

IGF ABCs for Newbies [\[DOCUMENT LINK\]](#)

| [Spanish](#) | [Portuguese](#) |

Internet governance and the IGF

Welcome to the [Internet Governance Forum](#) (IGF)! We were all new here at some point, so we hope to make it easier for you to participate in all of the activities that happen during the IGF meeting and in the time between meetings. This page is a basic guide to help make your first IGF meeting more meaningful.

This is an *evolving* project, and our objective is to **create a welcoming IGF environment and enhancing experience for youth**. And for more information about youth IGF initiatives, check out [this link](#). We also encourage you to check out a document the IGF secretariat produced called [Youth Engagement at the IGF](#), which is also a useful resource and highlights all youth-related activities in Internet governance.

Check out this [informative video](#) produced by the Internet Society (ISOC), which includes an 8-point guide on how to make the most of your IGF experience. We also encourage you to pick you schedule using this [handy Sched tool](#), which also provides details for how to participate remotely should you not be able to make it to Geneva.

Still curious about how to participate? Check out our [getting involved](#) guide.

What is Internet governance?

Who? It includes members from government, the private sector (e.g., technology companies, infrastructure providers, etc.), civil society (e.g., NGOs, human rights defenders, etc.), the technical community (e.g., computer scientists, Internet networking engineers, etc.), and academia (e.g., university professors, research scholars, etc.). For more information on specific groups that are involved, check out the list of actors on the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP): <http://giplatform.org/actors>.

What? Shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making processes, and programs that shape the *development* and *use* of the Internet.

How? In a [multistakeholder](#) way, which means that everyone is able to participate equally, and no stakeholder is more important than another. Therefore, you have as much a say as governments or businesses in this process.

Where? Everywhere! Internet governance concerns and impacts all Internet users.

What is the IGF?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations-supported initiative that brings people and organizations together from various stakeholder groups, as equals, to discuss public policy issues relating to the Internet. It was created in 2005 during the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) as part of the 2005 [Tunis Agenda for the Information Society](#) (paragraph 72), and its mandate was renewed for another 10 years by the U.N. General Assembly in 2015.

This year, IGF 12 is taking place in Geneva, Switzerland, from December 18-21. You can find out more information on the official IGF 2017 [website](#).

Note: Although the IGF officially starts on December 18, many individuals and organizations participate in pre-events, such as those on “Day 0” (December 17).

Why is there a need for the IGF?

While the IGF has no negotiated outcomes or policy-making powers, like some other UN institutions, it is the only multistakeholder platform that enables parties to come together to discuss important Internet challenges and issues. As you’ll see at this meeting, participants discuss, exchange information, and share best practices on various Internet-related topics. The IGF serves to inform and inspire those with policy-making powers in both the private and public sectors, as well as shed light on various issues by incorporating voices that are often excluded from global policy discussions. It also helps people reach a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address the risks and challenges that are constantly arising.

How does it work?

The IGF has one large meeting every year where a number of activities take place, most of which are led by the multistakeholder community itself (e.g. workshops on various topics), as well as local, national, and regional IGFs. In addition, the IGF also has intersessional activities (i.e., those activities that take place throughout the year), like the Best Practice Forums (BPFs) and Dynamic Coalitions (DCs), which are also referred to as “intersessional activities.” You can learn more about these in the section on intersessional activities below.

INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Best Practice Forums

The [Best Practice Forums](#), or BPFs, are community-led projects that work on specific themes throughout the year. Their primary aim is to gather broad stakeholder input to define and gather effective and/or efficient practices to address certain important challenges in Internet governance.

In 2017, there are 3 BPFs, namely:

1. [Gender and Access](#)
2. [Local Content](#)
3. [Cybersecurity](#)

Each of these BPFs will present their findings at the IGF meeting, and you are welcome to attend and read their reports, which are published on the IGF's website.

