

## IGF 2017 Reporting Template

- Session Title: Good governance with governments: Getting governments involved in internet governance

- Date: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017

- Time: 11:50-13:20

- Session Organizer: Martin Fischer/Lorena Jaume-Palasi

- Chair/Moderator: Helani Galpaya

- Rapporteur/Notetaker: Martin Fischer

- List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

Juuso Moisander – MAG/Finnish government

Frederico Links – Namibian IGF

Natasha Tibinyane – Namibian IGF

Gabriel Ramokotjo – South African IGF

Arda Gerkens - Dutch IGF, Senator, Help-Line Saferinternet

Sunil Abraham - Centre for Internet and Society, India

- Key Issues raised (1 sentence per issue):

(Frederico Links) Governments should be involved early on in the Internet governance process, to create legitimacy and partnership but in a clear multi-stakeholder setup.

(Sunil Abraham) IGF works best as a consultative body, as it is not output oriented and has more dialogical, policy perspective.

(Arda Gerkens) Participation needs more investment, digital multistakeholder consultations are already taking place parallel to IGF fora but they are not as open and generate that much debate and feedback.

(Juuso Moisander) National and international IGF structures are intentionally kept loose to leave space to address the issues important to the different levels.

(Sunil Abraham) Consultations need clear feedback to the consultees and explanation why which suggestions have been taken on board or left out.

(Natasha Tibinyane) It is easier to involve governments on soft topics such as “Access to digital rights” than on hard topics like “cybercrime”.

(Gabriel Ramokotjo) Local IGF processes need to be thought long term, in South Africa they started a white book last year, which now leads to a structured process on Internet governance with clear participation pathways.

(Frederico Links) Most engagement with government is informal, in the early stages it mainly consists of changing negative perspectives about the Internet.

(Sunil Abraham) Too much balancing between the stakeholders drove the governments out of IGF; once civil society entered the intergovernmental side meetings in Bali, no one bothered to show up anymore.

(Arda Gerkens) IGF should produce more outputs, based on the common sense in the room.

(Juuso Moisander) IGF has outputs through reports and links into regional and national IGFs and vice versa.

(Peter Major) We should remind that the IGF and the WG on enhanced cooperation have independent mandates and are both based on the multi-stakeholder approach.

(Gabriel Ramokotjo) Nobody questions the participation of the private sector, why do we second guess the participation of civil society?

(Arda Gerkens) We should have a “special IGF” every 5 years, focussing on a single issue.

(Juuso Moisander) We have a lack of communication, not of governance; Netmundial was an excellent example for a conference, when there was need for one.

- If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:

No presentations, the workshop was held in a round table format.

- Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):

Three main issues were discussed: first, the multi-stakeholder approach (MSA) and whether it is effective in creating policy change, lending legitimacy and representativeness. Most speakers agreed that the MSA is an effective tool to get the foot in the door and contribute. However, Sunil Abraham questioned whether the IGF structures have any measureable impact or are just a fora for capacity building to all those beginning to get involved in the digital policy field. Follow up suggestions included a stronger focus on output, more support for developing countries and a forth and back whether governments or civil society needs to be strengthened in the process.

The second issue concerned the government involvement in the Internet governance processes. Their participation was considered pivotal to the forums, however difficult. Several speakers shared their experiences of high participation thresholds, due to misinformation and worries about the Internet in general on the side of government representatives and administration. The speakers also addressed the issue of priority setting, often done solely by the government and using the IGF structures only for consultation purposes or in a tokenistic manner. If not done by the governments, agenda setting is very hard to be linked to the actual governmental work.

A third focus point was the involvement of developing countries, stressing the need for stronger support in order to catch up in Internet governance field. There is not only a lack of funding but also of expertise on the topics as well as no willingness for cooperation in a multistakeholder fashion. For many of those countries Internet governance is not yet a priority and they run the risk of falling behind and not being heard on future developments.

- Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/ potential next steps /key takeaways (3 paragraphs):

Audience participation suggested three ideas:

- Try out different ways to implement the MSA and see what works best.
- Give a more prominent space to developing countries at IGF, to make it more appealing to their governments to get involved.
- Use new opportunities to get involved in MSA approaches in countries, where currently the government is not involving other stakeholders.

## **Gender Reporting**

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session:

All seats were filled. Maybe around 100

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session:

There was a slightly higher amount of male participants in the room.

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?

The panel and moderation mostly balanced (3/7 female). Helani Galpaya, the moderator encouraged to speak up. In one contribution Natasha Tibinyane shared her insights on the role of gender in the interaction with other stakeholders.

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:

Natasha Tibinyane briefly outlined issues of getting involved in structures and to reach other stakeholders in the beginning of the Namibian IGF creation.