

## **IGF 2017 input**

### **Contribution by DiploFoundation**

*This contribution is based on DiploFoundation's direct experience from the IGF, and in particular, the just-in-time reporting initiatives, and research and consultations with Diplo's community and various stakeholders at the Geneva Internet Platform over the past few weeks.*

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

- The sustainable development theme was timely, and creating the right momentum for discussions on how to achieve the goals. The choice of sessions contributed to valuable discussions on a wide range of current and emerging themes.
- The high number of parallel sessions posed a challenge to follow and engage in all sessions of interest to a large number of participants. The GIP Digital Watch just-in-time reporting (online and in print) throughout the IGF received excellent feedback as a much-needed resource to navigate the multitude of themes, topics and sessions in the programme. The [daily reporting initiative for IGF Guadalajara](#), which included reports from sessions, data analysis, and a daily newsletter round-up, was undertaken in cooperation with the Internet Governance Forum Secretariat, ICANN and the Internet Society.
- Remote participation was well-organised, and allowed hundreds of online participants from every region to participate. Some areas for improvement are identified below, especially in cases where the voices of online participants were not always heard.
- The new formats of sessions worked very well, particularly the flash sessions, which were extremely dynamic and helped to bring the participants' attention to emerging issues and trends in Latin-America and other regions. This format should be repeated in the IGF 2017.
- The main sessions featured a long list of panelists which allowed for minimal interaction with the audience. To ensure more dynamic and interactive discussions in the main sessions, a limited number of panelists – with appropriate regional, gender and linguistic diversity - should be considered.

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

The IGF should capitalise on the uniqueness of the host of the 2017 meeting. Geneva is the seat of many international and technical organisations covering more than 50% of international digital policy. The city hosts most of the UN specialised agencies as well as the International Parliamentary Union. Many countries - in particular small and developing - have engaged in global digital policy via their permanent missions in Geneva since the start of the WSIS process (2003). Their presence in Geneva can increase the involvement of governments in the IGF. An important part of research on emerging issues, such as artificial intelligence and robotics, is conducted at CERN, the EPFL, the Brain Center and the University of Geneva.

The dynamic business scene includes start-ups in secure communication (Geneva) and robotics (Lausanne) as well as well-established financial technology industry. The IGF could benefit from more business presence, especially from sectors undergoing digitization. The Swiss bottom-up and inclusive political life is reflected in its vibrant civil society scene. Geneva hosts many technical and civil society organisations, including one dealing directly with digital issues such as Internet Society or a political entity such as Pirate Party International. The 2017 IGF should benefit from the unique presence of digital policy actors in Geneva. How it can be done?

### **1. Mainstreaming digital policy**

**WHY:** IGF-Geneva should help ‘mainstream’ digital policy issues into traditional policy areas - a challenge for many public institutions, from local to global level. For example, the overarching principle that ‘human rights offline apply online’ is applicable to areas such as health, trade and labour, among others. Most of digital policy ‘mainstreaming’ on international level happens in Geneva where international organisations - dealing with human rights, health, trade, labour, intellectual property - are based.

**HOW:** The preparatory process should facilitate exchange of best practices on ‘digital policy mainstreaming’ on issues such as online communication, dealing with data (see: Data Policy), involvement of digitally-enabled policy actors, using specific expertise on digital policy matters. Lessons learned on digital policy mainstreaming on global level could be used for addressing similar challenges on national and regional levels.

### **2. Tackling data governance**

**WHY:** Data policy is at the heart of digital developments, from new data retention and data localisation rules, to measuring and monitoring sustainable development efforts through data. Human rights and security aspects, standardisation requirements, and the use of data as the basis of business models are some of the related considerations. Many governments, businesses and other organisations face a problem of adequate data policies (e.g. security, privacy, interoperability).

**HOW:** In the build-up to the IGF, data dialogue should help the IGF to capitalise on the enormous expertise and capacity that exists in data-related fields in Geneva and beyond. For example, CERN is one of the major ‘data-handling’ organisations in the world, whose research in virtualisation is at the core of many cloud computing technologies. The World Meteorological Organisation has one of the most comprehensive global data network for collecting, processing, and exchanging data on weather and climate. Their pioneering

experience in the data field and the inputs from many other organisations could be very beneficial for the IGF discussions.

### 3. Achieving cross-fertilisation via multi-disciplinary approach

**WHY:** Digital policy issues are multidisciplinary by nature. Thus, in addition to the multistakeholder approach (representation of various actors at panels), the IGF should encourage a multidisciplinary coverage of main themes. For example, if data policies are discussed, there should be reflections on privacy, standardisation, security, economic and development aspects.

**HOW:** The IGF can capitalise on the cross-fertilisation of the work done in Geneva on Internet-related issues by various organisations, ranging from standardisation and trade to intellectual property, labour and human rights. To ensure a meaningful leverage of the expertise in town, the IGF would benefit from engaging these actors throughout the year in the preparations for the event in December. This could be achieved through regular meetings and briefings during 2017 involving various international organisations. IGF session organisers should be encouraged to focus on multidisciplinary approach. Multidisciplinarity could be considered among the criteria for the selection of the IGF sessions.

### 4. Connecting digital policy initiatives

**WHY:** While there are numerous global and regional policy processes, there is no policy space where views and lessons learned could be exchanged among them. These processes include cybersecurity (UN GGE, the Global Conference on Cyberspace), trade (WTO Digital Trade, eTrade for All), human rights (Freedom Online Coalition, sessions at the Human Rights Council, etc.). Such exchanges at the IGF would benefit both the overall digital policy space as well as each specific policy field, facilitating peer exchange. While some of these initiatives have showcased their work at previous IGF meetings, within the framework on open forums, there has been little interaction among them.