Dynamic coalitions

[Dynamic Coalitions](#), or DCs, are informal, issue-specific groups comprising of members of various stakeholder groups. Ahead of the DCs Main Session at IGF 2017, participating coalitions have submitted [substantive papers](#) in accordance with the general guidelines provided as a result of the [Dynamic Coalitions Coordination Activities](#).

The list of active DCs are as follows:

- [Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Accountability](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Blockchain Technologies](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Child Online Safety](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Community Connectivity \(DC3\)](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Core Internet Values](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media on the Internet](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Gender and Internet Governance](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Innovative Approaches to Connecting the Unconnected](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Network Neutrality](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Platform Responsibility](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Public Access in Libraries](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Publicness](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on the Internet of Things \(DC-IoT\)](#)
- [Dynamic Coalition on Trade](#)
- [Youth Coalition on Internet Governance](#)

Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s) (CENB)

In 2015, the community contributed to the development of [a set](#) of Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion(s). This first phase focused on the creation of enabling environments, including deploying infrastructure, increasing usability, enabling users, and ensuring affordability.

After the 2016 meeting, the final output resource from the second phase of this intersessional, multistakeholder, and community-driven activity of the IGF was added [here](#). The resource is aimed at investigating challenges and opportunities for addressing and overcoming barriers to meaningful Internet access, promoting meaningful access in diverse contexts and regions, and ensuring that meaningful access also supports the achievement of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

The Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion(s) Phase III work is underway in 2017. The progress overview is available [here](#).

National, subregional, and regional IGF initiatives

The national, subregional, and regional IGF initiatives (NRIs) are IGF events held around the world throughout the year. They gather stakeholders locally or regionally for a one-, two-, or even three-day event, and they produce “messages” summarizing what they discussed and the outcomes of the meeting, which feed into the global IGF. There are at least [26 youth-related IGF initiatives or programs](#) as well. Each year, the NRIs have a main plenary session at the IGF, as well as a number of auxiliary sessions throughout the week. For more information about the NRIs, see [this link](#).

THE MEETING

How do these meetings work?

A variety of workshops and sessions will be held over the next few days and you are welcome to attend any of them. You can check the schedule of the 2017 IGF [here](#). Bear in mind that the schedule is subject to last-minute changes, so double-check the session dates and timings closer to the IGF meeting.

As a first-timer, we understand you might feel overwhelmed or even intimidated. As sessions overlap, make sure that you **identify sessions you find potentially interesting or relevant beforehand** and work out your own agenda [here](#) for the meeting.

Prepare, prepare, prepare! You can research about the panel speakers and topics ahead of time. You can find these details by reading the [selected workshops](#) and [selected open forums](#) lists.

Who can participate during and speak at meetings?

Everyone has an equal opportunity to speak when the panel moderator opens the floor. When the time comes for audience participation during a session, please raise your hand or approach a microphone to speak.

Tip: You might feel others in the room are more experienced than you and you don't know the topic well enough to contribute. *Remember though: no one knows the youth's perspective or situation in your own country better than you!* Keep in mind that this is also a discussion forum – there is NO right or wrong, only perspectives, reason, and evidence.

What is allowed and what is not allowed during these meetings?

Besides respecting other participants, and not verbally attacking anyone personally, there are no rules. Read more about the IGF's guidelines for participation [here](#).

Tips for you:

- **Be proactive!** Never stop reaching out to people/participants/speakers. The IGF doesn't end after 4 days; you can build the relationship beyond the IGF meeting, and also use the IGF as a way to network and meet individuals working on issues you care about. By doing so, you can get involved in post-IGF activities such as the intersessional work or join other Internet governance processes and communities.
- Be specific about your questions when reaching out to people.
- **Don't ask questions for the sake of asking questions.** It's better to contribute (in U.N.-language, it's called making an intervention) when you have a salient point to make or perspective to share that is relevant to what is being discussed during the session.
- **Take notes** during the day and review them at night. It helps to reflect on what happened throughout the day.
- Read up on the just-in-time reporting and daily briefs offered by the [Geneva Internet Platform \(GIP\)](#).

