

SUBMITTED BY:

AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK (FEMNET), Gisele Dodji Dovi, ISIS-WOMEN'S CROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGE (ISIS-WICCE), and WOMEN OF UGANDA NETWORK (WOUGNET) On behalf of the AFRICAN GENDER IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY NETWORK

Questionnaire on the Convening the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

*This questionnaire addresses some issues that came up following the Tunis Summit. It is meant to stimulate the discussions in the open consultations on the convening of the IGF on 16 and 17 February and help clarify some open questions with regard to the functioning of the IGF. The questionnaire aims to provide an open framework for discussion – additional remarks, comments or questions are welcome and should be sent to wgig@unog.ch *. You may write your comments on any of the questions directly into the form or submit more general comments separately. Please provide your full name . the entity which you represent and where you are based. If you are responding in your personal capacity please state so and describe your involvement in Internet Governance issues. Responses will be published on this website.*

- 1 1 The Tunis Agenda sets out various functions for the forum. Paragraph 72 (g) indicates that a possible outcome of its meetings could be recommendations (“where appropriate”). Paragraph 72 (l) asks the IGF to produce a report (“to publish its proceedings”) as its output.

(a) (a) *What outcome would you expect from an IGF meeting?*

- i) *Clearer understanding of emerging and known public policy issues regarding the Internet. A gender analysis of the public policy issues should be conducted and taken into account in order to operationalise the Geneva Principles and paragraph 23 of the Tunis Commitment to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and to promote the WSIS goals of access for all and affordability.*
- ii) *Discussion, development and adoption of best practices for dealing with use and misuse of the Internet – with full involvement of all stakeholders and addressing concerns from everyday users represented by special interest groups e.g. women, grassroots communities, people with disabilities, media, cultural diversity, etc*

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(b) (b) *Should there be any other output apart from the report?*

i) *Non-binding recommendations, guidelines, frameworks/conventions related to public policy issues regarding the Internet.*

2 2 The Tunis Agenda describes the IGF as “multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent” (para 73) and sets out many functions it should assume (see paras 72 and 77). However, it leaves open questions of participation as well as periodicity, duration and type of IGF meetings, including on-line aspects and virtual collaboration and participation. Several delegations endorsed the proposal contained in the WGIG Report, i.e. to create a Forum that should be modelled on the WGIG open consultations, where all stakeholders participated on an equal footing.

(a) (a) *Could the WGIG open consultations constitute a possible model for the IGF?*

Yes. We further recommend that the IGF establish rules and guidelines to govern its consideration of views submitted through virtual/online communication. As much as possible, these should be given the same weight as submissions made during face-to-face meetings. This would encourage the open consultations and contribute to cost-effectiveness by providing alternative ways for stakeholders to participate in the IGF meetings.

(b) (b) *How often should the Forum meet?*

We recommend that the Forum meet once a year given the fast change of technology and to reduce expenses that accompany international meetings. Regional and national meetings can be held at the discretion of the region/states in preparation for the annual Forum meetings. Online consultations should be encouraged as much as possible.

Furthermore, effort should be made to ensure the rotation of meetings of the IGF on each continent i.e. Africa, Americas, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

The IGF should also put into action recommendation 43 from the WGIG report on the equal representation of women and men at all levels of Internet Governance. “Gender balance should be considered a fundamental principle with the aim of achieving an equal representation of women and men at all levels”.

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- (c) (c) *How long should its meetings be?*
- (d) (d) *Should meetings be considered subject to UN rules, such as accreditation, rules of procedure or languages?*
- (e) (e) *How could the IGF make best possible use of ICTs and promote virtual interaction?*

The IGF should as much as possible promote the use of virtual interaction as used by WGIG. Web casting, and other interactive features should be incorporated on the IGF website. The use of convergence of old and new media should also be encouraged so that proceedings of the meetings and coverage of IG issues can be followed on radio and TV, which are more accessible in developing countries. Capacity building of female and male journalists, especially from developing countries, in understanding IG debates could be beneficial as a way of 'publishing the IGF proceedings'

However, the use of virtual interaction further underlies the need to bridge the digital divide between countries and within countries, which may leave out the participation of sections of communities including women and people with disabilities. Innovative use of media such as radio and appropriate software can be found to increase their participation.

- 3 3 The Tunis Agenda has a strong development focus. It raises questions related to access to the Internet (para 72(e)) as well as to developing country participation in Internet Governance mechanisms (para 72 (f)). It also emphasizes that the IGF needs "to contribute to capacity-building for Internet Governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise" (para 72 (h)).

