Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Synthesis Paper

Open Consultations
Geneva, 26 February 2008

I.   Introduction

1.   This synthesis paper is intended as an input for the open consultations to be held on 26 February 2008. Stakeholders were invited to submit their comments and views on the Rio de Janeiro meeting to the IGF Secretariat and make suggestions with regard to the preparation of the 2008 meeting. It was suggested that they address issues such as the preparatory process, the logistics of the meeting as well as its format and content. The discussion on the future of the Advisory Group was also part of this process.

2.   All contributions are posted on the IGF Web site. A <u>Web-based questionnaire was made available</u> on the <u>IGF Web site</u> for this purpose.

3.   The paper includes a synthesis of all contributions submitted to the Secretariat by 18 February 2008, that is a total of twelve from eleven contributors, three of which come from governments. It also includes content by seven commentators who made use of the above-mentioned on-line questionnaire, as well as nine postings on the <u>IGF discussion space.</u>

4.   The paper also reflects the on-line discussion among the members of the Advisory Group. The discussion was made available in the form of a digest on the <u>IGF discussion space.</u>

II.   Taking Stock and the Way Forward

What worked well?

5.   Most commentators felt that the Rio meeting was a success and had been well run ("well organized, and effectively hosted"). The meeting had provided a space for "constructive and inspiring debates on a multitude of public policy issues related to Internet governance". One commentator described the meeting as a positive next step in establishing the IGF as a "unique and relevant platform for the global discussion of Internet governance issues".

6.   Several commentators emphasized the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach. One commentator added that what he termed "the multi-stakeholder - on an equal footing - approach and the non-decisive nature of the IGF" should be maintained and strengthened and the next IGF should build on these.

7.   It was pointed out that the most successful aspects of the IGF were the opportunities people were offered to work together on specific issues of Internet governance. Thus, in Rio, some opportunities arose in the formal workshop sessions, while others in meetings of dynamic coalitions, or other more *ad hoc* gatherings organized on site. In this regard, the increased commitment to collaborating on child protection; the involvement of parliamentarians in Internet governance issues; the informed discussion on

linguistic diversity; and the increased understanding of steps necessary to reduce Internet connection costs were all cited as concrete examples.

8.   Some participants noted as positive the ability to choose between a wide set of possibilities. There was one comment that the sessions had worked better than they had in Athens.

9.   The organizers were generally praised for the logistics of the conference, in particular it was noted that the wireless access was much improved over Athens, as was the greater availability of affordable food.

What worked less well?

10.   Some commentators saw a lack of transparency in the proceeding of the Advisory Group and the Secretariat in the selection of self-organized events, and the criteria by which these were accepted or rejected. One writer mentioned that the feedback from the IGF on reasons for not including a session did not provide sufficient information.

11.   One commentator noted that the profiles for events that were selected were not complete.

12.   Some mentioned that the programme was too heavy and did not allow for sufficient informal interaction between participants. Others expressed that there were too many sessions, too many speakers and that there should have been a common lunch break. It was also suggested that no other sessions should be held in parallel to the open sessions.

13.   One issue that was brought up concerned what was described as the lack of effective remote communication capabilities for enabling Internet users who could not attend the meeting in person to attend. One commentator expressed special concern that a new facility for an on-line live chat service provided by the Brazilian hosts was not deployed.

14.   One contributor noted that on the social side of the Rio meeting, there were too few social events. .

Did the meeting meet your expectations? If not, what were its shortcomings?

15.   It was generally felt that the meeting did adequately meet their expectations.

16.   Several comments suggested that the IGF was not meeting its mandate to provide a global multi-stakeholder forum to address Internet-related public policy issues and that it risked becoming irrelevant if it did not begin doing so.

17.   One author indicated that one shortcoming of the IGF was that it did not connect or make sufficient outreach to regular Internet users through the Internet.

In your opinion, was the Rio meeting in line with the IGF mandate as contained in the Tunis Agenda?

18.   One commentator held the view that the IGF was not meeting the following parts of the mandate as contained in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, specifically: "advise all stakeholders" (e), "make recommendations" (g), "help to find solutions" (k) and to "promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet

governance processes". He recommended the formation of working groups with a formal link to the IGF's main body, which would be empowered to formulate concrete proposals on a multi-stakeholder basis, and to present those with a recommendation for adoption by consensus by the main body.

What did you think of the different types of meetings?

<u>Main Sessions</u>

19.   While many commentators felt that the main sessions general worked well, they also felt there was room for improvement of the format.

20.   The view was held that the main sessions should be focused on a more in-depth discussion of a limited number of specific issues drawing on the outcomes (including recommendations) of the relevant workshops. This could be done, by putting one participant of each workshop (e.g. its moderator) on the panel of the respective main session. The format of the main sessions should be as attractive as possible.

