

Internet Governance Main Session  
**Gender inclusion and the future of the internet**  
20 Dec, 16:00 – 18:00, Geneva

Internet governance discussions and processes have always strived for Inclusion, diversity and participation as their core principles. This ranges from key and emerging issues, to stakeholder groups to regional diversity. Intersecting within and between them are issues of gender, both as an analytical lens, as well as basic equality in participation.

Topics related to gender have formed part of the debates at IGF from the beginning. Different stakeholder groups have brought to the process a gendered focus and lens to policy issues on gender and internet governance; sexuality and freedom of expression; addressing online-gender based violence; access to the internet and the gender digital divide; the importance of fostering women's leadership in innovation and STEM fields; economic, social and cultural rights including education; privacy and surveillance and its gendered impact; to name a few.

The Geneva Declaration of 2003 committed all stakeholders to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. That gender remains a challenge was affirmed in the December 2015 WSIS+10 resolution of the General Assembly: "We express concern, however, that there are still significant digital divides, such as between and within countries and between women and men, which need to be addressed through, among other actions, strengthened enabling policy environments and international cooperation to improve affordability, access, education, capacity-building, multilingualism, cultural preservation, investment and appropriate financing. Further, we acknowledge that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divides, and encourage all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to new technologies, especially information and communications technologies for development." (para 6 A /70/L.33)

In the past 5 years, there has also been a growing number of workshop proposals that aim to facilitate more focussed discussions on specific issues related to gender, as well as a stronger integration of gender into key and emerging themes. The IGF Gender Report Card – introduced by APC and the Gender DC in 2012 – have been a sustained effort to monitor inclusion in terms of issues as well as numbers, supported by the IGF Secretariat since 2014.

This clearly demonstrates investment and interest by the IGF community to both deepen and broaden the integration and inclusion of gender in the process.

The SDG Goal 5 that looks at a range of targets related to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls specifically cites ICTs as an important area for policy development. This provides an opportunity as well as a clear impetus for to seriously consider gender in current developments that will impact on the future of the internet.

This main session aims to foreground a discussion on gender and internet governance and policy. It will provide a space for stock-taking and discussion on key issues that have emerged and are emerging, including challenges and recommendations for ways forward; as well as specifically, what does it mean to integrate gender into internet governance processes?

## Agenda

The session will be divided into two segments.

The first will discuss key issues related to gender and internet policy, as clustered based on workshop proposals as well as a consideration for past IGFs.

The second segment will facilitate a discussion on internet governance processes, mechanisms and structures, and aim to surface some recommendations on improvements to better integrate gender.

At both segments, discussants will be invited to provide brief inputs, with a question posed to participants by the discussants.

The floor will be then opened up for discussion. If the format allows, participants will be invited to form buzz groups of 3-5 to discuss particular issues and bring them to the plenary. Space will also be given to online and remote participants to provide their thoughts on the issue.

Anticipated format for each segment:

- Introduction & framing: 5 minutes
- Introduction of and inputs by discussants (6 maximum): 3 minutes each (20 minutes)
- Open discussion: 30 minutes (15 minutes buzz group, 15 minutes report back)
- Synthesis and closing remarks: 20 minutes

A strong moderator would be identified for this format. And discussants will be from a range of stakeholder groups and regions, and gender as well as other forms of diversity will be prioritised.

## Policy Questions [Open for further input]

### Segment 1: Key issues and challenges

- Women's human rights: To what extent have discussions on human rights and the internet integrated gender and the specificity of women's contexts and realities, in their diversity? What are the possibilities and limitations of the "empowerment" framework vs the human rights framework? Are there tensions between specific rights that need addressing when a gender analysis is applied? How do we ensure that violations of women's rights are not reinforced and deepened in the online context?
- Intersectionality: How can looking at gender open up a broader lens of addressing other forms of diversity, disparity and exclusion? Has IGF successfully addressed issues of intersectionality in policy discussions - such as disability and gender, sexuality and religion, indigenous women's issues, LGBT issues, young people and gender and so on?
- Access: Progress and key challenges. What are we missing in the debate? Are there questions, actors and initiatives that are not part of the conversation? How can IGF as a key multistakeholder platform facilitate their inclusion?

- Addressing online gender-based violence: How has IGF been a key space to drive this conversation? What has surfaced in discussions here that can be better linked with policy initiatives on this key and emerging issue in other policy fora such as the HRC and CEDAW?
- Education and the economy: What are inclusive models that the private sector can develop and support? What are the safeguards and preconditions that need to be ensured by government? What role can internet governance play as enabler, facilitator, host of a gender inclusive future on innovation and empowerment?
- New and emerging technologies: What new challenges do emerging and data-driven technologies, like algorithmic decision making, smart cities, digital identity cards, etc. present for women's rights and gender equality in the digital age?

