

# INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

## Lighthouse Case Study

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## Case in Brief

The digital revolution continues to unfold and to fundamentally change the way that people think, behave, communicate, work and earn their livelihood. Technology has also opened opportunities to improve the lives and livelihoods of people at all levels of the socio-economic spectrum through education, health care, business, entertainment and innumerable other channels.<sup>1</sup> But who keeps pace with the advances in technology? Who monitors the issues that arise and provides a structured opportunity for oversight, discussion and direction?

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a Policy Network according to the GSN taxonomy.<sup>2</sup> The IGF's multi-stakeholder network convenes annually to discuss the opportunities and challenges of global governance of the Internet. The IGF has, as its mandate, the objective of providing an open, inclusive environment for policy discussions and debate regarding the global governance of the Internet. It does not seek to resolve conflicts but provides the data and tools for others to deploy for conflict resolution. It operates in an open and inclusive manner and gathers stakeholder groups from every sector and every part of the globe, including governments, industry players, users, NGOs and academia.

While the IGF is not a rule-making body, it exerts significant influence on Internet-related policy development, enabling members to share best practices with respect to governance, discuss contentious issues such as Internet privacy and intellectual property rights, and accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world. The fact that it has no statutory power could make the IGF appear impotent. But evidence suggest that a lack of direct involvement in rule-making ideally positions the IGF for addressing controversial issues in a constructive manner, with all parties at the table and without the posturing and controversy that can arise when there is a legislative or regulatory decision at stake.

## A Brief History of the IGF

At the end of the 20th century the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), responding to issues raised at their 1998 meeting, resolved to hold a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) at which the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly developing information society could be discussed. The Summit was held in two phases. At the first meeting, held in Geneva in 2003, the Working Group for Internence Government (WGIG) was assembled to discuss what the group would undertake. At the second convention of the WSIS, which took place in Tunis in 2005, more than 19,000 participants from 174 countries convened and plans that had been put in place in 2003 were put into motion, among them the establishment of the IGF.<sup>2</sup>

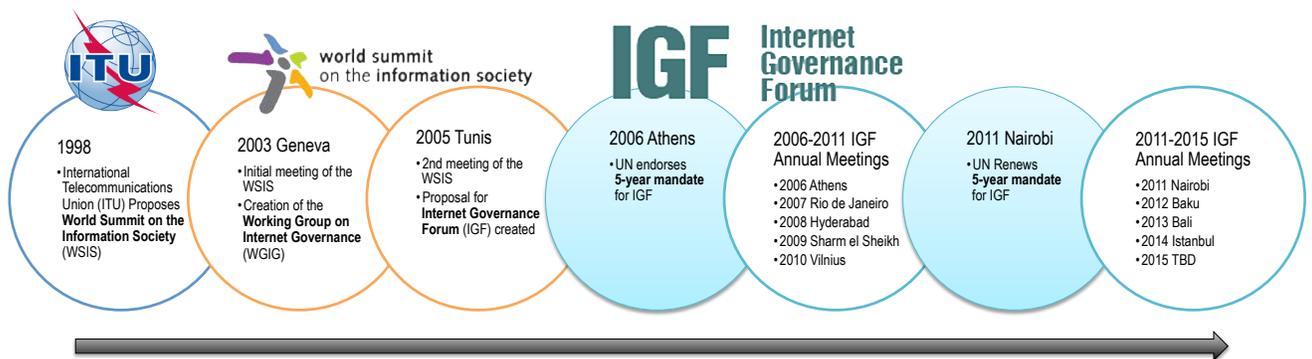


*The WGIG identified a vacuum within the context of existing structures, since there is no global multi-stakeholder forum to address Internet-related public policy issues. It came to the conclusion that there would be merit in creating such a space for dialogue among all stakeholders. This space could address these issues, as well as emerging issues, that are cross-cutting and multidimensional and that either affect more than one institution, are not dealt with by any institution or are not addressed in a coordinated manner.<sup>3</sup>*

When the WSIS reconvened in Tunis in 2005, the formation of the IGF was formalized and a five-year mandate was established in the Tunis Agenda.<sup>4</sup> In order to provide assistance in convening the IGF, then Secretary General Kofi Annan established the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) with its own mandate to advise the Secretary General on the IGF meetings, and to prepare the program and agenda for the forum.<sup>5</sup> Now made up of 56 members from government, the private sector, civil society, academia and the technical community, the initial mandate specifically calls for the group to make the best possible use of “electronic working methods, including online consultation.”<sup>6</sup> The MAG membership is renewed annually, with one-third of the membership carrying over into the next, providing continuity while also expanding the opportunity for new input and involvement from interested participants.

