Dynamic Coalition Report on the Accountability of Internet Governance Organizations

Drafted By Farzaneh Badii

The overall plan

The Dynamic Coalition on the Accountability of Internet Governance Organizations was convened in 2014 but not operationalized until 2015. In 2015 the debate surrounding the accountability of ICANN reached its peak. Moreover, there was interest from the community to discuss the accountability of other organizations such as the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) and even nonbinding policymaking venues such as WSIS and IGF. Some decisions were made during this discussion on how to approach accountability in the dynamic coalition:

1. As was discussed with the group, it was decided that the dynamic coalition would focus on one organization or a group of organizations at a time, for example the accountability of RIRs be considered separately and then the group move on to the accountability of other organizations.

2. The name of the group changed from Internet governance venues to Internet governance organizations to avoid confusion for participants from non-legal backgrounds.

3. Dynamic coalition is not going to set principles. Its approach differs from other coalitions in that it will observe the Internet organizations and investigate their accountability mechanisms, and to suggest certain mechanisms in order to enhance their accountability.

The focus

We have discussed this before and still request members to comment on which organizations should be the focus of the dynamic coalition. In general we are going to focus on:

Internet Governance Forum

Regional Internet Registries

ccTLDs (not confirmed yet, there might be national bodies that do not agree with our suggestions or studies)

ICANN (A group worked on ICANN accountability mechanisms, it is good to look at the mechanisms they came up with, but the real implications are unknown yet)

IETF

The next task of the DC on Accountability

The next task of the dynamic coalition is to look at the accountability of the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group. In order to do so the coordinators of the dynamic coalition will first carry out an initial study of what accountability mechanisms are already in place, who the MAG members are accountable to, and what mechanisms are missing. The group will then suggest some mechanisms and ways to enhance the already existing mechanisms.

Many other regional and national IGF initiatives have MAG membership as well. These suggestions can be taken up by them too.

To avoid duplication, the DC will look into whether some studies have already been done on the MAG and what suggestions have been provided for the accountability of MAG. We will provide links and reports on these studies.

Some preliminary observations on MAG accountability

- The dynamic coalition should clarify who the MAG members are accountable to. Are they only accountable to their own stakeholder group community? Are they accountable to the Internet community as a whole?
- Mechanisms for holding MAG accountable to its subjects should be in place before the selection of MAG members.
- The nomination of MAG members should take place in a transparent manner so that each community knows who their representative is. The NETmundial principles are appropriate here.
- It is necessary to clarify whether MAG members are representatives of their respective stakeholder groups.
- The selection of MAG members should be through a transparent process and the community should know how the decision is made.

The future of dynamic coalitions and milestones

The dynamic coalition will discuss MAG accountability for a period of 3 to 4 month starting from July 2016. It will draft a document with suggestions and finalized based on consensus. The document will be provided to the MAG members and IGF Secretariat.

The coalition will then decide on which organizations it needs to address and study. This will be discussed during its consultations with the members.