

Federation for a Free Information Infrastructure  
15 February 2006

> Questionnaire on the Convening the Internet Governance Forum

Responses provided by Mr Norbert Bollow on behalf of the Federation for a Free Information Infrastructure, a non-profit association registered in several European countries, which is dedicated to the spread of data processing literacy. FFII supports the development of public information goods based on copyright, free competition, open standards. More than 650 members, 3,000 companies and 90,000 supporters have entrusted the FFII to act as their voice in public policy questions concerning exclusion rights (intellectual property) in data processing.

> 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) What outcome would you expect from an IGF meeting?

I. It should become clear what the various stakeholders and interest-groups are concerning matters related to "internet governance", and where there are dangers that fundamental freedom principles of the internet might be violated.

II. It should become clear whether government investments or developmental aid are needed for creating adequate internet structure (for example to create a worldwide IPv6 backbone network), and some possible business scenarios for this should be developed. Development Policy shall take into account the "leapfrogging effect" that developing countries can skip some intermediate stages of technology development.

III. Software infrastructure should be developed for allowing interested members of the general public to participate via the internet in events like the Internet Governance Forum and in public policy processes in general.

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

All software developed or modified for meeting the needs of the IGF meeting should be released under a Free Software license.

> 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.

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

Yes.

> (b) How often should the Forum meet?

Bi-annual.

> (c) How long should its meetings be?

Two days, but not more than two days. Longer meetings would  
lead to the non-participation of the most knowledgeable  
people, due to the many other demands on their time.

> (d) Should meetings be considered subject to UN rules, such  
> as accreditation, rules of procedure or languages?

Languages: English, French, German, Arabic, Mandarin

> (e) How could the IGF make best possible use of ICTs and  
> promote virtual interaction?

Use internet-based communication technologies such as  
webfora, IRC, internet-broadcasting.

> 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) How should the IGF approach access issues  
> ("availability and affordability of the Internet")?

Focus on antitrust regulation and competition policy and  
access2knowledge regulation.

> (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?

Move from Geneva to Berlin, to cut costs.

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

I. Support of a free information infrastructure by funding of  
selected software projects.

II. Where necessary, investments into fundamental network  
infrastructure should be subsidized.

> 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) Does this para refer to a bureau as it is normally used  
> in an intergovernmental context, such as the WSIS bureau?

Office services provided by a third-party, private-sector  
contractor.

> (b) Would it be a bureau to deal with organizational issues  
> and prepare agenda and programme of the IGF meetings?

Yes.

For the development of agenda and programme, the bureau would  
however provide only secretarial functions; the decisions  
themselves should be in the hands of the Chair of each IGF  
Meeting, who would be assisted by a Programme Committee.  
The Chairs of the various IGF Meetings would be appointed by  
the Secretary-General of the United Nations in a manner  
which adequately reflects the intended multi-stakeholder  
nature of the IGF. For example, the first three IGF  
Meetings could be chaired as follows:

I. A representative of a NGO from a developing country is  
appointed as the Chair of the first IGF Meeting,

II. A representative of an Internet Service Provider from a  
developed country is appointed as the Chair of the second  
IGF Meeting,

III. A diplomat from a developing country is appointed as the  
Chair of the third IGF Meeting,

etc. Each Chair would only have responsibility for the  
agenda and programme of one IGF Meeting, and the Chair would  
be responsible for directing the IGF Meeting in a manner  
that is fruitful and beneficial for all stakeholders in the  
internet. In particular, while acting as Chair, it would be  
considered improper for a Chair to represent his or her own

organisation's or country's particular interests during the IGF Meeting which he or she is chairing.

With this approach, it is possible to have a bureau which primarily provides secretarial services, organized relatively inexpensively by a private-sector contractor. This makes it possible to avoid spending a significant part of the available resources (which are severely limited for many stakeholders) on political wrangling about agendas and programmes rather than constructive discussions pertaining to the substance of the issues.

> (c) If so, how should it be composed?

Staff consisting of 3-5 people.

> (d) Alternatively, could it be a high-level senior advisory  
> body to provide overall direction and shape to the IGF  
> meetings?

No.

> (e) If so, how should it be composed?

N/A.

> 5 Para 78 (b) can also be interpreted as referring to a  
> secretariat function.  
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>  
> (a) Could this function be assumed by existing institutions,  
> which could take turns in providing the secretariat for the  
> IGF?

Not reasonably.

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

Yes.

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

For example in Berlin.

Geneva is too expensive.

It is important that a location is selected where human rights are well-respected.

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

Independent, regular reporting.

- > 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?
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- > (a) Does the decentralized structure refer to a support
- > structure (secretariat) or the Forum itself, or both?

To the Forum, not the secretariat. A decentralized secretariat makes no sense.

- > (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?

Contractors, such as political non-profit foundations.  
Privatise IGF organisation to cut costs.

- > 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?

From the budget of the United Nations Organisation. Any other form of funding could lead to particular stakeholders indirectly buying undue influence through making contributions.

- > 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?

It is very important to ensure that formulations like "proven competencies" are not misinterpreted as to exclude stakeholders based on their IGF process involvement or other formal criteria etc. The goal must be to get real experts of information infrastructure involved, not mere political governance.

- > 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?  
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>  
> 10 Paragraph 72 (a) of the Tunis Agenda gives the IGF the  
> mandate to \u201cdiscuss public policy issues related to key  
> elements of Internet governance in order to foster the  
> sustainability, robustness, security, stability and  
> development of the Internet\u201d.  
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>  
>  
> (a) What are these issues?

- I. Interoperability
- II. Open Standards
- III. Access to Knowledge
- IV. Free Competition
- V. Freedom of Speech
- VI. Freedom to Connect

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

That is irrelevant.

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

Interoperability.

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

Yes.

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

>  
> (a) When would be the best time for the meeting?

Summer 2006

> (b) What should be on its agenda?

- I. Open Standards for a Free Information Infrastructure
- II. Access to knowledge

> (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?

Two issues.

- > (d) How should its programme be designed (time-management
- > plan, organizational aspects)?
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- >
- > 12 Any other comments, suggestions or questions that should
- > be addressed?

It is important to make sure that the term "internet governance" will not be interpreted in a way that would in effect undermine the integrity of the internet as an interconnection of a variety of networks which are each administrated according to each network's policies. Any attempt to put the internet under any kind of centralized government would do great harm to its great benefits for humanity. However, the term "internet governance" can be justifiedly used for efforts of creating international law to protect the integrity of the internet in areas like

I. Freedom of Speech in the light of worldwide communication,

II. Privacy Rights,

III. Multilingualism and local languages including matters of typography and content management,

IV. Effective anti-trust laws to prevent powerful corporations from undermining the integrity of the internet in their geographical area of influence.

- > Please let us know your views on any other issues that ought
- > to be addressed.