

WSIS +10 Review Event: 27 February 2013, 14:30-16:00, UNESCO, Paris

WORKSHOP REPORT

ENHANCED COOPERATION: FROM DEADLOCK TO DIALOGUE. REFLECTIONS ON WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

Facilitated by APC, ISOC and ICC BASIS

Number of workshop participants: 80

Number of remote participants: 8 (Africa, Australia, Sweden, USA)

Speakers:

- Linda Corugedo Steneberg, Director Cooperation, DG Connect, EU Commission
- Benedicto Fonseca Filho, Director, Ministry of External Relations, Government of Brazil
- Markus Kummer, Vice-President, Public Policy, Internet Society (ISOC)
- Tulika Pandey, Additional Director, Ministry of Communications & IT, Government of India
- Theresa Swinehart, Executive Director, Global Internet Policy, Verizon

Moderator:

- Anriette Esterhuysen, Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Remote Moderator:

- Nicolas Seidler, Policy Advisor, Internet Society (ISOC)

Rapporteur:

- Constance Weise, Assistant Policy Manager, Digital Economy Commission/BASIS, ICC

Summary of debate:

The objective of this workshop was to enable frank and constructive dialogue on enhanced cooperation in Internet governance, and to provide informed input into the deliberations of the Working Group that is to be convened by the Chair of the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Markus Kummer explored the background of the term “enhanced cooperation”, and why so much weight is put on it in the context of this discussion. He described “enhanced cooperation” as the “but” in the otherwise positive affirmation by the Tunis Agenda that existing Internet governance arrangements work well, but saw a need for “enhanced cooperation”. Key points include:

- The pre-event to the IGF 2012 in Baku, Azerbaijan, saw APC, ICC BASIS and ISOC involved in a constructive discussion on enhanced cooperation. Past discussions usually focused on different interpretations on what the term “enhanced cooperation” means.

- In Baku, we tried to identify the changes that happened since 2005 and show that a lot of cooperation is already happening within and between existing organizations. As always, there is room for improvement and more could be done.
- Now is the right time for organizations to input into the working group on enhanced cooperation, convened by the CSTD chair, which is due to start its work soon. This workshop is an excellent opportunity to provide input into the working group.

Theresa Swinehart provided her perspective on what enhanced cooperation means in Internet Public Policy, and emphasised particular gaps. Key points include:

- The private sector understands enhanced cooperation as enhanced collaboration between and within institutions warranting the engagement and inclusion of all stakeholders.
- We have come long way since the adoption of the Tunis Agenda in 2005, and already discussed the need for enhanced cooperation at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It is now time to move forward the partnership between and within institutions. Enhanced cooperation needs to be strengthened; we need to identify the gaps, resolve them and proceed forward.

Linda Corugedo Steneberg provided the European Commission's view on the status of the enhanced cooperation discussions, including:

- There is no need for new structures; the problem is about knowing what goes on where. Some governments do not even have capacity to follow the discussions on enhanced cooperation. A mapping exercise is needed while keeping the benefits of the ecosystem.
- It is important to ensure that the Internet does not suffer fragmentation and that policy decisions do not break the internet ecosystem.

Benedicto Fonseca Filho explored the status of enhanced cooperation and identified further needs:

- Different approaches of enhanced cooperation exist. However, it must be recognized that the main purpose of enhanced cooperation as per the Tunis Agenda, particularly paragraph 69, is to enable governments to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- The Brazilian government acknowledges that enhanced cooperation is already happening, e.g. at ICANN, IGF, international organisations, etc. However, we consider there is a gap in the existing Internet governance ecosystem as there is no platform for governments to discuss public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, including cross-cutting issues, on an equal footing, in consultation with all stakeholders.
- The Brazilian government is ready to further refine the concept on enhanced cooperation but we think it is even more important to focus on action-oriented, concrete outcomes with the purpose to address deficiencies identified. The moment is right to further engage in this discussion. The CSTD working group on enhanced cooperation will be a basis for better understanding and productive discussions. The mapping exercise should be the starting point.

Tulika Pandey shared her view on how enhanced cooperation needs to evolve; key points are:

- Existing processes (e.g. ICANN, IGF) have indeed evolved toward inclusion of different stakeholders, regions, and even issues (e.g. multilingualism). These processes can nevertheless be improved since many people's voices are still not yet reflected in the process.
- There is a need for further cooperation and enhancement to identify the gaps in spite of the existing mechanisms and processes in the Internet space and remove the gaps through the action lines worked out through the CSTD Multi-stakeholder Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation. Reports indicating countries' policies performance on enhanced cooperation would be a useful outcome.

DISCUSSION PERIOD – The Way Forward:

Ms. Esterhuysen led a discussion and facilitated a dialogue between the panel and members of the audience. Key topics of this discussion included:

Definition-oriented approach

- There is no single meaning of “enhanced cooperation”. Eight years on, all actors are now more mature to have a deeper discussion about what it means and what should be discussed in the CSTD working group on enhanced cooperation.
- However, the discussion should not solely be about the definition of enhanced cooperation. Instead, it should be about what we want “enhanced cooperation” to mean.

Pragmatic-oriented approach

- Some participants argued there is no need for a re-definition of “enhanced cooperation”, or new structures. Other participants think the concept can be best understood and do not want to prejudge the outcome of the exercise to be undertaken by the CSTD working group regarding the need for new platforms. Some participants consider that the organizations active in Internet governance are already doing the job while others think there is room for improvement in the existing structures and that an additional platform may be needed; all institutions need to work more closely together to get the work done.
- All stakeholders need to work together in an open mapping process to identify if there are any gaps, and to find concrete solutions. One member of the audience called for a more pragmatic and operational approach, by e.g. designing a research programme, which was strongly supported by some members of the audience and the panel.
- The outcomes of the CSTD working group’s discussions on enhanced cooperation should be pragmatic and in a multistakeholder manner to also satisfy intergovernmental actors.

Addressing gaps in a multistakeholder environment

- In the past year (e.g. at IGF 2012, WCIT 2012, etc.) some stakeholders (e.g. governments) expressed concern about which format would be used to address the gaps in enhanced cooperation (e.g. cybersecurity?). All stakeholders must continue to be involved in the process.
- Some governments feel challenged to obtain relevant information available at the right time to enable proper judgement. Some participants argued that the gaps are not in infrastructure, but in freeing capacity and resources to follow existing processes.
- The gap identified in 2005 was filled by the establishment of the IGF; the question is whether the IGF could/should be tweaked.
- Some members of the audience emphasized that there are many existing avenues available for governments to participate and engage on specific issues (e.g. cybersecurity)

The CSTD working group as an opportunity for addressing gaps

- Enhanced cooperation is already happening in a variety of fora inclusive of many stakeholders. In this context, the CSTD working group on enhanced cooperation provides a useful opportunity for addressing issues that have not been covered yet; potential gaps needing discussion may include cybercrime.
- It will be important to ensure the broadest input possible in discussions on enhanced cooperation. Furthermore, valuable outcomes of all discussions on how to further enhanced cooperation need to be effectively captured.
- Some members of the panel and the audience echoed the previous suggestion for the CSTD working group on enhanced cooperation to undertake a mapping exercise as a useful way of addressing gaps.