**HOW:** Exchange of information among different processes during the intersessional work for the IGF. Practically speaking, it can be achieved by preparing background mapping documents on other digital processes. Then, when IGF sessions are prepared, these documents could serve in identifying the various initiatives and processes which work on the same topic, and whose input and interactions would be valuable contributions to the sessions. Agreeing on specific topics to be discussed and elaborated in the intersessional work leading up to the IGF would facilitate this exchange, with a view to publishing short and meaningful outcomes before the IGF in December. Session organisers could then integrate such outcomes into the workshops and/or main sessions according to their thematic focus.

### 5. Covering emerging digital policy issues

**WHY:** Dealing with emerging policy issues is part of the IGF mandate and has been a practice of the IGF. In 2017, we can expect the acceleration of technological developments that will impact digital policy (e.g. artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality, cryptocurrencies, Internet of Things, smart cities, big data). Most of these policy issues are in early formative stages which requires a lot of exchanges among stakeholders. In addition, emerging issues relate to the evolution of governance models addressing policy specificities of digital transformations.

**HOW:** The build-up for the IGF (inter-sessional work) should serve as a major brainstorming exercise on emerging issues among various actors. There are already a few events hosted in Geneva ahead of the IGF (Internet of Things Summit and Artificial Intelligence for Good Summit in June). Other events under preparation consider the ethical aspects of AI. Some of these dynamics could lead towards the creation of dynamic coalitions or establishing a living document on, for instance, the policy implications of artificial intelligence.

## 6. Promoting capacity development

**WHY:** Capacity development remains an underlying theme of the IGF. A lot has been achieved, in particular, on individual capacity development (training) by the Internet Society, various summer schools, ICANN and DiploFoundation among others. In addition to individual trainings, much more needs to be done on institutional capacity development, which would ensure sustainability of policy processes.

**HOW:** IGF 2017 should be used to raise awareness of the need for sustainable capacity development by stressing budgetary planning, devotion of and investments by states and regional organisations, and the involvement of the private sector, civil society, and academia in conceptualising and implementing the programmes. In addition, the IGF 2017 process should focus on capacity development for unrepresented actors including developing states and marginalised communities. For example, special focus could be placed on strengthening the capacity of permanent missions of small and developing countries in Geneva to participate in digital policy processes. The IGF should host a best practice forum on capacity development aimed at summarising experience from the IGF process.

## 7. Strengthening inclusiveness via online participation

**WHY:** Online participation has been the IGF landmark since the first event in 2006. Remote participation could be further improved, with the aim of encouraging remote participants to be regarded more as *participants* and less as *observers*. The principle that remote participation is not merely a service but a substantial part of the process needs to be further promoted, and remote participation organised and treated accordingly.

**HOW:** Include online participation as a key strategy in preparatory activities.

- Session organisers and moderators should ensure equal participation of online attendees. Synchronised communication between the session in situ and remote moderators should be properly prepared, including the provision of necessary training for moderators.
- For breakout and innovative type of sessions, it is more difficult to ensure online participation than in traditional plenary and workshop sessions. The organisers of breakout and innovative sessions should make an effort to include online participants or clearly indicate if online participation would not be possible (e.g. use of special signs for 'online participation').
- A screen for projection of online chats should be considered a priority in room setup.

Through the *Geneva Engage* initiative, the GIP and Diplo will contribute to increasing awareness about online participation among Geneva-based actors who will actively participate in the IGF.

## 8. Supporting just-in-time reporting

**WHY:** Just-in-time reporting helps participants and the wider community to follow numerous parallel discussions at the IGF. It could also help the wider community to grasp the IGF's complexity and make IGF better perceived, understood and appreciated (e.g. complexity and incapacity to understand could trigger distance and negative perception).

**HOW:** The IGF can build up on the achieved level of just-in-time reporting which was deployed during the previous two IGFs by Geneva Internet Platform, Internet Society, ICANN, Diplo and the IGF Secretariat. Just-in-time Reporting should also have a capacity development aspect by integrating training in reporting and reporting from IGFs (main and regional ones) in various IGF-related initiatives offered by ICANN, Internet Society, DiploFoundation and other actors in this field.

## 9. Providing more effective communication

**WHY:** Just-in-time reporting is one building block for effective communication. Much more would be needed to have engaging, simple and relevant communication from the IGF. This way, the Forum can benefit from improved recognition, especially of its outcomes. This can improve support from the main stakeholder communities, in particular those that have not been sufficiently active in the IGF process.

**HOW:** The communication about the IGF should combine good classic strategies (simple, clear and engaging language) with modern ones (use of social media, video, etc.). Communication should be an ongoing process. Diplo and the GIP will feature a special section dedicated to the IGF build-up process on the GIP Digital Watch observatory and in the GIP Digital Watch newsletter. Other organisations and initiatives could also provide more dedicated coverage of the IGF process (special page on the website, sections in newsletter, etc.).

The current chairman summary should be further improved in order to be clearly understood by wider communities, including Internet users. Following well-received practices in the IGF community, the summary paper could take the form of 'messages'. The format and language of the final document should be concise and written in accessible language for wider communities.

## 10. Adopting 'connectivity' as a possible theme

**WHY:** 'Connectivity' appears in numerous contexts, ranging from Internet cables to broader connectivity among societies. In addition, 'connectivity' relates to making linkages among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Many of these linkages could be facilitated by their online aspects.

**HOW:** A potential focus for the meeting and for the build-up to the IGF is '**Connecting the goals for digital development**'. This theme reflects the overall centrality of 'connectivity' in the modern era as well as a more specific need to connect 'policy dots' among many policy areas.