The IGF renewed its five year mandate in 2011 and continues to provide a vital policy forum for discussing and coordinating Internet policy.

### Internet Governance Forum: Creation and Development Timeline



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## The Need for a Multi-Stakeholder Model for Internet Governance

The IGF meetings assemble concerned stakeholders to discuss public policy issues related to the Internet. At the first meeting, held in Athens in 2006, most of the delegates were from Western, developed countries but since then the forum’s membership has become more regionally diverse. In fact, the vast diversity of Internet users and uses makes a multi-stakeholder model of governance necessary. As Internet Pioneer Scott Bradner describes: “The Internet is a chameleon—it is very different things to different people—an interactive encyclopedia of medical information for one user, a faster and cheaper post office for another, a way to commune with people of your own political bent for another and a way to influence the world around you for another, a cyber-security, porn threat, in general a threat to society to a politician. And an interactive gaming system for yet another.”<sup>7</sup> A multi-stakeholder policy network is arguably the only way to successfully accommodate all of these uses, interests and viewpoints into a global dialogue on Internet governance.

As a totality, the Internet Governance Forum’s policy network includes a broad array of policy makers, industry players, NGOs and academics. The IGF directorate at the center of the network consists of a programme manager and four consultants that orchestrate stakeholders, convene meetings and manage a platform for sharing best practices in Internet governance.

The IGF’s mandate to play a leadership role in Internet governance is highly challenging, however. What follows are some of the critical issues facing the IGF and its stakeholders.

**Today’s Internet user is more likely to be from outside the developed world and accessing via a mobile device.** This growing global user base with many diverse constituencies has evolved from 1 billion largely Western Internet users to a more diverse 2.5 billion users in less than a decade. The global user population now consists of people with wide variety of religious, cultural, political and educational backgrounds, and thus with very different sensibilities when it comes to issues such as privacy, security, freedom of expression and intellectual property. While most forums for Internet governance are closed to public participation, there is a growing recognition, according to Kieran Bergmann of the Citizen Lab at University of Toronto, that Internet governance is no longer just the business of government and corporations. “Policy decisions, changes in infrastructure, and privacy and security concerns relating to the Internet affect everyone,” she argues.<sup>8</sup>

The IGF has provided a forum for these voices and actively encourages greater participation from the developing world (including the creation of a fellowship program for which preference is given to nominees from



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least developed Countries (LDC's), developing countries and transitional economies.<sup>9</sup> Still, Marco Pancini, European Senior Policy Counsel at Google, suggests that there is room to improve, stating that the IGF “needs to increase the level of participation from different cultures, particularly those who come from countries where open discussion is not as common.” Pancini argues that participation in the IGF promotes collaboration and discussion and leads to shared principles across cultures.<sup>10</sup>

**The digital divide still inhibits the ability to realize the full economic and social potential of the Internet.** The IGF places a high priority on building the capacity of disenfranchised communities to access the Internet. Ensuring that users around the world can both access the Internet and take advantage of the incredible diversity of services that the Internet provides remains a considerable governance challenge.<sup>11</sup> Rohan Samarajiva, the founding Chair of LIRNEAsia, an ICT policy and regulation body, argues that, “If hitherto free content goes behind a pay-wall, there will be required a low-transaction-cost international method of payment available to a majority of the previous users. Millions of users in the developing world will not have such a mode of payment and will necessarily be excluded from the content, even if they are willing to pay for it. The end result will be the exclusion of millions of users from the developing world from useful and attractive content. They will have little reason to use broadband.”<sup>12</sup>

