. Some of the bilateral rooms were not closed and created acoustic problems which made discussion hard to hear.
- Good acoustics is also very important for workshop rooms, if participants have difficulty hearing what is said, they quickly disengage and a lot of valuable contribution is lost.
- Last-minute changes of rooms should be avoided not to confuse participants.
- The amount of remote participation at this year’s IGF seemed reduced. It is important that the IGF continues to encourage and support remote participation to improve inclusivity and diversity.