



Response to the Questionnaire on the IGF Review Process.

1. To what extent has the IGF addressed the mandate set out for it in the Tunis Agenda?

IGF Chair Nitin Desai summarized the progress of the IGF, during the Closing Ceremony of the IGF Hyderabad, by drawing an analogy from the Indian Wedding process: It takes time for the IGF participants to effectively begin collaborating with each other. In its third year of the process, the effectiveness is beginning to be visible. By and large the IGF proceedings reflected the spirit of the Tunis Agenda, though it can't be denied that there is ample room for further improvements to the process.

2. To what extent has the IGF embodied the WSIS principles?

To some extent..

We would rather comment on the inadequacy of the WSIS principles that contained an imbalance in the fundamental principle of multi-stakeholderism. The WSIS had allowed a convenient advantage to one of the stakeholders with a hint of conceding Public Policy as the sovereign rights to States, rather than as a shared process. Internet might rather be defined as a trans-sovereign plane as it indeed is. This may not be interpreted as a disruptive definition, but instead as a way of describing the true and fundamental nature of this permeative medium for connecting people around the world.

3.What has the impact of the IGF been in direct or indirect terms? Has it impacted you or your stakeholder group/institution/government? Has it acted as a catalyst for change?

None in terms of easily measurable, direct impact. The proceedings are observed with a sense of curiosity by those who have the powers to cause changes to the fabric of the Internet.. The IGF is an elite or esoteric arena and from within this circle, it appears to the participants that the spirited participation within represented or reflected the spirit of the outside world. Yards away from the IGF venue, neither the significance of Internet Governance, nor the IGF process to define Internet Governance was barely understood. More importantly, positive or negative changes in the Internet Policy arena happened and continues to happen almost in complete isolation of the deliberations at the IGF.

But, the impact of the IGF could be seen on a deeper level (rather than superficially).The participants have gained from the flow of knowledge at the IGF which in turn gets shared and influences the respective stakeholder groups and others.

Also, the Internet Governance Forum, irrespective of its direct impact on the policy making process of Governments, is changing the way Government's perceive Civil Society participation in the policy making process. During the preparatory phase as also during the last three IGFs, Governments had an opportunity to experience the mutli-stakholder participatory process and they are becoming comfortable with the idea and process of consultation. This 'roundtable' equality is largely an IGF achievement. (The IGF process promotes faith in the functionality of the participatory governance process and could inspire National Governments to emulate the participatory process)

Again, the direct impact has been minimal. IGF does not have powers to decide, not have the powers to recommend. This is a "design" aspect of the IGF which may be largely preserved. At the same time it is observed that due to this status of the IGF, the policy making process of National Governments and Regional Governments have not sufficiently paid attention to the deliberations at the IGF.

The IGF brings together participants with different expertise from various stakeholder

groups from various geographic regions around the world, who deliberate on Internet Governance issues but these valuable and meaningful deliberations have not been systematically channeled to contribute to the actual policy making process. IGF could devise a system by which Session/Topic Reports could be generated to summarize the positions of stakeholder groups on issues deliberated during the IGF.

Though this may not constitute to be a "recommendation" or a "formal statement" from the IGF, such Session/Topic Reports could be released under different topic headings and could become Reference Documents to contribute to the National / Regional policy making process.

Governments could adopt it as a convention to draw resources from the IGF Reference Papers on the relevant issues/topics while framing proposals for a new policy / change of an existing policy related to Internet.

The proposed Reference documents could be on broad topics such as Security or Freedom of Expression to outline the overall IGF position with sub-sections on stakeholder positions, and also on sub-topics such as a topic on Cloud Computing or Social Networking. Such Documents would enable the National / Regional Policy making process to comprehensively and readily understand the "mood" of the IGF on a topic on which a certain legislation/ directive/ guideline is being considered.

At present decisions are taken by governments and by business corporations largely in isolation of the IGF deliberations, without taking into consideration the concerns of the IGF, nor consider the solutions proposed by the IGF.

The Internet Governance Caucus proposes that the IGF Secretariat considers this as an action item and introduce a mechanism to thoroughly record as audio-visuals collated with text transcripts and presentations to be archives as source records of each panel discussion, workshop, roundtable, open forum, or in any other format, in every room. In addition the Secretariat may also assign neutral staff with synthesizing skills to prepare consensus/ stakeholder position reports on issues/sessions.

