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United Nations General Assembly, 21 October 2010, New York

The Importance of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the Internet Society (ISOC) and our memberships believe that the IGF is one of the most effective and successful outcomes of the WSIS. The IGF inspires people to work effectively in support of people-centered development – a key goal of the WSIS. It feeds work in communities, in countries, in all regions and at the global level.

We believe the current IGF model is uniquely successful

- A body that **does not negotiate decisions**: without this fundamental characteristic, it would not be possible to have a free exchange and learn from different stakeholders' positions.
- Supported by **multistakeholder voluntary funding**: voluntary funding acts as a feedback mechanism; multistakeholder funding demonstrates that the IGF is of value.
- Led by an **independent secretariat based in Geneva** where the Internet policy networks and the history of the WSIS lie: it is important for stakeholders to feel they can trust the secretariat to be unbiased and not unduly influenced by any one interest.

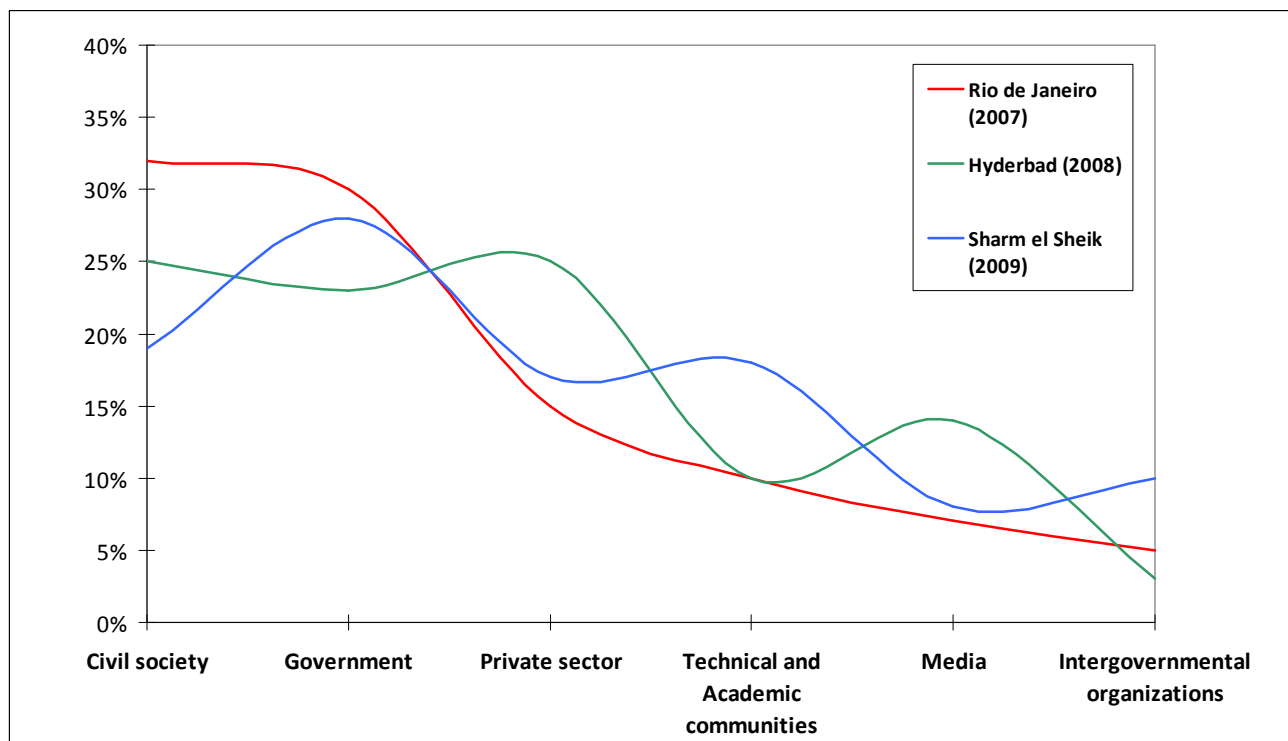
The IGF Should Continue in its Current Open and Multi-Stakeholder Framework

- The ICC and ISOC have had the privilege to contribute to all phases of the WSIS and the IGF. We believe diverse and strong participation to these processes are a condition to their success, and ISOC has also supported participation of diverse groups of stakeholders, including those from developing countries, through our "ISOC IGF ambassadorships".
- The multi-stakeholder framework of the IGF was established as the result of extensive discussion and negotiation during the WSIS summits. It has proven to be one of the most effective and successful outcomes of the WSIS.
- ICC and ISOC support the continuation of the IGF in its current multi-stakeholder framework, which has proven to be a valuable forum for addressing global policy issues raised by the rapid growth and evolution of the Internet. We support continued enhancements to the IGF process within the existing flexible framework so the Internet can continue to grow and evolve for the benefit of users around the world.

