

## PRESS CONFERENCE ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

With organizers and participants for the second Internet Governance Forum (IGF) gathered in Geneva to finalize plans for this year's meeting, event planners identified a number of key issues to be addressed during the four-day meeting taking place in Rio de Janeiro from 12 to 15 November.

Addressing journalists on the margins of the daylong consultations bringing together representatives of government, the private sector, civil society and the Internet community, Nitin Desai, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for Internet Governance, spelled out the progress made by Forum participants underlining that among the new features this year would be one addressing critical Internet resources. While this issue was raised at the first IGF held in Athens last October/November, the second Forum meeting would expand on the subject to include discussions on the management of the Internet's infrastructure, namely, the root server and domain name systems. The main focus, he explained, related to the extent to which these processes were managed multilaterally, democratically and in a transparent fashion.

Other issues to be highlighted at the meeting in Rio de Janeiro will be freedom of expression on the Internet, multilingual domain names, and the protection of children and child pornography, he added. Additionally, the already conceived "Dynamic Coalitions" will receive considerable attention allowing room for other such partnerships to come out of this second phase.

Also speaking in his capacity as co-chair of the 47-member Advisory Group appointed by Secretary-General tasked to convene the IGF, Mr. Desai explained that his role as such would be to provide a structure to the Forum where a multistakeholder cast of participants could raise specific issues related to Internet governance.

Stressing the importance of this multistakeholder approach, Hadil da Rocha Vianna, Director of Scientific and Technological Affairs at the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-chair of the IGF Advisory Group, explained that today's consultations had gotten off to a very good start with participants from various sectors contributing interesting ideas. Among the issues discussed over the course of the morning were those on the substantive programme and schedule for the Rio meeting. Other issues being discussed dealt with logistical arrangements, the role of the Advisory Group, and the future of the Forum.

"The biggest challenge in this whole process is to see how we can move forward taking into account the multistakeholder aspect of the IGF, and how to accommodate so many different interests, not only from governments, but also the private sector, international organizations and non-governmental organizations", Mr. Vianna said.

Recalling the inaugural meeting in Athens, Mr. Desai said that was the first attempt at a multistakeholder exercise of this nature. "Some of the most positive comments on this first meeting came from the Internet community where issues normally discussed behind closed doors among the Internet community were discussed with people who were not part of that community", he added.

The good news, he continued, was that people were more confident about the process and realized that the stakeholders were coming to Rio not with the intention preach to others about how to do their jobs but rather to voice their own concerns.

Responding to a question, Mr. Desai said there were many things that governments could do that the Internet community could not. Using the example of Internet security, he said it was impossible for the Internet community, including the Internet service providers and those managing its infrastructure, to provide proper security without government support.

Responding to a question on the outcome of the IGF and its future, Mr. Vianna said the IGF should be viewed as an incremental process which would not end in Rio but would continue for years to come.

Addressing a question on representation at the first meeting in Athens, Mr. Vianna said there was a general impression that developing countries were not well represented at that meeting, however, he hoped that would change at the second Forum meeting in Rio.

Expanding on the issue of representation, IGF Executive Coordinator Markus Kummer said there was basically an even representation between governments, civil society, business and the Internet community, at the Athens meeting. It was expected that there would be large participation from Latin American stakeholders at this next phase given the vested interest in the region and its venue.

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