The IGF will not get involved in expanding telecommunications networks or in providing the training required to help marginalized communities take advantage of the resources that the Internet provides. However, at the 2013 event in Bali, a roundtable discussion on the digital divide concluded that the IGF could play a valuable role by brokering relationships between different stakeholders and by collecting and sharing metrics and best practices. Tijani Ben Jemaa of the African Regional At-Large Organization of ICANN, a participant in the Bali session, observed that capacity building initiatives will be key to closing the digital divide. “As much as is done in the areas of capacity building, it is never enough,” he says. “Capacity building is needed for everyone at all levels and in all countries—developed and developing.”<sup>13</sup>

**The pace of technological change requires that conversations happen frequently; even waiting for annual conferences will not adequately allow stakeholders to stay current.** Internet technologies are changing quickly, making it difficult for policy to keep pace. The smartphones of five years ago were very powerful computers and are now considered quaint antiques. Data is collected faster than ever through more and more devices. The impacts on issues such as privacy and intellectual property rights change so quickly that is difficult for countries to keep up with adequate legislation. In addition, the very nature of the Internet requires that meaningful laws be multi-national, based on cooperation and diplomacy.

While the IGF publishes highlights of conferences on its webpage and via social media, there is a great deal of room for improvement with respect to outreach between meetings. Videos of discussions and roundtables are available on YouTube and Facebook, yet there have been few views,



suggesting that the IGF has not established engagement with a broad community of users.

**Most Internet services—including cloud computing and social media—operate across international borders creating potential jurisdictional conflicts over issues like privacy and freedom of expression.** Arguably the biggest challenge for the IGF is the sheer diversity of views and interests on many core Internet governance issues. The cultural norms with respect to issues such as privacy and self-expression differ so greatly between cultures that a single set of rules would be inappropriately ethnocentric, especially if the rules were dictated by the developed countries who dominated the first wave of Internet users. As UK Member of Parliament Alun Michael observes, “It’s not enough to say there ought to be treaties and legislation, because [the issues are] far too complex and it’s changing too quickly.” He suggests that the IGF’s role is “enabling everybody to have a say or be represented in discussions about the future of the internet.”<sup>14</sup>

**Major Internet platforms are setting *de facto* rules in their terms of service agreements and are reluctant to concede rulemaking power to traditional government entities.** Internet industry players have a significant interest in setting up rules and standards for Internet governance that align with their product and service strategies and their broader corporate interests. For example, Google, Facebook and others would, in most cases, rather a single set of global rules and codes governing issues like privacy than deal with a patchwork of hundreds of national and sub-national regulations that address the particular sensitivities of local jurisdictions.

According to Stephen Caswell, a long-time researcher in the areas of online communication and governance, “All the companies that originally set up as the Internet—including service providers and cable providers—worked out the details without leadership from a central body, and in most cases do not see the need to coordinate changes through a government-like body now.”<sup>15</sup> This sets up a challenging dynamic between what is efficient and workable for industry and what is desirable for users and their elected representatives. Moreover, there are those who would like to see the IGF act as counterbalance to the relative power of industry. Some NGOs and regulators, for example, believe that Internet companies and telecommunications providers already have too much control over private data and would like to see the IGF help rein in that power. These concerns underscore the importance of fostering a multi-stakeholder process while simultaneously demonstrating why such dialogues will prove difficult.



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## Promoting Collaboration Amidst Diversity

The mandate of the IGF is to provide an open, inclusive environment for policy discussions and debate. It does not seek to solve conflicts but provides the data and tools for others to deploy. Vint Cerf, who has frequently been described as one of the “fathers of the Internet,” advocates for an expanded role for the IGF. In a white paper, “Internet Governance is Our Shared Responsibility,” Cerf and co-authors Patrick Ryan and Max Senges state, “The strongest case for the IGF is that it allows all stakeholders (including those from developing countries) to confer and build relationships with peers in other countries and actively participate in working groups and projects that extend beyond the IGF itself.”<sup>16</sup>

Since the constituency contains great diversity with respect to many different factors including attitudes towards issues such as censorship and freedom of speech, the IGF needs to manage decorum and set rules for respectful dialogue. The directorate, however, is pleased with how much the stakeholders manage behavior on their own. According to Programme and Technology Manager Chengetai Masango, “At our first conference in Athens people were shouting at each other, we even had catcalls like ‘liar!’ We did not develop a code of conduct but let behavior grow organically. The types of discussions have matured. Now there is a genuine debate and a respectful exchange of ideas without the pressure of having to reach a clear consensus.”<sup>17</sup>