- **Be present during the session.** It will make your contributions more relevant, and make your participation more meaningful. You will learn more too! It's important to ensure that you aren't distracted by things like Facebook, email, or Snapchat.

You are encouraged, though, to share insight and what is going in the sessions on social media, especially Twitter. This year's social media hashtag is **#IGF2017**.

How can I participate in what the IGF does?

Join the [Youth Coalition on Internet Governance](#), or participate in (or even host) a [youth IGF](#) event.

Join a Best Practice Forum or a Dynamic Coalition by visiting one of the links above, or by reviewing the draft output documents on the [IGF review platform](#). You can also comment on the Connecting and Enabling the Next Billion draft outcome document.

Connect with the Internet Society (ISOC) [ambassadors](#) and the Youth@IGF [participants](#).

What I wish I had done at IGF?

Your opinions matter! Tell us what we can do better at: [ycig\[at\]googlegroups.com](mailto:ycig[at]googlegroups.com).

Packing list

Before you leave home, don't forget these essentials:

1. Laptop and/or tablet and charger
 2. Travel adapter
 3. Passport (you'll need it to enter the venue) and visa (if necessary)
 4. Business cards (so you can give them to people you meet and help them connect with you after. They are useful even if you aren't working. You can include simple information such as your university affiliation or a group you are involved in, along with your name, email, and preferred social media information).
 5. Pen(s) and notebook
 6. Formal clothes
 7. An open mind to discuss new ideas
-

IGF glossary

IGF – Internet Governance Forum

BPF – Best Practice Forum

MAG – Multistakeholder Advisory Group (the group of people appointed by the UN Secretary-General to manage and organize the IGF).

DC – Dynamic Coalition

Multistakeholder – also sometimes used as multi-stakeholder, refers to a process where multiple stakeholders (usually from all different fields – technical community, governments, civil society and academia, intergovernmental organizations (such as the UN), and the private sector) are involved.

Remote hub – an area set up away from the meeting with the aim of enabling people in different countries to listen to and participate in the IGF proceedings.

IGO – intergovernmental organization, e.g. the United Nations

UNDESA – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

WSIS – World Summit on the Information Society

You can also find a handy acronym glossary at the DiploFoundation booth with more abbreviations and acronyms, or [here](#)

We'd like to thank the development team

Bianca Ho

Anri van der Spuy

And the contributors

Ginger Paque

Susan Chalmers

Michael Oghia

Israel Rosas

Hailey Yang

David Ng

Élisson Diones

Luã Fergus Oliveira da Cruz

Esteban Aranda

Mili Semlani

Yannis Li

ABOUT THE YCIG

The **Youth Coalition on Internet Governance** (YCIG) is an open group for organizations and individuals, representing all stakeholder groups, willing to collaborate together in order to encourage and enrich youth participation in local, regional, and international Internet governance discussions and processes.

YCIG was established to advocate for the voice of children, young people, and young professionals in Internet governance fora and processes.

YCIG is open to all young people and other relevant stakeholders interested in Internet governance issues. It has been successful in securing a commitment from the IGF to include young panelists at annual meetings, as well as at organizing a series of panels at different levels of engagement, and producing clear statements during IGF closing plenary sessions.

As a registered IGF Dynamic Coalition, YCIG has a meeting slot at each forum to bring together youth stakeholders from across the IGF to identify and discuss relevant issues, and network together to build a stronger youth voice in Internet governance processes.

YCIG is run through its [mailing list](#). You can also find more information on the [YCIG Facebook group](#), the YCIG [website](#), the YCIG [blog](#), and on the [IGF website](#).

Find our more ways to get involved [here](#).

The nature of a youth coalition is that founder members grow older and need to hand on responsibility for the coalition to new groups. Thus, right now there is no active chair or lead group within YCIG.

And that is where we need you.