The IGF is having a Positive Impact on Internet Governance Globally

- The IGF provides a unique opportunity for governments, business, civil society and the Internet community to share experiences and best practices that can inform decision-making in their home communities. IGF participants have embraced the approach of “think globally, act locally” to address issues of development and human, economic and social growth which are essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- The IGF has led to greater understanding and consensus on challenging Internet governance policy issues. Without the IGF, there is no space for discussion of the full range of current and emerging Internet issues among all relevant stakeholders.
- The IGF has succeeded in expanding the participation of government representatives and other stakeholders from all regions. This is best exemplified by the growth of national and regional IGFs, which are continuing the dialogue from the global IGF and bringing many more people into the process.
- The IGF 2010 in Vilnius, Lithuania built upon the remote participation facilities of previous IGFs, connecting over 30 remote participation hubs from Argentina to Burundi helping more stakeholders from around the world participate in the discussions.
<http://igf.wgig.org/cms/remote-participation/remote-hubs-list>

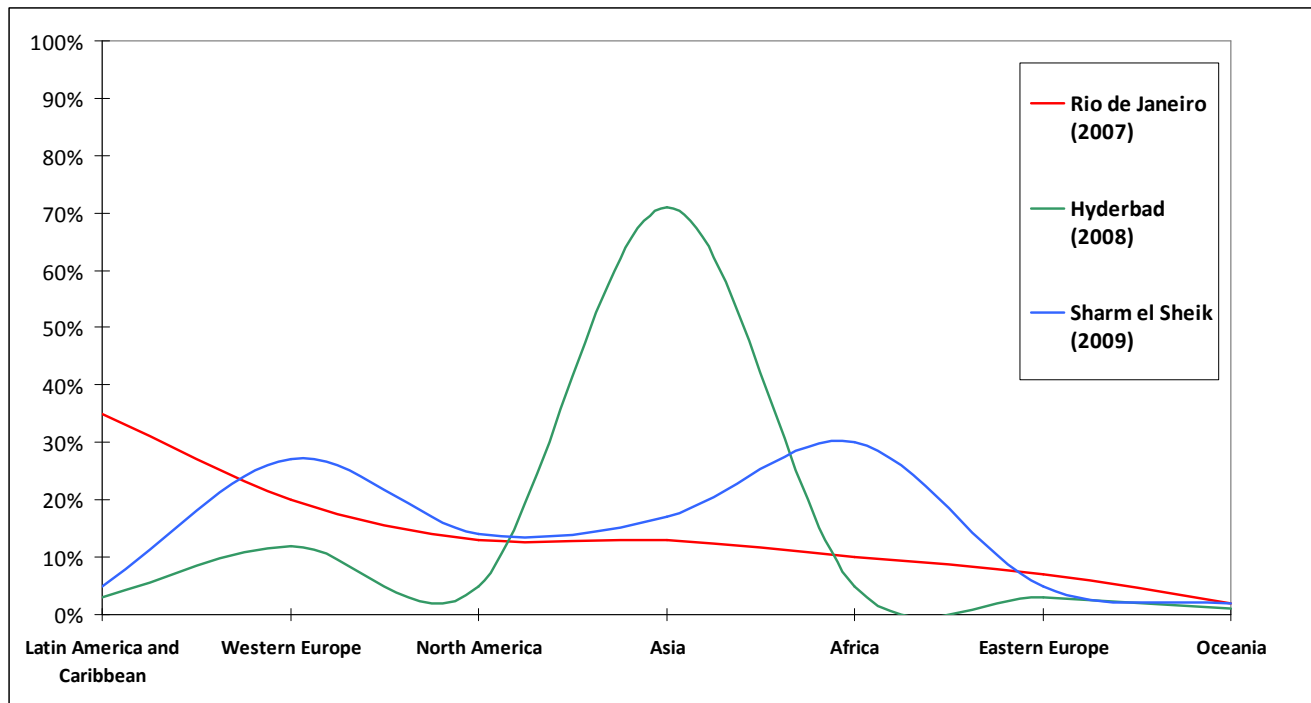
IGF Participation by stakeholders groups: towards a balanced diversity