Nitin Desai, former Chair of the Multi-stakeholder advisory group (MAG) for the IGF, agrees: “The most effective result of the IGF is the much better understanding that the major stakeholders have of each other’s compulsions. By the time of the second IGF, willing coalitions of stakeholders started coming together for cooperating on specific issues. These dynamic coalitions, as they are called, have moved beyond once-a-year deliberation to substantive inter-sessional activities and concrete outcomes in the form of capacity building. Of course, given the fact that they did not have substantial resources to deploy, the outcomes are still modest relative to need.”<sup>18</sup>

The IGF brings stakeholders together to discuss an issue such as cybersecurity outside of traditional diplomatic forums where discussions are often influenced by extraneous goals and agendas (for example, a Conservative group wanting to restrict language or images that conflict with their personal belief system). The IGF is able to facilitate debate and drive productive outcomes because the discussion is inclusive and all voices are heard.

Maureen Hilyard, Project Manager of the NGO Cook Islands Action Group, has attended several IGF meetings and is also involved with other groups including the ISOC (Internet Society) and ICANN (The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers). She believes that the meetings are



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productive and provide great value. She reports, “I enjoy attending IGF meetings because there are always new and interesting views on different topics...I also enjoy the networking that is so much a part of these meetings, and discussing one-to-one about how our contacts can assist development in the Pacific. We are still so needy for advice and support that these contacts are valuable for setting us in a meaningful direction. And people are so willing to provide support in whatever way they can, and it’s not just coming from a particular area or region, the support is global, so that we KNOW [emphasis hers] we are part of a global community.”<sup>19</sup>

Hilyard’s experience of participating in the IGF contrasts sharply with conventional conferences arranged by or solely attended by governments and telecommunication companies. Technology executive and blogger Mike Masnick writes, “An effective look at cybersecurity requires recognizing that governments and telcos often have views that are not at all in the best interests of citizens—and handing off all discussions on ‘cybersecurity’ regulations to [a corporate] body seems ripe for abuse in ways that may help governments or telcos, but at the expense of the public and their ability to speak out.”<sup>20</sup> For example, proposals created by law enforcement agencies with the intention to combat child pornography or terrorism by disallowing anonymity could be used by governments to track all activities including political dissidence. In the US, the principles of the Patriot Act have been subverted to charge PETA members with terrorism for videotaping animal abuse.<sup>21</sup> Vint Cerf warns, “If any of these policies are adopted in an international treaty, they will be used by countries to pursue their own national agendas.”<sup>22</sup>

## The IGF and Decision Making

While IGF does not determine policy *per se*, it can influence how governments, agencies and corporations operate and it can highlight abuse. Like many emerging networks, the IGF operates with a soft governance model. It is a neutral forum that does not enact legislation on its own but describes best practices and guiding principles that governments can deploy. “The advantage of the IGF is that everyone comes together and can provide their input,” says Markus Kummer, Vice-President for Public Policy, The Internet Society. “Most of these issues, opinions, points of view may vary widely, but there is merit in listening to each other and opening your eyes. Many government people go to the IGF to learn the new developments related to online governance.”<sup>23</sup>

To many observers, the importance and effectiveness of the IGF is diminished by the fact that the IGF does not set official policies. Policy networks, after all, are supposed to design policies. But most leading commentators who study Internet governance believe that the IGF’s lack of formal regulatory and legislative powers is an advantage, not a deficit. Because conversations are not expected to lead to finely crafted legislation, participants are more likely



to speak freely and genuinely collaborate. And since technology advances so quickly, many policies (especially policies that require intense negotiations to finalize) are obsolete before they are enacted.