21.   It was recognized that there had been greater diversity among the speakers than in the first IGF meeting. One comment, however, mentioned that the panellists often seemed to have been selected more for which group they represented rather than for their expertise.

22.   Several contributions commented on what they described as the "poor attendance" at the main sessions. Some wrote that main sessions seemed to be a repetition of the previous IGF meeting.

23.   As was the case at the inaugural IGF session in Athens, it was felt that there were too many panellists. It was pointed out that even though the number of panellists had been cut down; the time for a session was also shorter.

24.   Some contributors did not see the addition of designated respondents as a successful change.   Several people commented that the community was not brought into the discussions sufficiently and several comments indicated that the designated commentators might have been part of the problem. One comment indicated that the success of a session rested on the talents of the moderator.

25.   Several contributions indicated that better use should be made of the main sessions. One comment indicated that the main sessions should be used to bring the outcomes of workshops and dynamic coalitions to the wider community.

26.   One contribution suggested that the main sessions would be improved if there were pre-sessions on the topics and the production of detailed synthesis papers on each of the themes as discussed in the pre-sessions.

27.   One set of comments wanted the main sessions to be focused on specific issues or concerns as opposed to being general presentations at the high level.   They also suggested that the main session descriptions should be simplified, and confirmed much earlier. The contribution also suggested that the issue(s) to be discussed in the main session should be identified in the descriptions.

28.   One contribution praised the emerging issues session in Rio as a good model that should be used again in 2008. They wrote that it was very interactive, and a valuable opportunity to raise issues that were not discussed during the other main sessions.

Workshops:

29.   Many of the workshops were regarded as well planned, sufficiently diverse and successful.

30.   One contribution suggested that the IGF should serve as a facilitator, providing many opportunities for action-oriented, formal and informal workshops and meetings.

31.   There was some concern expressed about too great a number of workshops. There was also a comment that there was too much overlap in the workshops and that more of them should have been merged. One writer suggested that workshop topics should have been chosen after a public consultation and then organized either by a dynamic coalition devoted to the topic or by a volunteer programme group.

32.   One comment indicated that in some workshops the viewpoint of the organizers was allowed to dominate at the expense of other points of view.

33.   One contribution suggested that the workshops should become more interactive. Other expressed that some workshops had too many speakers.

34.   One comment indicated that it would be helpful for workshop outcomes to have been aggregated to show where emerging consensus was in process.

Open Forums:

35.   One commentator wrote that some forums did not offer a sufficient opportunity for alternative viewpoints to be expressed.

Best Practice Forums:

36.   Several writers suggested that the Best Practice Forums not be included as a separate category from other events, but that best practices should be mainstreamed into other events, while others held the view that they had fulfilled expectations and allowed for the sharing of best practices. One contribution suggested that a database on best practices be established, including toolkits and good practices that are presented or emerge from the workshops. The databank should be made accessible through the IGF Web site.

Dynamic Coalition Meetings:

37.   The point was made that in order to strengthen the dynamic coalitions, they should be given more visibility during and also between the IGF meetings, and their work should be better reflected into the meetings during reporting back sessions. There should also be some way for the IGF to promote the outcomes from the dynamic coalitions.

38.   Some suggested developing more concrete rules under which these coalitions could work, how their relation to the "core" IGF would be organized, and what rights and obligations they have.

Was there an adequate balance between the different types of meeting?

39.   It was generally felt that the balance between the different types of meetings was good.

40.   One commentator held the view that while the balance was adequate for a conference, it was not appropriate for the forum, as it did not contribute to genuine dialogue on global Internet governance issues. This contribution added that to achieve that proper balance, the outcomes of focused sessions would need to be brought back to main sessions for further dialogue.

Are there any other kind of organized meetings that you think would be useful to consider?

Should all the different types of events be maintained on the programme of the New Delhi meeting? If so, should they be maintained in the form they were held in Rio or is there need for any changes to be introduced?

41.   One commented suggested setting aside some time during the first day for regional meetings to allow the different stakeholder participants from the regions to network among themselves.

42.   One contributor argued that if the wide range of different formats were to be kept (workshops, open forums, best practice forums, etc.), the difference between them and their concrete structure and participants had to be presented more clearly, so that participants would know better in advance what to expect from an individual event.

43.   Another contributor regretted that no use was made of the speed dialogue format that had been proposed early in the planning process.

44.   It was suggested that more effort had to be made to schedule thematic threads that would allow for the in-depth exploration of an issue.

45.   One commentator called for a meeting format that would allow for the IGF multistakeholder community to discuss and make policy recommendations. The writer indicated that this did not require decisions, but that it should be the venue that enabled different views from the status quo to be presented to and to be discussed with those currently responsible for Internet governance.