The IGF Secretariat may also proactively reach out to Governments to urge them to adopt

it as a convention to call for IGF Position papers and related documents to be used as inputs in their policy making process.

4. *How effective are IGF processes in addressing the tasks set out for it, including the functioning of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), Secretariat and open consultations?*

The IGF processes at the IGF paid attention to the participant level processes and did not address the tasks related to the functioning of the MAG or Secretariat. These were not the central agenda items. Perhaps in the forthcoming IGFs sessions such as "Review of the MAG" and "Review of the Secretariat" could be built in as central agenda items along the lines of the exemplary, transparent proceedings at ICANN meetings.

5. *Is it desirable to continue the IGF past its initial five-year mandate, and why/why not?*

Yes, during the first five years IGF has been a very successful experiment in stakeholder interaction, and has been valuable in terms of its indirect contributions to the global policy making process. The forthcoming IGFs are likely to have greater and more direct impact on the policy making process. The forthcoming phase of IGF could perhaps emerge or at least pave the way for an age of participative global policy making

6. *If the continuation of the Forum is recommended, what improvements would you suggest in terms of its working methods, functioning and processes?*

The IGF needs to be seen as a round-the-year process rather than as a process that happens during a 3 day period in a year. If this view is taken, it becomes more important to pay attention to the preparatory and review process, to inputs as well as outputs and

pay attention to how the outputs are fed into the policy making processes around the world.

What is more important is to tune the IGF deliberations to address the current developments. This is not happening at the moment and IGF seems to be happening on a theoretical plane in isolation of the actual changes happening outside in bits and pieces around the world, which in turn are policy , legislative and business method changes happening oblivious to the deliberations and the mood of the IGF.

IGF needs to be funded substantially to further enhance the quality of programs with greater diversity of participation. There are two aspects to be considered in this regard: a) WSIS/ present IGF participants representing various stakeholder groups are highly qualified individuals with diverse accomplishments but it is also true that IGF participation needs to be further expanded to invite and include more Civil Society participants known for their commitment and accomplishments outside the IGF arena on various Civil Society causes ; business leaders who are otherwise committed to social and other governance issues are not seen at the IGF, and not all governments are represented at the IGF and b) The present participants of the IGF do not represent all participant segments and geographic regions. This needs to be improved and it requires various efforts, but availability of various categories of Travel Grants for different classes of participants may help improve participation by those not attending the IGF for want of funds. IGF already has made some funds available for representation from Less Developed Countries, but such funding achieves a limited objective.

The true cost of the IGF (including all visible and invisible costs to the IGF Secretariat, participating Governments, organizations and individual participants) would be several times that of the actual outflow from the IGF Secretariat in organizing the IGF, as reflected in the IGF book of accounts. **If an economist estimates the total visible and invisible costs of the IGF, it would be an enormous sum, which is already spent. For want of a marginal allocation for travel support to panel speaker and participants, which would amount to a small proportion of the true cost of the IGF, the quality of panels and the diversity of participation are compromised.**

With this rationale, ISOC INDIA CHENNAI recommends that the IGF should consider liberal budgetary allocations supported by unconditional grants from business, governments, well funded non-governmental and international organizations and the United Nations. The fund may extend uncompromising, comfortable travel grants/ honorarium to 200 lead participants (panel speakers, program organizers, who are largely invitees who are required to be well-received for participation), full and partial fellowships to a large number of participants with special attention to participants from unrepresented categories (unrepresented geographic regions and/or unrepresented participant segments and even to those from affluent, represented regions if there is an individual need).

Such a fund would enable the IGF to bring in really diverse opinions to the IGF from experts who would add further value to the IGF. It is especially recommended that such a fund may be built up from contributions that are unconditional (as opposed to a grant from a business trust with stated or implied conditions about the positions to be taken; 'unconditional' does not imply that funds may have to be disbursed without even the basic conditions that the recipient should attend the IGF and attend the sessions etc. In this context "unconditional" means something larger. It is to hint at a system of Travel Grants whereby IGF will pool funds from Business Corporations, Governments, International Organizations, well funded NGOs and UN with no implied conditions on the positions to be taken by participants) and may be awarded to panelists and participants unconditionally. It is recommended that the IGF create a fund large enough to have significant impact in further enhancing quality and diversity of participation.

7. Do you have any other comments?

If stakeholders are very broadly classified as Government, Business and Civil Society, Governments have the power to participate, Business has the resources to participate and influence, while the Civil Society has limitations to be bridged.

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