### Analysis of the IGF’s Mandate by Leading Commentators

Commentator(s)	Affiliation	Perspective
<b>Vint Cerf, Patrick Ryan, and Max Senges</b>	Google	“The IGF is not a decision-making body, and the fact that it has no power by itself makes it the best institution for gathering all relevant stakeholders. Stakeholder groups from every part of the globe (government, industry, users, NGOs and academia) attend workshops, bi-laterals, coalitions and other events and play an active role in the IGF. It’s an environment where controversial issues can be addressed in a constructive manner with all parties at the table, and without the posturing and negotiations that can happen when there is a decision at stake, such as in a regulatory proceeding.” <sup>24</sup>
<b>Markus Kummer</b>	Vice-President for Public Policy, The Internet Society	“Many say it’s a weakness of the IGF that it does not have any decisions, no outcomes. However, others argue that’s precisely its strength, because there’s no pressure to negotiate anything. It allows participants to discuss freely, to voice their opinions, to think aloud, to think out of the box. You don’t do that when you’re negotiating, you have to be very careful. You don’t want what you said today to be held against you tomorrow when it comes to agreeing on a text.” <sup>25</sup>
<b>Samuel Morgan</b>	Ambassador, the Internet Society	“I am aware that the IGF is non-binding, that it’s not something that formally passes on regulations to the United Nations or to the ITU, <sup>26</sup> but I’m hoping that the principles and the essence of the discussion is there. For example, most people believe that copyright laws are a little archaic and they don’t necessarily fit with new media and digital media, so I am hoping that most of these discussions will mature into something—a global understanding, not necessarily a global treaty or anything of that sort, but a global understanding, which would see itself be modified or replicated in local jurisdiction.” <sup>27</sup>

In short, the soft governance model is more expedient than a rule-making model. Discussions move faster because participants do not need to argue about the wording of legislation. Also, these discussions can respond more quickly to changing conditions. For example, programming language standards are not compulsory; however, using a standard programming language makes it possible for websites to work in all browsers. It did not take a convention to develop these standards; they evolved organically. As such, the IGF provides the structure for and curates the discussions around issues such as access and cybersecurity. Even if all parties cannot reach a firm agreement, the organic discussions will create standards and best practices that add value to the macro stakeholder group. According to Desai, “What impressed me most about the IGF was the gradual transformation of the dialogue between governments, corporate managers, the Internet technical community and civil society from confrontation to cooperation, from talking at one another to talking with one another.”<sup>28</sup>



The IGF could increase the value it creates by passing on knowledge gained from its discussions to other organizations and networks that can act on the IGF's findings and recommendations. Cerf and his co-authors believe that "...one way to improve the IGF would be to identify which other forums and institutions can be used to resolve various issues raised at the IGF. This could be seen as a kind of 'intellectual tech transfer' or 'policy tech transfer.' Workshops could be designated for developing non-binding suggestions to address certain Internet governance issues. For example, security issues of a technical nature might be recommended for action at the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF, an undertaking of the Internet Society that works on design, use and management of the Internet)<sup>29</sup> or even organizations like For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST, a youth organization that operates a robotics competition)<sup>30</sup> or the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE, a professional association dedicated to advancing innovation)."<sup>31,32</sup>

Cerf *et al* continue, "While the non-decision making nature should stay at the heart of its mission, the IGF can complement its role as a core deliberation platform by establishing solid methods to document and archive the development of Internet policy and governance themes, as well as by allowing voluntary enhanced cooperation to form and tackle the challenges identified."<sup>33</sup> Masango believes that the IGF should continue the soft governance method, but reinforces that the directorate will follow the objectives desired by the stakeholders.<sup>34</sup>

## Performance Metrics

The IGF's role has been to provide a forum for discussions rather than to lead change. There have been, however, some examples of change. One good example is the West African Governance Forum, a subgroup of the IGF that developed a series of regional Internet Service Providers that kept online traffic local. (Previously, e-mails sent across the street needed to travel to European servers and back.) The new system reduced costs of access and enabled more people to participate.

There is still much room for improvement, especially spreading the word about the organization's findings and accomplishments as well as continuing to engage and encourage diverse voices.

Some of the first order performance metrics include:

- Overall membership participation rate including conference attendance (which has increased from six hundred at the first conference in Athens to more than two thousand at the most recent event).