The overall attendance during IGF meetings 2007-2009 has been on **average 1300 participants**. The number of countries that have participated in IGF meetings increased during the years 2007-2009.

Since 2007 there has been a **positive trend** concerning participation of stakeholders from **developing and less developed regions**, as well as a **growing balance between different categories of stakeholders** (civil Society, business, governments, parliamentary, Internet technical and academic communities, media and intergovernmental organizations).

IGF Participation by region: geographical balance over the years



We Support Continued IGF Enhancements¹ within the Current Framework

- The foundation of the IGF is true multi-stakeholder involvement in the Forum's organization, leadership and discussions. Within this multi-stakeholder framework, the IGF has shown that it is flexible enough to embrace ongoing enhancements.

¹ See the Tunis Agenda for provisions regarding review process of the IGF and enhanced cooperation:
<http://www.itu.int/ws/s/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html>

- The IGF has made considerable progress over the years to ensure participation of a broader range of representatives from all stakeholder groups, particularly representatives from developing countries, and to financially support participation from developing countries. We believe continued progress can be made. We commit to work with other stakeholders to expand participation.
- The 2010 IGF, “Developing the Future Together”, placed increase emphasis on the potential positive impacts of Internet governance for development. We support continued emphasis on development issues in future IGFs.

Taking stock and the way forward

We would like to make the following suggestions to improve the Forum in the future:

- **Giving more weight to the national and regional IGFs:** encouraging the continuing expansion of local events, archiving their preparations and outcomes in a way to use them and take them into account when preparing the global IGF. As well we recommend enhancing the bottom-up methodology of the IGF structure, organizing chronologically the discussion of issues at the national, then regional and global level to keep track of the history and the geographical parameters of issues discussed.
- **Focusing the discussions:** although the open, non-binding discussion format is adequate, too many issues are being discussed. Now that the Forum has reached a more mature level, sessions should not be taken up with talking about the basics of an issue but, instead, should be used to progress understanding of unresolved and more complicated issues.
- **Encouraging participation:** the Forum offers an unprecedented open platform for multi-stakeholder interaction. To allow individuals from all regions to effectively participate to the Forum, it is necessary to expand sponsorships and funding opportunities for developing countries (e.g. ISOC IGF Ambassadorship program).

We encourage all delegations to take these points into consideration during the United Nations’ deliberations about the future of the Internet Governance Forum. We believe the IGF should be supported by all governments interested in good governance and in bringing the benefits of the Internet to all the people of the world.

About the Internet Society (ISOC)

ISOC is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet related standards, education, and policy. With offices in Washington D.C., USA, and Geneva, Switzerland, it is dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution and use of the Internet for the benefit of people throughout the world.

ISOC provides leadership in addressing issues that confront the future of the Internet, and is the organizational home for the groups responsible for Internet infrastructure standards, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the Internet Architecture Board (IAB).

ISOC acts as a global clearinghouse for technically sound Internet information and capacity building and as a facilitator and coordinator of Internet-related initiatives around the world. For over 15 years ISOC has run international network training programs for developing countries and

these have played a vital role in setting up the Internet connections and networks in virtually every country connecting to the Internet during this time.

ISOC's participation to enhance cooperation: <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/conferences/wsis/>

ISOC's participation to the IGF: <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/conferences/wsis/IGF.shtml>

About the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its thousands of member companies in over 120 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

A world network of national committees keeps the ICC International Secretariat in Paris informed about national and regional business priorities. More than 2000 experts drawn from ICC's member companies feed their knowledge and experience into crafting the ICC stance on specific business issues.

The United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and many other intergovernmental bodies, both international and regional, are kept in touch with the views of international business through ICC.

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