## Segment 2: Gender inclusion and internet governance

- Beyond numbers: To what extent are issues on gender being discussed and addressed at the IG fora, both specifically as well as in an integrated way? Does gender influence the framing and prioritisation of IG issues, or do they remain at the periphery as specialised topics? To what extent are women taking part in IG discussions and decision-making on issues other than gender? Are there certain topics on which women's voices are lacking? How about certain fora or certain sectors? How do we improve monitoring and assessment on this to improve on structures and processes that facilitate internet governance and policy discussions?
- Diversity within stakeholder groups: Are women in leadership positions in different stakeholder groups? Do national women's machinery participate in IG discussions at different levels? Are they seen as a key stakeholder group with interlinkages made between different policy priorities? Do specific stakeholder groups face additional challenges because of capacity and existing disparity and discrimination?
- National and Regional IGFs: Do we have a good sense of gender diversity within NRIs? Can we identify some best practices or lessons learned from national or regional experiences? How can the global IGF support gender diversity and inclusion within NRIs in tandem with its own efforts?
- Capacity building: How are initiatives such as Schools for Internet Governance and the Diplo trainings paying attention to gender, in terms of participation as well as content? How can best practices be shared amongst different initiatives to strengthen this effort?
- Improvements to the IGF: How can existing internet governance structures better include women's participation and leadership? What can be done to support current effort to improve the IGF to better address and integrate gender issues and participation?

### Moderators

Chair [to be provided by host country]

- Bishakha Datta (Gender Dynamic Coalition, Civil Society, India)
- Emilar Gandhi/Ebele Okobi (Facebook, Private Sector, SADC)

### Panelists

1. Peggy Hicks (OHCHR, Intergovernmental)
2. Mr David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression (Intergovernmental)
3. Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Intergovernmental (TBD)
4. Ms Tara Denham, GAC (Government)

5. Doreen Bogdan (ITU, Intergovernmental)
6. Carlos Henrique Zimmermann, Brazil (Government)
7. Lissette Perez Perez, Official of the Directorate of International Relations and Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Communications of Cuba (Government)
8. Chat Garcia Ramilo, Association for Progressive Communications (Civil Society) - Confirmed
9. Chenai Chair, Research ICT Africa, Africa, Academia/Civil Society)
10. Maria Paz, Derechos Digitales, LAC, Civil Society)
11. Avri Doria IRTF Human Rights Protocol Consideration Research Group (Technical Community)
12. Joyce Dogniez, Internet Society (Technical Community)
13. Bob J Alotta (Aestrea Foundation, Civil Society)
14. Desiree Milosevic (Afilias, Private Sector)

### **Remote moderator/Plan for online interaction**

Efforts will be made to coordinate an online discussion that happens in tandem with the open floor discussion. Webex and Twitter will be used for this discussion. Two experienced moderators will be facilitating the discussions to input into the floor, and the moderators will be working with them closely for this segment. A specific time slot will also be provided for inputs from the remote/online conversation.

### **'Feeder' workshops (if applicable) and/or connections with other sessions**

This session is drawn from workshop proposals that is related to gender or women's rights. Depending on which workshops are accepted, the session will invite inputs from relevant workshop organisers to share 1 key question/insight that emerged from their discussion. The workshops are: 37, 49, 57a, 81,97,102,104,152,166,198, 211, 212, 220, 227, 251, 268, 283, 285, 305 (see attached for a list of workshops)

The main session will also draw from and invite participation from the Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance, Accessibility and Disability, Internet Rights and Principles, Freedom of Expression and Media Freedom and Innovative Solutions to Connect the Unconnected; as well as the Best Practice Forum on Gender: Access (Year 2), and the Connecting the Next Billion – Phase III Outcome Document on SDG5 focus

### **Desired results/output**

- Stocktaking and assessment of key issues, gaps, insights and potential ways forward.
- Emerging issues and challenges that should be prioritised in the work of IGF. This can form as inputs to intersessional work such as DCs as well as BPFs, as well as potentially inform workshop submissions.
- Recommendations and ways forward to improve gender inclusion in internet governance processes, structures and mechanisms, specifically, to help inform the work of the WG on IGF improvements.

**MAG Co-facilitators:** Jac sm Kee, Raquel Gatto, Juan Fernandez