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- Reach of research material, including views and downloads. According to Masango, this has increased by an order of magnitude over the past year, but still has room to improve.<sup>35</sup>
- Impact and reach of social media properties. There is a lot of room for improvement here; the IGF is represented on major sites but the reach is limited. As of January 2014, it has just over 4,000 Facebook likes, 2,000 Twitter followers, and 300 YouTube subscribers.<sup>36</sup>

According to Masango, the second-order metrics are even more important. “When people come to our meetings they get ideas, we break down barriers. They take home what they have heard and implement the best ideas in their home institution. We judge success by how often that idea is being quoted in forums such as G8 and the African Union.”<sup>37</sup>

While delegates may communicate on forums hosted on the IGF site, many take the conversation offline or follow up on discussions through interaction with other organizations. Hilyard reports, “I am involved in several organizations that are associated with the IGF—The Diplo Foundation, Internet Society, ICANN—so that there is always some way that I can get more information to enhance what I have learned at an IGF. We need to keep in touch with each other so that we can include experts (both personally or remotely) to bring meaningful dialogue to the table that we can better inform the decision makers of the different stakeholder groups about IGF issues that will impact on the future of development in the Pacific.”<sup>38</sup>

## The Future

The IGF will evolve according to relevant technological and sociological changes. Masango states, “It is best to develop guiding principles that are more adaptable to the future. Who knows what will be invented next year that might change the Internet or how it works if you have unbreakable conventions that might not apply to the current law because the Internet is changing so fast.”<sup>42</sup> The constituency will continue to become more diverse as more people gain access to the Internet (and that access improves). Devices become more powerful and monitoring algorithms are becoming more sophisticated. As a result, new governance issues will arise. For example, insurance companies and law enforcement agencies are able to make inferences about people’s health risk and possible criminal activity from their social media activity, Internet searches and from data collected from wearable computing devices. Even for people who meticulously guard their private information, these calculations can be made based on triangulating data from people with similar profiles.

Kummer tells us, “I think the forum is here to stay, the issues relating to Internet governance are not issues that will go away, they are complex



issues and the fundamental tension between the Internet as a borderless technology and an international system that's built on national borders will remain. So, we have not found a solution yet. Now there are organizations for each of these issues—when you go for intellectual property you go to the World Intellectual Property Organization, when you talk about trade it's the World Trade Organization, but none of these organizations have multi-stakeholder processes, so it's very unlikely that these organizations are able to come up with viable solutions, and here the IGF can play a vital role in preparing decisions that are taken elsewhere. It will not make the decision, but it can shape the decisions."<sup>40</sup>

It is crucial, however, for the IGF to transform from merely a forum for discussions to one where policies are developed (or to at least impact policy development in the local jurisdiction of attendees). Nitin Desai comments, "IGF must build on the open dialogue culture that it has created to secure concrete programmes of cooperation between willing parties. IGF can play a major role as an established multi-stakeholder deliberative forum to guide and advise the bodies that have the mandate to make decisions on the management of the Internet and the public policy issues that arise from the use of the Internet."<sup>41</sup>

## Implications for Network Leaders

The IGF has done a good job of inspiring, moderating and curating debate about Internet governance and has become the *de facto* world center for such discussion. The key takeaways for policy network leaders are:

**Soft governance stops short of rule-making, but has a vital role to play in addressing global issues.** Managing critical policy issues like privacy and data protection entails, at some point, the need to set and enforce laws and regulations, capabilities that are currently reserved for governments. Multi-stakeholder governance networks such as the IGF may not engage in rule-making directly, but they can play other vital governance roles that both support and complement the activities of governments. The IGF succeeds by raising awareness, promoting dialogue and sharing best practices across the Internet governance community but does not, in most cases, have the resources or the authority to establish regulations or to implement its programs or recommendations at ground level. Responsibility for implementation falls to national and sub-national authorities and partners.

**Truly global policy networks must collect and encourage input and engagement from all geographic areas.** They must reinforce that Internet governance needs to be truly global and not simply driven by the United States and other supra-influential countries. IGF has already made some progress here; not only does it collect input at many regional events, it



encourages input by holding major events in the regions where participation is currently lacking. The four most recent global conferences have been held in Baku, Azerbaijan; Nairobi, Kenya; Vilnius, Lithuania and Bali, Indonesia.

