

Workshop report

Building Human and Institutional Capacity for Meaningful Participation in Internet Governance Issues

1. Title: Building Human and Institutional Capacity for Meaningful Participation in Internet Governance Issues

2. Organizers and Panellists

Bill Graham, Director- International Telecommunications Policy, Industry Canada
Guy Sebban, Secretary General, International Chamber of Commerce

David Appasamy, Chief Communications Officer, Sify Limited, India
Raul Echeberria, Executive Director, Latin American and Caribbean Internet Addresses Registry, Uruguay
Arthur Reilly, Senior Director, Strategic Technology Policy, Cisco Systems, United States
Richard Simpson, Director General, Electronic Commerce, Industry Canada
David Souter, Managing Director, ICT Development Associates, United Kingdom
Valerie D'Costa, International Director, Info-Communication Development Authority, Singapore

3. Discussion

The moderator led off the discussion by suggesting that panelists discuss how to participate in the development of the Information Society and how to enhance capabilities of those participating by taking stock and sharing experiences.

Panelists discussed their experiences in developing policies with multistakeholder input. An example from Singapore was provided- by moving from a top down approach in the development of a domestic policy, the government was more consultative and brought in other perspectives. Canada also discussed various models of public private partnerships. Policy toolboxes involve a division of roles and responsibilities. While the establishing the legal and policy frameworks necessary to promote ecommerce is a governmental responsibility, private sector has a distinct role in helping to prevent negative experiences such as spam and other cybercrime by taking proper security measures on the networks they own. Panelists also addressed the need for national ICT strategies, believing that national capacity is necessary before international capacity can be established. Panelists and discussants agreed that shared experiences with a variety of stakeholders is valuable because it gives all stakeholders a better perspective.



Industry elaborated on how business contributes to policy development. They stay in contact with other stakeholders through real partnerships which go beyond public private relationships. The private sector is able to transfer experiences through subsidiaries or business relationships with SMEs. Panelists and discussants agreed that information sharing is well organized and well done within business. A discussant also encouraged the private sector and civil society to think about how to encourage governments to engage in effective dialogue.

Panelists and discussants seemed to agree that discussions should be on an issue by issue basis, the right people had to be engaged at the right time. Government panelists have found that asking specific questions also helps frame the debate for sectors on the demand side of the market. Financial institutions were cited as an example.

Panelists agreed that tenacious outreach with a specifically framed debate was vital. Panelists suggested that countries identify a champion for outreach, or a coalition of sectors. Success stories using this approach included use of a scorecard sent out through chambers of commerce in Singapore and the Italian government's ability to attract involvement in consultations between WSIS and the IGF through creating a new institution.

Panelists debated whether meaningful participation was dependant on increased training. Some believed that participation in the development of technical standards, guidelines and rules necessitated a basic technical competence and access to an infrastructure to do outreach. The availability of a technical infrastructure facilitates the creation of networks of people. Companies are building human and institutional capacity by developing programs and materials to increase the number of people with IT training to participate effectively. Cisco Academy, for example, exists in 160 countries in the world, and offers college level classes in technical issues by partnering with educational institutions and intergovernmental organizations such as the UNDP and ITU. The importance and success of gender-based programs was highlighted. Panelists cautioned that training should focus not on transmitting knowledge, but on facilitating skill development; it's about building a broad range of understanding that's required to engage in dialogue with other actors.

Others believed that simplifying the process was required rather than providing more resources or training. Some panelists argued that there is not a direct relationship between capacity building and participation.

Some thought another issue is a lack of resources. Governments have to decide priorities and often have to focus on dealing with crisis rather than training.

Panelists expressed that one way to promote participation given lacking resources is to bring information and issues to the regional or national level. Indeed, panelists referenced that stakeholders do participate at local level. One outcome of WSIS was that government representatives were identified to each other. A problem was cited, however that there is a high turnover in representatives following Internet governance issues, meaning that they have to consider how to maintain capacity.

A variety of models may be necessary to take into account the differences between north and south. For example, India was presented as having complex needs. To address these needs in part, they establishing cyber cafés in postal offices in every village to increase access.



4. Inventory of events and actors related to the issue under discussion

Each stakeholder (government, private sector and civil society) has specific role and responsibility in increasing meaningful participation in the Information Society.

5. Possible follow-up

Aggregate contact points for governments on who is dealing with Internet governance capacity building issues.

Assist in development of national e-strategies in every part of world.

Each stakeholder group could consider what role they can play in enhancing meaningful participation in Internet governance.

6. Useful links

<http://www.iccwbo.org/basis/id8215/index.html>