If you are under 35, interested in Internet governance, and able to get involved in Internet governance debates, join the YCIG mailing list, introduce yourself, and get the discussion going over what this coalition should be doing. You might be new to Internet governance and the IGF, or you might have already taken part in the IGF as a young person but not engaged with the YCIG. The group needs new volunteers, new ideas, and new leaders. In short – it needs you!

Youth-related workshops and sessions @ IGF2017 – Geneva

You can find the descriptions and details of every single workshop in the IGF 2017 programme at the following [link](#). The youth related workshops have been highlighted below:

Title	Description & Reference
6 – Collaborative Community Development Program Learn IG Promoting Youth on the Table	During the workshop we would be highlighting the personal experience, and need of technology in terms of youth awareness and how community collaborative project like Learn IG can help in bridging the gaps. Most of the times People are awarded fellowship but when they go back they limit themselves to the limitation of their reach. This session will explore the possibility of how leaders can use their knowledge, learning and expertise to help others raise awareness especially with youth and community.
85 – Online Safety or Safeguarding Dystopia–Is Keeping Children ‘Safe’ Online Eroding Their Rights?	This session will inform the community about research conducted by Plymouth University/the South West Grid for Learning surveying 10,000 children and young people about their online lives. It will raise the issue that there are a broad range of content and issues that affect young people, with particular concern around the impact of screen time on mental health and wellbeing, and the interpretation of both abuse and harmful content by children. The

session will argue that prohibitive approaches to “online safety” are failing their rights and in some cases eroding them as a result of keeping them “safe”

90 – [Achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in a Digital Future: Where Do Youth Stand?](#)

The session will start by setting the scene and outlining the purpose and objectives of the session. Speakers will then offer flash presentations reflecting on the work undergone by their respective organizations while sharing best practices, lesson learned, recommendations, and emerging trends with the audience. These brief presentations will set the stage for an interactive, moderated discussion between the speakers of the panel and the audience, followed by questions and answers, and a conclusion.

130 – [How does social media shape our minds?](#)

The purpose of the session is not only to reflect the facts about the influence of social media, but it also provides a chance to raise suggestions to modify current policies of social media platforms and solutions to the discussed issues. Moreover, it aims to create a guide and tips on social media usage for youth and general internet users.

212 – [Navigating gender and youth challenges: telling stories about women, technology and creation](#)

This workshop will consist on a narrative-based approach to promote a discussion between generations of female internet users. By telling stories and sharing experiences, the idea is to solve questions such as ‘How women access the Internet?’ or ‘What is the content that women create on the Internet?’ in order to provide meaningful insights on the way we see/perceive the relationship between women and tech.

230 – [Youth participation in Internet governance](#)

The workshop will explore how participation of young people in

shaping the internet can be ensured without reproducing and creating new patterns of discrimination and equally how can the internet support further youth participation, association and expression in society.

IGF Youth Initiatives

– <https://sched.co/Co1m>

This work meeting will focus on the status of the youth IGF initiatives and ways forward. **Note that it begins at 08:30, not 09:00.**

YCIG session

– <http://sched.co/CTse>

This session is the annual meeting of the YCIG.

Additional sessions include:

- **Collaborative Leadership Exchange (CLX) on “Shaping the Digital Future”** – A Day 0 event designed to contribute to building and fostering communities of engagement and action, and create a multiplier effect on the multistakeholder participation theme throughout the IGF week, and beyond. All IGF participants are welcome to attend (<https://sched.co/CR5g>).
- Insafe, the European network of safer Internet centers, is organizing a Day 0 event (Sunday, 17 December) around the user-friendliness of terms and conditions, and invites youth participants.
- **Workshop 134** – Fake news and possible solutions to access information. The discussion will be led by the Young Netherlands IGF organizer: Vanessa Berning (Wednesday, 20 December, 9:00-10:00 | <https://sched.co/CTs9>)
- **Workshop 193** – Youth Engagement in Internet Governance Ecosystem: Current Scenario, Controversies, and Future Action. (Tuesday, 19 December, 10:10-11:40 | <https://sched.co/CTrZ>)