

Input from the Swiss Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM) to the stocktaking consultation conducted by the IGF Secretariat

OFCOM Switzerland thanks for the opportunity to take part in this stocktaking exercise and would like to share the following suggestions for further IGFs:

Political profile and strategic direction:

- **Continue raising the political relevance and profile of the IGF:** We consider that the IGF would benefit from maintaining a broad approach to “Internet Governance”, i.e. allowing and fostering discussions on issues that are of interest for citizens and businesses in their daily lives and that are thus relevant for political debates. The focus should lie on issues related to the sometimes disruptive digital transformation of our societies and economies through the use and development of the Internet – in line with the broad approach on IG as established in the UN working definition of the Tunis Agenda – instead of focusing too much on a narrow definition of “Internet governance” understood as being equivalent to critical Internet resources.
- **Use synergies between the High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the IGF:** Inclusive bottom-up dialogue in multistakeholder platforms such as the IGF, but also EuroDIG and others, have laid important ground for the work of the UNSG’s High-Level Panel (HLP). We believe that the IGF continues to have a key role in discussing digital governance and fostering digital cooperation. At the same time, digital cooperation needs to be improved in order to make sure that all people in the world benefit from it, that they get a “digital dividend”. We hope that the HLP will make proposals on how to strengthen the IGF and to strengthen the link between the dialogue at the IGF and result-oriented cooperation activities as well as policy-making. We would strongly welcome that the work and results of the HLP would be discussed and further processed within the IGF. As a strategic long-term goal, a multi-stakeholder framework for better digital cooperation may evolve on the basis of the IGF as a platform of multistakeholder dialogue – not changing the IGFs nature, but adding more action- and cooperation- oriented deliverables around it.
- The **continued presence of the UN Secretary General**, if possible in person as during the 2018 Paris IGF, would be highly valuable, strengthening with his attendance the profile and visibility of the IGF and its outcomes.
- The **re-appointment of a Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General** could help in raising the profile of the IGF. This person should be a senior person that the global IG community knows and trusts and that can facilitate dialogue and cooperation.
- **Continue improving the tangibility and usability of “outcomes” of the IGF meeting** by building on the experience of the “Geneva Messages” introduced in the 2017 IGF and the “IGF Messages” in the 2018 Paris IGF. The “messages” should be put to effective use by all participants (e.g. by feeding them into any other relevant fora and

processes), be included in all reporting activities performed by the MAG and the IGF-Secretariat, and be revisited in forthcoming IGF and NRI meetings.

- Further work is needed for establishing clear **linkages to the Agenda 2030 / SDG process**, also using the Geneva international network in this field.
- Efforts to benefit from the **potential of Geneva as an international hub for global governance and dialogue** on a broad range of issues relevant to Internet Governance and digitization should be continued, in order to continue taking advantage of the large international community present in Geneva (including international organizations and international NGOs, scientific and academic networks, etc.). They should be involved as much as possible in the preparatory work.

Format / Organization

- **Continue with the process of an open call for issues**, as it was first done in preparation for the IGF 2018 in Paris, in order to identify topics of high interest to stakeholder across the world.
- **Enhance in-depth debates on selected topics.** The Introduction of thematic tracks in the IGF 2018 schedule was welcomed and should be kept and further developed.
- The **interactive format of the opening session** first introduced in the 2017 IGF should be maintained and further improved.
- **Further promote dynamic and interactive discussion formats in all sessions**, possibly with a more limited number of panelists – while respecting regional, gender and stakeholder diversity and seeking to include young people. The shortening of the duration of main sessions during the IGF 2018 in Paris was highly welcomed and should be kept. The mix of stakeholders within one session could be further enhanced.
- The **close co-operation between former, current and future host countries** in the organization of the IGF should be maintained and further deepened.

Participation / Outreach

- **Enhance the communication about the IGF's specific « added value »** (compared to other events on digitalization): Bottom-up, open, inclusive.
- **Further raise the level of political participation** in the IGF, especially from the global south. This could be achieved, inter alia, through increasing the involvement of national diplomatic missions already present in Geneva, informing them and involving them as early as possible in the preparatory process.

- More efforts by all stakeholder groups should be made in order to increase the outreach to **sectors undergoing deep processes of digitization**, which nonetheless are not yet sufficiently present in the IGF environment.
- We consider that, in particular, a **higher presence of the business community** would be welcome, and therefore, specific outreach actions to involve them in the preparatory work should be envisaged.
- Enhance the **dissemination of work by initiatives such as CNB, BPFs, DCs and NRIs**.
- The **information sources** at the disposal of the participants during the IGF (such as instant “session reporting”, “daily reports”, etc.) should be further developed and improved, e.g. by strengthening and entering into partnerships with, inter alia, GIP, GIPO, IG Schools, etc.

Biel/Bienne, 15 January 2019