

Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance (DC GIG)

Introduction

The Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance (DC GIG) aims to ensure gender parity and inclusion within the IGF. These recommendations were formulated by examining the Gender Report Cards from the IGFs of 2012, 2013 and 2014, and discussing ways of improvement with others on the DC GIG list. As the Gender Report Cards show, current mechanisms to embed gender in internet governance are yielding mixed results. While the number of women participating in the Internet Governance Forum is growing each year and there is an improvement in gender-related content at the IGF, gender is still not adequately represented on panels or among moderators. Neither does gender surface in all themes or sessions. The following recommendations are made against this backdrop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though there are more 'women in the room' at the IGFs, more effort is needed to ensure that women are present as moderators and panelists and not simply as participants. Not just women, but individuals with varied gender identities must be considered as stakeholders to ensure that this happens. It is important to have diversity within the 'gender' category itself. There is a need to ensure that women and trans persons who are present in internet governance spaces represent different geographies, languages, ethnicities and so forth. Fellowships would help ensure that more under-represented groups make it to the IGF, specially from the countries of the Global South. Financial mechanisms – both at country levels and across multiple stakeholder groups - could be used for this purpose. The next iteration of the Gender Report Card could take account of other sorts of inclusion that need addressing e.g. geography or age. The Gender Report Cards could also develop more fully what the term “gender” encompasses in order to avoid the assumption that it is a synonym for the number of women versus men visible. The percentage of women participants at the IGFs is sometimes overcounted in the Gender Report Cards. For example, there is a tendency to mark ‘half’ of the participants as women even when women were much less than half. This can be addressed by further refining the Report Cards to include percentages: 1-39% for “a minority”, 40-60% for “half” and 41-99% for “a majority”. Gender issues tend to be raised in sessions on human rights and less present in other sessions. For example, gender is often absent in sessions around core internet values, network neutrality, the internet of things, connectivity, spectrum allocation etc. One way to start addressing this is for members of the Dynamic Coalition on Gender to intentionally attend sessions where 'gender' does not obviously feature, with a view to understanding potential links. Another way to do so is to start two-way collaborations with other active Dynamic Coalitions and explore how gender could feature in other issues and vice-versa. And another option is to start recording gender mentions across all themes and sessions in the Gender Report Cards. It is important to include trans and alternative gender expressions when thinking

about internet governance. Internet governance must take into consideration marginalised identities, the spaces they turn to for support and the potential these digital spaces offer for the formation of counter publics that can influence policy. How do we include the Global South, in particular around lesbian, bisexual, queer and specifically trans and intersex experiences, expressions and spaces?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

These recommendations are based on the Gender Report Cards used to monitor and assess the level of gender parity and inclusion at the IGF's workshop sessions from 2012 to 2014. Since 2011, APC's Women's Rights Programme has been compiling Gender Report Cards to monitor and assess the level of gender parity and inclusion at the IGF's workshop sessions. Some of the highlights from the IGF Gender Report Cards of 2012, 2013 and 2014 are below:

Women as moderators: From 2013 to 2014, there has been a drop in the number of moderators who were women. The overall percentage fell to 31% in the 2014 IGF from 40% in 2013. All the sub-themes had more men than women as moderators

Women as panelists: The ratio of women to men panelists stayed the same approximately at 2:3 in the 2013 and 2014 IGF. In 2013, there were 104 moderators who were women as opposed to 146 of their male counterparts. In 2014, 64% of the sessions had more men than women as panelists. The imbalance was greatest in the Emerging Issues subtheme and lowest in the Internet and Human Rights subtheme.

Women as participants: Women participants were the majority in 16% of the themes and equal in number in 67% of the themes in 2012. In the following IGF, 91% of the themes had equal number of male and female participants, but only 4% had women participants in majority. In 2014, there were no workshops without women participants, and 96% of the themes had equal numbers of female and male participants.

Gender as a topic: There was a significant improvement in 2014 with regards to how relevant gender was considered at the different discussions. Out of all the sessions, gender was seen as relevant in 32%, as opposed to the 6% and 1% relevance rates in the 2013 and 2012 IGFs respectively. But with 68% of the sessions where gender is still not considered important, there is a lot more work to be done. While gender was not considered the main theme of most sessions, it was still mentioned by participants and/or panelists and discussed. Some of the main comments and questions raised regarding gender are as follows: Several of the workshop panelists, particularly Nnenna Nwakanna and Subi Chaturvedi, referenced the importance access plays in empowering women in their roles as homemakers, business owners, and community leaders. Subi spoke about the young women she teaches and how many have gone on, empowered by the use of the internet, to become community reporters and activists using the power and outreach that internet access has provided them. One questioner made a statement about the importance of transparency from content platforms about their procedures for taking down content related to sexual harassment and violence against women, and especially the importance of clear instructions and human contact points to ask for takedowns of such material. Panelist Nadine Moawad emphasised the importance of anonymity in regards to combatting violence against women online. A lot of women from countries like Egypt, Jordan, Yemen and Indonesia, share their experiences of being harassed online. It is the ability to be anonymous that allows these women to speak out. Protecting personal details thwarted victim-blaming, which would have been very counter-productive. Janine Moolman raised questions about the lack of rules on online platforms with regards to harassment online, and the lack of transparent and effective mechanisms to address this and prevent similar incidents in the future

CONCLUSION

18. Gender is an integral aspect of internet governance. All genders - women, men, trans - must shape and define internet governance.

19. Not just women, but individuals with varied gender identities must be considered as stakeholders in internet governance. It is important to include trans and alternative gender expressions when thinking about internet governance.

20. Gender Report Cards are an effective accountability mechanism to ensure that enough women and trans persons participate as speakers and moderators in IGF sessions and that gender concerns are raised.

21. It is important to have diversity within the 'gender' category itself. Women and trans persons who are present in internet governance spaces must represent different geographies, languages, ethnicities and so forth.

22. It is crucial to ensure that internet governance is free from harassment based on gender. We propose an anti-sexual harassment policy for the Internet Governance Forum as a concrete next step.