**Policy networks can boost their effectiveness by inviting diverse voices to participate in the discussion.** Masango has observed that diverse stakeholders come up with ideas the directorate never would have thought about. The IGF sets out a proposed agenda before every meeting and invites the community to provide additional topics (in fact, the organization's mandate specifically prioritizes the impact on the developing world).<sup>42</sup> For example, at the most recent Bali conference, workshop titles that were suggested by the community and that were primarily aimed at the developing world included: Linguistic Diversity in the Internet Root, Building Bridges to Online Multilingualism, Is it Time for the Internet Spring in the Arab Region?, Encouraging Locally Relevant Content to Grow the Internet, and Internet Governance for the Next Billion Users.

**Providing an alternative forum that reduces the impact of dominant players enables policy networks to increase legitimacy and foster inclusive policies.** Without neutral bodies such as the IGF, the largest corporations and the most powerful nations will dominate conversations. Open dialogues that give equal weight to less powerful voices will foster more inclusive policies, and inclusive forums and policies are more likely to be perceived as legitimate by the global population of Internet users. Maintaining this position is challenging precisely because the major players are accustomed to dominating all aspects including shaping agendas and allocating workshops. For example, Russia has been a major critic of the IGF and has officially proposed that it be integrated into the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) forum that is hosted by the International Telecommunication Union.<sup>43</sup> The WSIS's mandate is similar to that of the IGF, but the conferences, while including sessions addressing developing nations, feature presentations delivered primarily by powerful nations and technology companies.<sup>44</sup>

**Policy networks should make all findings and discussions openly available and use collaboration technologies to boost transparency, participation and accountability.** IGF makes materials—including video of presentations and discussions—accessible via social media. The network could benefit from generating more interest and awareness from ordinary Internet users, whose current engagement with the IGF remains low. Hosting a digital brainstorm with citizens around the world, for example, would enable ordinary users (whose opinions have not yet been heard) to shape policies and inform debates.

**To manage scope creep, policy networks should maintain focus on their core mandate, but allow for reasonable variation.** Within Internet governance, there are many issues to investigate and these continue to evolve due to technology advancement (such as the improvement of mobile computing) as well as a myriad of other geopolitical changes. The IGF encourages discussion on issues such as cybercrime, linguistic diversity and digital opportunity for children. Since the IGF sets agendas, gathers



constituents, hosts discussions and publishes results in transcript and summary form but does not, as an organization, publish original research, it can cast a wide net of subjects. At the 2013 Bali event, the IFG hosted more than eighty workshops; all within the scope of Internet Governance. The discussion points were openly shared even from those sessions that did not produce clear recommendations.

*by Mike Dover for Global Solution Networks*



## Endnotes

- 1 “Basic Information: About WSIS,” <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/why.html>
- 2 Don Tapscott, “Introducing Global Solution Networks,” <http://gsnetworks.org>, 2013.
- 3 <http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/about.html>
- 4 “Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance,” WSIS, Chateau de Bossey, June 2005.
- 5 Paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda spells out the specific mandate of the Internet Governance Forum:
  - a. Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
  - b. Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;
  - c. Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview;
  - d. Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;
  - e. Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
  - f. Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;
  - g. Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;
  - h. Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise;
  - i. Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes;
  - j. Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources;
  - k. Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;
  - l. Publish its proceedings
- 6 “Secretary-General Establishes Advisory Group to Assist Him in Convening Internet Governance Forum,” UN press release, 17 May 2006.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Interview conducted by Chris Grundemann, 22 May 2012.
- 9 Kieran Bergmann, “Why It Matters: The Internet Governance Forum,” IFEX, 19 August 2013.
- 10 <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/aboutigf>



- 11 Interview with Marco Pancini conducted by Mike Dover, 28 August 2013.
- 12 “Why the Internet Governance Forum matters to you—The Next Web,” Interview uploaded to YouTube, 11 October 2011.
- 13 Rohan Samarajiva, “A Giant Step Backward or the Way Forward,” LIRNEasia, September 2012.
- 14 “Capacity Building Roundtable Forum,” 8th Internet Governance Forum, Bali, Indonesia, 26 October 2013.
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## About Global Solution Networks

Global Solution Networks is a landmark study of the potential of global web-based and mobile networks for cooperation, problem solving and governance. This research project is a deliverable of the GSN program, offered through the Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

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