46.   One submission recommended that the IGF create working groups using either the format of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG, established during the World Summit on the Information Society), or bodies such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) to address complex emerging issues. The recommendations in the paper indicated that these groups should have a more specific charter than the broader thematic dynamic coalitions and that they would have higher requirements for transparency and accountability to the IGF. The paper indicated that the working groups would not produce decisions but could produce recommendations that could be communicated to other groups. The paper outlined three areas for working group effort: self and co-regulation in Internet governance, business models for access, and the development agenda for Internet governance.

47.   One contribution indicated that the IGF India meeting should prioritise the issue area of global Internet policy, especially what was described as "the gaps in and the inadequacy of global policy institutional frameworks and mechanisms in meeting the existing and emerging policy challenges".

Did the 'Village Square' meet your expectations? If not, what can be improved for the next IGF?

48.   Several comments indicated that the Village Square was very useful and important for networking between groups and for informing individuals.

49.   One set of comments indicated that the IGF should provide, at no cost, a large networking/display space for all stakeholder groups to present their real-world experiences and their efforts to implement Internet governance locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. Physically, they said, the display area should be structured around the IGF themes, to encourage dialogue and synergy among practitioners. The contribution went on to add that the theme areas should have facilities for small and medium groups to meet and exchange experiences and to plan future work.

50.   One commentator asked for greater resources, such as photocopying, to be available at the Village Square.

Is there a need for a synthesis paper which gives an overview of all contributions received and which is translated in all UN languages?

51.   Most writers agreed that having a synthesis paper was worthwhile and several contributions emphasized the importance of translating the paper into all UN languages.

52.   One contribution indicated that a synthesis paper was only useful if it was used to initiate discussions. This contribution went on to say that participants and moderators should come into the IGF meeting having considered the contents of the contributions.

53.   It was suggested that it would be useful to have a paper introducing the issues in addition to the synthesis paper covering contributions.

Other suggestions for improvement in view of the third IGF meeting?

54.   Several authors felt that it was very important that the IGF invest more effort and resources in creating an active and useable online forum that can be used throughout the year for continuing discussions on a multitude of themes.

55.   Several contributions mentioned the need for better on-line communications during the meetings.

56.   It was suggested that the IGF should make an effort to help participants to explore how the innovation potential of the Internet and its governance can be better explored by small and medium businesses, especially from the developing world.

57.   One suggestion was to create a space for the announcement of commitments, initiatives and partnerships as it might help make the IGF more attractive for leaders to participate and also for the media to report on it.

58.   One comment mentioned that pre-meetings should be encouraged by interested stakeholders as part of the preparations for the IGF meeting in India. One contribution mentions that regional IGF meetings should be convened for "the purpose of defining regional priorities and enabling greater participation from multiple stakeholders at regional level."

Any other comments or suggestions.

59.   It was suggested that the process of drafting an agenda for the meeting be open to the stakeholders and suggested that a working group could be formed for this purpose.

60.   The point was made that the written contributions to the IGF should receive greater recognition and acknowledgement.

61.   One contributor held the view that the success of the IGF depended upon the fact that the IGF remained multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent, and that it was neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding – consistent with the Tunis Agenda guidelines.

62.   Several contributors felt that the IGF Secretariat needed more effective resourcing. One paper held the view that the United Nations should recognize that the IGF was the outcome of a UN process and should ensure that it had the resources it needed to fulfill its mandate as defined at the Tunis Summit in 2005.

63.   One writer suggested that there should be active sharing of lessons learned by previous hosts with the next host country of the IGF. They went on to suggest that this process should include representatives of all stakeholder groups.

64.   It was suggested by several contributions that the selection and announcement of speakers completed by June 2008, and that complete programme be made available by September 2008.

65.   One contribution wrote of the importance of keeping reports short and of strict adherence to time limits for speakers and for reports.

III.   Discussion on the future of the Advisory Group

A.   Replacement of Advisory Group members

66.   Several contributions indicated that the Advisory Group had worked well over he first two years of the IGF. A few contributors felt that it could be improved and called for more transparency and accountability.

67.   Many agreed that the current size of the Advisory Group, approximately forty, was an appropriate size, though several expressed a desire to see a smaller group.

68.   All contributors agreed that the Advisory Group should have a balanced representation of the different stakeholder groups. Some stated that the current balance, where half were representatives of government and half were from the other stakeholder groups, needed to be readjusted.

69.   It was pointed out that diversity in the Advisory Group related to both geographical diversity as well as to stakeholder affiliation and expertise.

70.   Most of the commentators favoured a stable arrangement that required that only one-third of the Advisory Group members be replaced each year.

71.   Many of the contributions favoured a "boot-strap" process where Advisory Group members from the initial Advisory Group would be chosen on a voluntary basis for rotation with new members of the advisory chosen for a three-year term.

