

Open Consultation IGF 2010

INTERNET RIGHTS & PRINCIPLES DYNAMIC COALITION Statement

The comments below from the Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition are our contribution to the Open Consultations for IGF 2010. Under each of the four themes below we take stock of IGF 2009 by offering practical suggestions for the format and planning of IGF 2010.

1) **Emerging Key themes:** A wide range of stakeholders in the plenary sessions reaffirmed the importance of upholding human rights in the internet age. However these sentiments tended to be expressed in general rather than specific terms.

a. The challenge for this coming year is to focus on how upholding human rights can be achieved in practice; what roles different stakeholders can or should play in this regard, and how these play out more specifically in different Internet governance issue-areas.

b. With this in mind we would like to see not only workshops but also main sessions that look more closely at what a 'human rights agenda', or 'development agenda for Internet Governance' might actually look like. Whilst openness and diversity continue to be important issues, we think this year is the moment to broach more specific questions or policy dilemmas within these broader themes

c. The coalition is ready and willing to contribute to organizing and facilitating main sessions along these human rights related themes.

2) **General Organization:** Generally speaking coalition members found the meeting to be well organized, with signs of continued progress in all aspects. Coalition members who were participating in, or who organized workshops would like to commend the organizers for their good work in this regard, particularly given the relatively limited budget and resources available to the IGF. Our members note the following aspects that need particular attention this year:

a. Discussions, especially in plenary sessions, tended to become diverted into the issue of whether the IGF should continue, and if so, how. This is a key issue, however we think it is important to avoid it dominating discussion in both main sessions and workshops this year.

b. Continuity between the main session themes and those covered in the workshops could be strengthened. Creating clearer links in the program, e.g. by cross-referencing session/workshop themes and titles, is one way to create more coherence in the program before the meeting. During and after the meeting, we would like to see formal feedback put in place and integrated into the stocktaking; from organizers and/or moderators of both main sessions and workshops.

c. Main sessions based around 'classic' themes of openness, diversity and such like need to be supplemented and reinvigorated by including new themes onto the program. The need for continuity and depth in ongoing themes need to be balanced by new ideas and themes, for this is a fast-moving area.

d. Some panels in main sessions were overloaded with panelists. This always means less time for a wider plenary discussion. We realize that larger panels allow for a greater diversity in some cases. However we would urge moderators of larger sessions to ensure that there is enough time for discussion and that when discussion takes place it is dynamic and inclusive of panelists and other participants. It is important that contributors from the floor as well as remote participants get enough time to have their say and be adequately responded to by others.

e. In light of the above we would also like to see more innovative panel formats encouraged even more; e.g. town-hall meeting formats, brainstorming, other sorts of small-group and interactive forms of discussion. Formal panels have their place but good work is also done in small groups/break-out sessions as well.

f. Rather than having main sessions largely based around broad themes, we think this year is the moment to broach more specific questions or policy dilemmas. These can be proposed in advance with an eye to opening up the discussion about specific solutions before the actual session.

3) **Remote Participation:** On the whole the facilities for remote participation seemed to work well. However, there are some specific issues that we think need particular attention this year to ensure more diverse and robust debate.

a. Workshop organizers were not given enough support in good time nor enough information on how to use the technology provided. When technical hitches occurred there was not enough technical support on hand so many moderators found themselves in the role of do-it-yourself technicians. This causes delays, frustration and a loss of focus. More information in advance from the IGF in liaison with the Vilnius venue organization would be useful, but also during the event. Given the importance of enabling remote participation but also having it run smoothly, the need for more dedicated staff in this respect is indispensable.

b. We would also suggest, in line with suggestions from the Remote Participation Working Group (RPWG), that Workshops include both a moderator on-the-ground and an online moderator in their planning. Someone needs to monitor remote participation, in partnership with the workshop moderator, in order to streamline, filter and facilitate remote participation in the proceedings; e.g. by gathering text-based comments, setting up a queue for spoken interventions, or having remote participants be given the floor en bloc if this is more practicable. We would also urge all moderators be made more aware of how remote participants are often doing this at difficult times of the day - or night; e.g. time-lags require careful attention be paid to not interrupting through better timing of responses or requests.

c. The above points underscore our support for proposals to organize adequate guidelines as well as a brief training session/module/virtual tour for all moderators before the IGF meeting. During the meeting is not the time to experiment.

4) **General Participation:** Increasing diversity in terms of cultural, regional, and linguistic representation remains a core issue for a number of dynamic coalitions. Our comments and suggestions about continuing to improve remote participation technically and organizationally relate to these concerns. There is still a need to

a. set up more coherent - vertical and lateral - links between discussions and themes from national, regional and international IGFs, during the meetings as well as in their respective output. At present the public record is piecemeal, not easily accessible, and inadequately hyperlinked. We recognize that this is something requiring dedicated time and human resources so we urge the IGF to put aside the necessary resources for this task.

b. Find more ways to open up the meetings to lay-participants. By this we mean that preparatory consultations, main sessions, and specialized workshops need to be more accessible to 'everyday internet users', any interested communities or groups from areas where the Internet is either less extensive or with other communication priorities.