

HIGHLIGHTS Monday, 16 November 2009

- The second day of the Internet Governance Forum meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh featured two main sessions dedicated to the issues of security, openness and privacy, and managing critical internet resources.
- Other events took place in parallel meetings. In all, 17 workshops were held today, as well as "best practices forums", "dynamic coalitions", and other meetings.
- Several workshops were also held yesterday morning, before the opening meeting, to discuss issues such as ensuring online child protection and safety and cybersecurity research and development. A meeting considered practical strategies for incorporating human rights standards into Internet governance processes and policies and mainstreaming human rights in internet governance, aimed at helping individuals and Internet governance organisations to take practical steps to protect and expand universal human rights within their work and activities. The transnationalization of Internet Governance was the theme of another workshop in which Robert Kahn, Internet co-Founder, participated as a panellist. Other workshops considered privacy, literacy and social networking, assessing the role of the web in youth empowerment, among others.

Statistics

- As of today, over 1,800 IGF meeting registrations were recorded, out of which some 600 were from government, 500 from civil society, 200 from the private sector, 120 from international organizations, 120 from the media.

Managing critical Internet resources

- During the morning's main session, participants underlined that much had happened since the previous IGF meeting with respect to the transition from Internet Protocol version 4 to version 6, which is made necessary by the rapid depletion of IP addresses under IPv4. However, only 1% of traffic is IPv6 and the transition will happen very gradually. It was suggested that transition should be completed more rapidly. Emphasis has also been given to spending effort on collaboration in IPv6 technical training as well as the broader outreach and information. The issue of the institutional rivalry between the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) and ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) as regards address scarcity was also discussed. A representative of ITU stressed that there was no intention in ITU to do what the ICANN does best, but the ITU would not want the ICANN to do what is the mandate of the ITU. Bob Kahn, one of the pioneers of the Internet, inventor with Vin Cerf of the Internet Protocol (IP), underlined that the Internet was not a locked-in system that has only one approach to doing things. The IGF is a way of having good discussions about these issues and he called for openness to new approaches.



- In this regard, the decision for the ICANN to develop a mechanism for domain names in languages such as Chinese, Korean, Arabic and others that use non-Latin characters was welcomed.
- During a press conference by the Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Mr. Tarek Kamel, and ICANN CEO Rod Beckstrom, it was announced that so far, six countries submitted applications for domains in three languages. The Minister announced that Egypt had registered the first all-Arabic domain name.

Security, Openness and Privacy

- The discussion held in the afternoon main session on security, openness and privacy covered practical aspects of the coordination needed to secure the network and their relationship to issues pertaining to openness and ensuring the open architecture of the Internet. Issues discussed included the respect for privacy; cloud computing and privacy; ethical dimensions of the Internet; enabling frameworks for freedom; regulatory models for privacy; cultural and technical perspectives on the regulation of Web contents.
- On the later, examples of legislation adopted in several countries in relation to privacy on the Internet and the different approaches adopted in different cultural contexts were presented. The responsibility of private enterprise with regard to privacy was stressed, in a society that is grappling with globalisation, rapid changes in technology, modernity and modern individualism that has penetrated many societies.
- As a consequence of the growing mass of data produced - not out of malice or design - data aggregation could also pose a threat to privacy.
- Speakers said that security, openness and privacy were not in conflict with each other - they were not a "trade off" to each other -, but were complementary and should be seen as enhancing each other. In addition, they had to be seen from the perspective of human rights policies and human rights principles. This implies the responsibility of the user, of corporations, and of those who develop communication technology, but also the responsibility of the state as guarantor of human rights exercise. Freedom of expression, specifically, was an individual right but it also a collective right: the right of peoples to express not only ideas but to express their cultures, their traditions, their language and to reproduce those cultures and languages and traditions without any limitation or censorship.
- There was also the right to information, and communication technology, communication instruments and communication facilities should not be the privilege of the few or the knowledgeable or those that can afford it.
- A panellist said that necessary limitations of the state to ensure the protection of children, the protection of national security, combating terrorism or combating organized crime should never be used to create a mechanism and the technology of filtering or censorship, including in electronic communication.
- Issues raised this afternoon also related to cybercrime and threats to cybersecurity, and it was emphasized that this was shared responsibility.

Other Events

- Workshops held today examined the following issues: global Internet access for persons with disabilities; cybercrime centres of excellence for training, research and education; measuring the impact of Internet governance on sustainable development; the risks and benefits of medicines on the net; balancing between online freedom of expression and privacy; youth and Internet governance; creating Internet capacity and bringing autonomy to developing nations; capacity building for Internet accessibility;



managing Internet addresses; open knowledge environment in bridging digital divide for innovative research and development; country code top-level domain.

- In a workshop addressing the issue of balancing between online freedom of expression and privacy, participants discussed the paradoxical fact that the Internet stimulates freedom of expression and democratic participation, which at the same time causes negative consequences such as invasion of privacy. Ways were explored to reconcile freedom of expression and privacy protection in order to develop the Internet as an open and secure space.
- In another workshop, panellists highlighted creating Internet capacity and bringing autonomy to developing nations through "Internet Exchange Points", which are the single most economically-empowering decision that the Internet community within any region can make, and the one which will most secure their future as an independent and viable centre of local content and online community.
- Another workshop addressed bridging the digital divide for innovative research and development through an open knowledge environment, or OKE.