72.   Several contributions stated that if an insufficient rotation was achieved based on voluntary resignation, then a judgment could be made based on previous levels of participation by the current members of the Advisory Group.

73.	One contribution suggested using procedures approved in the UN system as a basis of the Advisory Group work, in particular those related to government expert groups. According to these procedures, country representatives may use services of their national experts who participate in the work without the right to vote or speak.

74.	There was a recommendation that AG members should be chosen on the basis of how large and diverse a community they connected to.

75.	There were a variety of viewpoints on the manner in which Advisory Group members should be selected. Most stated that while stakeholder groups should designate the members, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should retain responsibility for final selection of Advisory Group members. Others proposed that the stakeholder groups should directly select representatives who would be included in the Advisory Group.

76.	Nearly all who commented on the Advisory Group stated that it should be in place early so that it could begin its planning work as soon as possible, preferably at the time of the first consultations in February. One contribution remarked that the Secretary-General of the United Nations should formally appoint the Advisory Group by the end of January each year.

77.	One contribution suggested that the mandate of the Advisory Group be clarified and that it consider appointing a management subcommittee to help streamline decisions.

78.	While several contributions recognized the need of the Advisory Group to continue working under the Chatham House rule, many also recommended that the Advisory Group discussions be more transparent. Several praised the recent efforts by the Secretariat to produce a public summary of comments and the newly adopted practice of producing reports following the Advisory Group meeting. Some wrote that the efforts for transparency should be extended beyond these initial efforts.

79.	Another comment emphasized the need to maintain the multi-stakeholder Advisory Group as extremely important to act as a program committee and to offer input as to discussion, topics, speakers and format.

80.	One contributor pointed out that it was sometimes difficult to identify one person within a single stakeholder group or specialization and that these multiple identifications can sometimes affect the proportionalities within the Advisory Group.

## B.	Chair of the Advisory Group

81.	Several comments were received emphasizing the importance of having a single consistent chair of the Advisory Group rather than a rotating chair or multiple co-chairs. Another comment suggested that the host country could supply a deputy chair for the Advisory Group. Another contributor noted that it should be sufficient to include one member of the Advisory Group from the host country to serve as a liaison.

82.	There was one recommendation that in 2008, the Chair should be appointed for the remainder of the mandate of the IGF. This was accompanied by a recommendation that the chair of the first two IGF meetings, Mr. Nitin Desai, remain the chair for the duration of the mandate based on the trust he had built with all stakeholders.

## IV.	Substantive comments

83.	Several contributions commented on the continuing importance of the

development theme, especially the focus on extending access to the next billion users, as well as on capacity building. Some commentators were in favour of strengthening these cross-cutting priorities.

84.   One paper proposed that the linkages between Internet governance and sustainable development should be a theme for the 2008 IGF and the subject of a main session. This proposal built on the Chairman's summary from the 2007 IGF that "one issue that seems to be really an emerging issue … is the inter-linkages with sustainable development." The paper pointed out the notable increase in interest, discussion and debate on this issue that has taken place among different stakeholder groups and in various forums in recent months. Creating a space for exploring linkages between issues related to Internet governance and issues related to the environmental, economic, social and governance dimensions of sustainable development was also raised; the paper suggested that this new theme would help broaden participation in the IGF and support achievement of many elements of the IGF mandate.

85.   Another contribution called for the inclusion of sustainable development with a focus on climate change as another cross-cutting issue and the identification of a few key questions that could be discussed in each of the workshops. The same contributor supported a proposal to work on a development agenda for Internet governance.

86.   The point was made that the role of the Internet in economic development and the importance of capacity building (i.e. in identifying initiatives that assist in bringing Internet access to developing countries) should remain among the key priorities for discussion for the IGF in all its sessions

87.   It was suggested that there should be a better combination of the main Internet governance issues with the developmental aspects so that, for example, the discussions around Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Generalized Top Level Domain Names (gTLDs) could be directed into showing the impact these have on development.

88.   One paper recommended that discussions in all the main sessions should emphasize the development agenda issues, and the human and institutional capacity building measures that are necessary to strengthen involvement of all stakeholders in Internet governance issues and institutions.

89.   It was proposed that critical Internet resources be considered as a cross-cutting issue for the IGF, including the implementation of the WSIS principles for Internet governance in all fora involved in Internet governance. Developing a code for public participation in Internet regulation was also mentioned in this regard.

90.   One contributor wrote that the discussion on diversity in 2008 should focus on the ability of the Internet and ICTs to enhance diversity with limitless capacity to transmit content. They described the role that user-generated content plays in advancing cultural diversity and noted the promotion of cultural diversity through intellectual property protection and standards that facilitate the creation of new software applications and tools such as translation technologies.

91.   One paper argued that digital literacy and IT training should receive more attention in the discussions in 2008. This paper supported inclusion of a discussion on skills development and the other resources necessary to get the world online.

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