- (a) (a) *How should the IGF approach access issues ("availability and affordability of the Internet")?*
- i) *Support the ITU study on Internet Connection costs of developing countries.*
- ii) *Recommend ways to provide financial and capacity building support for regional and national Internet governance mechanisms such as Regional Internet Registries (RIR), national communication regulatory authorities, and Internet Service Providers (ISPs).*
- iii) *Recommend/support the establishment of regional backbone infrastructure.*
- iv) *Show commitment to gender analysis of public policy issues that perpetuate the gender digital divide by incorporating on the IGF gender experts, ensuring equal geographical representation of these experts.*

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- v) *Importance of involving civil society organisations (CSOs) from developing countries who work with communities and know the barriers to accessibility, availability and affordability faced by their constituents.*

- (b) (b) *Para 72 (f) indicates that special measures ought to be taken to facilitate developing country participation in the IGF itself. What should be done?*

- i) *Capacity building of government, civil society and private sector in developing countries on IG to enhance their participation at international level but also follow up the IG process at regional and national level. There is a need for the IGF to link up with regional intergovernmental organisations and civil society mechanisms, for example, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as key players in ICT and development.*
- ii) *Capacity building of women is essential if the Geneva Principles are to be achieved. It is essential for the IGF to promote science and technology education for girls at all levels, link up with universities, facilitate training of the gender ministries, regional and national level women organisations and women in SMEs who are venturing into e-commerce and other uses of the Internet.*
- iii) *Promote virtual interaction.*
- iv) *Rotate the venue of the IGF meetings with a majority of them being hosted in developing countries.*
- v) *Sponsorship of some categories of participants, particularly civil society organisations?*

- (c) (c) *What should be the focus of capacity-building initiatives?*

- i) *Understanding of Internet Governance public policy issues.*
- ii) *Understanding of the various cross-cutting themes, structures and working methods of the organisations dealing with various aspects of IG public policy e.g. WTO, WIPO, ITU, Interpol.*
- iii) *Understanding the limitations of government control so as not to infringe on human rights, privacy and media freedoms, especially when dealing with cyber crime, fraud, combating spam, etc.*

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4 4 Para 78 (b) calls on the Secretary-General to “establish an effective and cost-efficient bureau to support the IGF, ensuring multi-stakeholder participation”.

- (a) (a) Does this para refer to a bureau as it is normally used in an intergovernmental context, such as the WSIS bureau?
- (b) (b) Would it be a bureau to deal with organizational issues and prepare agenda and programme of the IGF meetings?
- (c) (c) If so, how should it be composed?
- (d) (d) Alternatively, could it be a high-level senior advisory body to provide overall direction and shape to the IGF meetings?
- (e) (e) If so, how should it be composed?

Alternative (d) would introduce more bureaucracy and hierarchy when what we should be striving for as much as possible is a loose, horizontal structure where all stakeholders are on an equal footing.

Support alternative (b). The bureau should adhere to the following:

- i) Equal representation of women and men as should the broader IGF.*
- ii) Equal regional representation*
- iii) Equal participation of civil society and private sector so that no one opinion outweighs the other as has often been the case in other multilateral bodies.*
- iv) Possibility of rotation (members of the bureau should change after, for example, serving a one-year or two-year term.*

5 5 Para 78 (b) can also be interpreted as referring to a secretariat function.

- (a) (a) Could this function be assumed by existing institutions, which could take turns in providing the secretariat for the IGF?

Yes. However, need to ensure that the developing countries also take turns at hosting the IGF Secretariat (particularly in Africa) as most of the existing IG institutions are based in developed countries. Lessons should be drawn from mechanisms such as

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ICANN, which is now beginning to hold some consultative meetings in each region, and the RIR, which rotate their meetings in different countries within each region.

- (b) (b) *Alternatively, is there need for an independent secretariat?*

No. Should be cost-effective to use existing institutions as it has been established by WGIG that most public policy issues may fall under existing institutions.

- (c) (c) *If a secretariat is established,*
(i) (i) *Where should it be based?*

See 5a.

- (ii) (ii) *What should be its linkage to the United Nations Secretary-General?*

The IGF Secretariat should be convened by and submit its reports and other outputs to the UN Secretary-General. Para 73.c. of the Tunis Agenda further links the IGF to the UN.

- 6 6 Para 73 addresses aspects related to the structure of the IGF, which should be “lightweight and decentralised” and build on “existing structures of Internet governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process”.

What does this mean in practice?

- (a) (a) *Does the decentralized structure refer to a support structure (secretariat) or the Forum itself, or both?*
(b) (b) *Does it point to additional expert meetings and / or programme committees, which could report back to the IGF and help prepare its meetings? Should possible sub-structures be supported by organizations with the relevant expertise?*

Any expert meetings should engage and have the full participation of gender experts with expertise in the various public policy issues being discussed. Further details in response to Qn. 8.

- 7 7 The Tunis Agenda does not elaborate on aspects related to the funding of the IGF.

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How do you think the IGF should be financed?

i) If the IGF is working in the framework of existing institutions, these institutions should finance IGF. As has already been established by WGIG and in the Tunis Agenda, such institutions like WIPO, TRIPS, WTO, Interpol already have a stake/role in IG and therefore can provide funding.

