



International Chamber of Commerce

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Workshop 258: "Improving the IGF: How Can We Get the Most out of IGF Improvements Processes"

Organizers:

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Moderators:

Jeanette Hofmann (RIIS) and Jeff Brueggeman (AT&T)

Remote moderator:

Cathy Handley (ARIN)

Rapporteur:

Marilyn Cade

List of speakers:

Patrik Fältström (CISCO)
Anriette Esterhuysen (APC)
Paraminder Singh (IT for Change)
Nandini Kotthapally (India) (tbc)
William Tevie (Ghana)
Ana Neves (Portugal)
Raul Echeberria (NRO/ISOC chair)

Speakers from the floor:

Wolfgang Kleinwachter (University of Aarhus)
Theresa Swinehart (Verizon)
Christoph Steck (Telefonica) Jimson Olufuye (WITSA/ITAN)
Nermine El-Saadany (Egypt) Professor Luis Magalhaes (Portugal)
Constance Bommelaer (ISOC)
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Baher Esmat (ICANN)
Chengetai Masango (IGF Secretariat)

Report :

This Workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders with representatives from government, civil society, business, academic and technical community, including representatives from the IGF MAG and CSTD Working Group, to discuss a broad range of ideas and provide an opportunity to exchange perspectives on improvements, both within the IGF process itself and the

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CSTD Working Group discussions that have occurred in the past months. After setting the stage with an overview of the improvements process, the workshop discussion focused on three general issues:

First, the panel discussed the issue of diversity of participation in the IGF, including developing country participation, gender balance and the diversity of viewpoints. Participants noted that the IGF process has evolved to include regional and national IGF events and to expand remote participation. There were suggestions to strengthen the links to regional and national IGF events by feeding the input of these events directly into the MAG and preparatory process. However, a few participants cautioned against romanticizing the national and regional initiatives. It was noted that boundaries about what can be done may be different between local, national and the global IGF.

The discussion also highlighted the need to continue expanding youth participation and facilitating even more robust remote participation. The discussion included the importance of addressing funding to support remote participation coordination. There was some disagreement about whether promoting “mesh” or Web 2.0 way of thinking about the IGF is helpful.

Second, the panel discussed the IGF’s substantive agenda and program development process, including the MAG structure and public consultations. Several panellists noted that the IGF agenda has continued to evolve. One panellist stated that there should be an increased focus on social issues as opposed to infrastructure issues, while other panellists supported continuation of a mixture of both issues. There was consensus that the IGF program should continue to evolve with robust input from the community. The panel highlighted the importance of the MAG as an important reflection of the multistakeholder model and mechanism for engendering trust in the program development process. There was agreement that the MAG selection process should be clear and transparent with a trusted mechanism to rotate MAG members, but a number of panellists noted the challenges in agreeing on solutions for this. There was strong support for the public consultation process in taking input on the development of the IGF overall, as well as on the program development for the annual IGF, with some suggestions to conduct outreach to subject matter experts as a way to help shape the program.

Third, the panel discussed the related issues of how to capture what comes out of the IGF and to amplify the impact of the IGF. There was an interesting discussion about the IGF’s unique role as a policy-shaping process or “issue shaping space” as put by one participant, as distinct from a policy development or implementation process. Some panellists expressed the view that the IGF already is having a huge impact on Internet governance policy, while other panellists questioned whether there should be a new global Internet policy-setting mechanism. Some people expressed the view that the IGF has contributed to the development of an enormous amount of useful information and resources that unfortunately remain under used. Others expressed concern with the challenge of ensuring that all workshop organisers produce a report. It was noted that additional resources are needed at the Secretariat level to support changes and improvements in these, and other ways. There were suggestions to make better use of existing materials, including an improved website, a standard template for workshop reporting and preparation of main point highlights from the IGF meeting. Panellists also supported a more concerted effort to document best practices and case studies, such as M-Pesa.

There was not a detailed discussion about the need for stable and predictable funding, but it was noted that more resources are needed.

It was noted that the IGF has very high expectations and high standards for diversity, compared to other international and IGO organizations and that improving diversity is more complex than seen at first glance.