

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

The IGF should:

(1) Outline and establish the necessary mechanisms for the practical implementation of the mandates put forth in the Tunis Agenda (paragraph 72) and maintain their effectiveness.

(2) IGF reports and recommendations should be sent to the concerned bodies.

Recommendations on international public policy issues should be forwarded to the enhanced cooperation structure which is to be started by the UN Secretary-General in accordance with Tunis Agenda (paragraph 71) please see also answer to question 12.

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

This constitutes a viable alternative.

- (b) *How often should the Forum meet?*
 - (c) *How long should its meetings be?*

The IGF should meet a maximum of once a year and meetings should last 3-5 days.

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

The IGF is based on the participation of a wide range of participants, which will not be easily accommodated by the strict accreditation rules of the UN. Therefore we believe that somewhat less stringent rules should be developed in an open, transparent and democratic manner under UN auspices to facilitate participation.

In order to encourage participation of as many as many multinational delegates as possible, all UN languages must be used in the meetings.

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

Mechanisms such as virtual working groups coupled with publicised active web presence can be adopted.

- 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”)?*

The IGF should coordinate with and input to other bodies, such as the ITU, that address this issue and encourage interested parties to participate in their activities.

(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?*

- (1) Select meeting venues that would facilitate travel
- (2) Allow for virtual participation through electronic means
- (3) Encourage physical participation from developing and less developed countries (LDC's) through an IGF fund (see answer to question 7)
- (4) Select meeting dates that do not conflict with major national and religious holidays.

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

- 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?*
Yes, but adapted to the IGF context.

- (b) *Would it be a bureau to deal with organizational issues and prepare agenda and programme of the IGF meetings?*
Yes
- (c) *If so, how should it be composed?*
The bureau should have equal representation from all geographic regions and from all stakeholder groups (governments, public sector and civil society)
- (d) *Alternatively, could it be a high-level senior advisory body to provide overall direction and shape to the IGF meetings?*
No. See answers to (a), (b) and (c) above
- (e) *If so, how should it be composed?*

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

- (a) *Could this function be assumed by existing institutions, which could take turns in providing the secretariat for the IGF?*
There should be a dedicated secretariat preferably provided from existing UN institutions.
- (b) *Alternatively, is there need for an independent secretariat?*
- (c) *If a secretariat is established,*
 - (i) *Where should it be based?*
 - (ii) *What should be its linkage to the United Nations Secretary-General?*

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) *Does the decentralized structure refer to a support structure (secretariat) or the Forum itself, or both?*
The decentralized structure refers to the Forum, itself.
- (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?*

If additional meetings are required, then they should be held virtually and with open access to all.

See answer to question 2 (a) above

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

How do you think the IGF should be financed?

The IGF can establish a fund based on voluntary contributions from all stakeholders. This fund would be managed by a group nominated from within the IGF. The fund would be utilized to finance the IGF as well as assist in facilitating participation from developing countries and LDC's.

- 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?

- Publicise the IGF's activities at other international internet related events
- Prepare IGF agendas that are significant and relevant to stakeholders
- Encourage participation in sub-groups based on knowledge, interest, expertise and capacity building.
- See also answer to question 3 (b)

- 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?

- 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) *What are these issues?*

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

Yes, as well as issues in the WGIG report.

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

Bridging the digital divide

Security and privacy

Multilingualism

Cybercrime and Spam

(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?*

We suggest early November 2006. The current proposed date of October 24-26 conflicts with Eid Al Fitr, a major Islamic religious holiday.

- (b) *What should be on its agenda?*
- Review IGF mandate and financing mechanisms
 - Agree on priority issues to be addressed by the IGF
 - Develop a plan of action to address priority issues

(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?*

See answer to (b) above.

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

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

Please let us know your views on any other issues that ought to be addressed. The interaction between the IGF and the enhanced cooperation process, defined in the Tunis Agenda and intended to enable governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet and which is to be started by the UN Secretary-General by the end of the first quarter of 2006, needs to be defined (paragraphs 61, 69, 70, 71 of the Tunis Agenda). This is required to ensure that IGF recommendations on international public policy issues are effectively addressed.

** Please send all submissions in .rtf, text or .pdf via email.*