- ii) Para.27 (l) of the Tunis Agenda recommends making “effective use of debt relief mechanisms as outlined in the Geneva Plan of Action, including inter alia, debt cancellation and debt swapping, that may be used for financing ICT for development projects, including those within the framework of poverty reduction strategies.” To implement this recommendation, we propose the following:*
- iii) Bilateral and multilateral development financing institutions need to commit significant percentages to development communications as central to development financing and live up to pledges in other arenas e.g. in the African Partnership Forum on G8/NEPAD engagement to support infrastructural rollout.*
- iv) In addition, investment in telecommunications and ICT regulatory reform to address questions of gendered universal access--through direct grants, incentives for private sector investment (including SME investment, particularly by SMEs owned and operated by women) and incentives for initiatives building on community-based communications (including, for example, community radio stations, especially those owned and operated by women)--will be critical to closing gendered digital divides.*

8 8 Para 74 mentions the “proven competencies of all stakeholders in Internet governance and the need to ensure their full involvement”.

What steps should be taken to identify and engage all stakeholders and what needs to be done to make best possible use of their competencies?

- i) Collaborate with relevant intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) at international and regional level to help identify stakeholders with necessary expertise. Gender experts should be included in the IGF. Consultations with IGOs like the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UN Commission on the Status of Women, Division for the Advancement of Women, Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI) of ITU, UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the NEPAD Gender and*

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civil society task force should be carried out in order to tap into their expertise on gender and ICT.

- ii) *The IGF should also carry out a mapping exercise to identify and engage with regional and national civil society organisations working on gender and women in the area of communication, ICT, trade, consumer rights, and human rights, etc.*
- iii) *Involve all the stakeholders in the development of the mandate and terms of reference (TOR) of the IGF. This consultation on the convening of the IGF is a step in the right direction. Stakeholders should include civil society representing various interest groups on IGF, for example, media, gender, people with disabilities, and human rights organisations.*

- 9 9 Para 74 also encourages the Secretary-General “to examine a range of options for the convening of the Forum”.

Are there any other options not addressed in the questions above? What are these options as you understand them?

Already stated previously.

- 10 10 Paragraph 72 (a) of the Tunis Agenda gives the IGF the mandate to “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”.

(a) *(a) What are these issues?*

(b) *(b) Are they all the issues mentioned in the Chapter on Internet Governance in the Tunis Agenda?*

(c) *(c) Which issues should be treated as priorities?*

In an online discussion forum hosted by the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) in August 2005 in preparation for WSIS Prepcom3, entitled 'Tunis and Beyond: Issues for Africa and African Women on Internet Governance' the following public policy issues were identified as priorities.

- i) *Capacity building - in Africa, the future of the African economy lies in small businesses. SMEs hold the key to economic growth and poverty alleviation on the continent. The need for capacity building on Internet governance issues, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in*

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Africa, was thus considered to be of great importance. Opportunities provided by the Internet, especially for SMEs owned or run by women, are very important for expansion and global exposure of these enterprises. Capacity building is therefore an important policy area for women owned SMEs that are involved in different aspects of ICTs such as software development, e-commerce, training, or as private Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

- ii) Interconnection Costs - The issue of cost affects African women because they are less empowered economically. It is therefore only when a service or commodity is affordable that it can be accessed and used by all, particularly by women who make up the majority of the poor in Africa.*
- iii) Intellectual Property Rights - African governments should put in place measures to ensure that local knowledge and innovation, especially technology, is protected to benefit local communities before it is marketed out of the continent and finds its way to the Internet. As custodians of much of the local knowledge in communities, women should participate in any discussions on intellectual property. Capacity building of women and local communities on IPR is therefore necessary to enable their effective participation in IPR discussions at national, regional and international level.*
- iv) Internet Stability, Security And Cyber Crime - Multi stakeholder consultations involving women affected by Violence against women (VAW), civil society, private sector and governments at national, regional and international level are essential to formulate strategies to deal with the intersection between VAW and ICTs.*
- v) Freedom of Expression - Freedom of expression and women's access to information contributes to African women's effective participation in decision-making spaces. Freedom of expression and privacy rights should not be infringed in IG policy formulation.*

(d) (d) Could these issues constitute a work programme for the coming years?

Yes.

11 11 The first meeting of the Internet Governance Forum should take place "no later than 2006"

- (a) (a) When would be the best time for the meeting?*
- (b) (b) What should be on its agenda?*
- (c) (c) Should it focus on one or at the most two issues that would be dealt with in depth, or should it discuss a wide range of issues?*

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(d) (d) *How should its programme be designed (time-management plan, organizational aspects)?*

N/A

12 12 Any other comments, suggestions or questions that should be addressed?

N/A