

From The IGF Remote Participation Project

To the IGF Secretariat

REMOTE HUBS OFFICIAL PROPOSAL

Since the beginning of 2008 a group of Interested IGF participants from many civil society organizations has come together with the concern to propose mechanisms that could enhance remote participation in the IGF Hyderabad.

The idea has already been positively evaluated by the IGF Hyderabad organization. The aim of the present document is to present the idea of the creation of local hubs to the IGF Secretariat and to ask for support to this initiative.

1) Objective:

To develop partnerships with regional organizations and communities with the aim to create local IGF hubs. These hubs would be local meetings, which would exhibit the webcast of the IGF as well as hold panels and roundtables, to discuss the themes of the IGF from a local perspective. This forum should serve as a stimulus or a starting point for the debate of local issues and implications and for the development of a network of interested people.

2) Some reasons that support the creation of hubs

2.1. Increases the visibility of the meeting. The local press will more likely cover a local event than one that takes place overseas. In addition to that, the engagement of civil society in organizing the hubs is a natural publicity and promotion that reaches all the larger local and regional community gathered around it.

2.2. Raises awareness. As a consequence of an increased visibility, the society in general becomes more aware of the importance of the subjects discussed at the IGF. The civil society plays an important role in getting in touch with possible stakeholders (NGO's, politicians, government representatives, economic sector, academics, etc) and convincing them of the importance of the subject and of their presence by being involved on the process.

2.3. Favors commitment. When a person solitarily watches a broadcasted meeting he/she feels free to drop it anytime and may never be involved with the subject again. When he's on the company of others and discusses the subject with them a sense of commitment with the group may flourish.

2.4. Favors community building. This sense of commitment can evolve into a structured relationship among stakeholders.

2.5. Provides networking. People can identify common interests and establish different kinds of partnerships. The hubs fully accomplish the second reason appointed here for people to be engaged on this experience.

2.6. Favors follow-up initiatives. People may feel motivated not only to follow the measures taken in the global sphere, but also to develop local actions. Through local discussion, people can agree on measures to take and share tasks and responsibility. This experience encourages collaboration and rises local initiatives.

3) Support provided to the local hubs

3.1) High quality webcast, with technical assistance from the organizers.

3.2) Publicity for the hub in the organization homepage, in the project homepage as well as in preparatory meetings and discussion forums

4) Requirements to create a local hub

The hubs can be held by any group of interested people. Each local group can propose and develop a methodology for the meeting, according to its needs. In general, the organization of the hubs does not demand high investments of time and resources.

We suggest that the interested parties in organizing the hubs take the following into consideration:

4.1) A four day activity (3-6 of December), on flexible hours.

4.2) A room or auditorium. It can be held at an university class or any other convenient place in the city

4.3) a broadband Internet connection and a video-conference (or projector) equipment.

4.4) A server

4.5) A moderator, who will plan the dynamics of the discussion

4.6) A general call in lists, forums, etc, to invite the local community interested in Information Society and Internet Governance

5) What are the modes of participation from the hubs in the IGF?

People attending the hubs will be able to benefit from the regular channels of participation:

5.1) Incorporated link for making an interactive recording of audio or video similar to "Youtube", "Seesmic" or "Quik", for broadcast in IGF sessions as comments or questions (In discussion with the IGF organization)

5.2) Chat, in the same terms of other regular participants

5.3) Open channel for discussions (fora) including theme-specific and moderated help forum for newcomers to the IGF

5.4) The IGF Secretariat will be asked to consider whether a channel of input can be included for the remote hubs, such as a pre-recorded 2 minute video statement

6) Local groups that have expressed interest to organize hubs

India (Delhi and Mumbai) - Rajesh Aggarwal and Nikhil Aggarwal

US - Stanford Program in Law, Science and Technology

Still examining the proposal:

Brazil – CGI (Internet Steering Committee)

Egypt - National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority - NTRA

Argentina - ISOC Chapter

US- Berkman Center (Harvard Law School)

As could be seen above, the responsibility to organize the hub relies on local organizations. The role of the Secretariat and Organization of the IGF would be to provide support, as specified on the item 3. The IGF remote project would help to find interested parties who want to organize the hubs and publicize them through civil society communication channels.

The creation of the local hubs would be of ultimate importance to raise local awareness of the issues related to Internet governance, to strengthen civil society involvement in those issues and to provide a larger social input to the IGF. We hope that this initiative receives the attention and support of the IGF Secretariat.

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