

Submission to IGF MAG from the Center for Technology and Society of the Getulio Vargas Foundation Law School (CTS/FGV)

The Center for Technology and Society of the Getulio Vargas Foundation Law School in Rio de Janeiro (CTS/FGV) would like to thank the IGF Secretariat for this opportunity to share our views on the 10th IGF, held in João Pessoa, Brazil. CTS actively participated in the IGF, with a team of seven researchers and interns, who organized pre-events, several sessions and workshops, an innovative pre-IGF capacity building conference, and took part in the Youth@IGF program. Based on our involvement, we would like to share the following observations and suggestions with the Secretariat and the MAG.

THEMES

The overarching theme of the IGF provided a valuable connection with the overall WSIS review process. Nevertheless, during the WSIS review it was clear that there is a considerable gap between the IGF community and the community that concretely discusses development, including on the perspective of sustainable development and the use of ICTs in order to foster such development. Without bridging the gaps between these communities of experts, it will be hard to promote a truly traversal discussion. The IGF managed to break many silos over the years. Continued efforts to promote the convergence between the WSIS process and the Sustainable development agenda needs to be put in place after the WSIS+10 in order to provide concrete solutions to a variety of developmental issues.

The emphasis on the sub-theme of cybersecurity and trust was an important one. Over the last years, there has been a proliferation of fora in which cybersecurity issues are discussed, such as the UN GGE, the London process and the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, to name just a few, spaces that have relatively limited multistakeholder participation. The IGF provides a unique space in which cybersecurity issues could be discussed in a multistakeholder fashion. Nevertheless, efforts need to be made to bridge the gap between the security community - especially those discussing peace and security issues - and the IGF community. The MAG should consider strategies to pursue this goal at the next IGF.

INTERSESSIONAL WORK & DYNAMIC COALITIONS' OUTCOMES

The intersessional work is key to foster a more output-oriented process, able to produce tangible outcomes, as recommended by the CSTD working group on improvements to the IGF as well as by the WSIS+10 resolution. The experience acquired with the BPFs, the policy options for connecting the next billion and with producing outputs from the dynamic coalitions should be distilled into guidelines for conducting intersessional work in 2016. We suggested that the agenda of next open consultation and MAG meeting should have a session dedicated to identifying these lessons and to forming a team (including BP facilitators and DC chairs) that would be responsible for consolidating these guidelines.

With particular regard to Dynamic Coalitions (DCs), we stress the key role of such IGF element as a powerhouse of ideas, and incubator of multistakeholder synergies towards concrete outputs and coordinated actions. Special consideration should be paid to the group that worked on a methodology to assess the IGF community feedback on the outcomes of the dynamic coalitions. Such informal group, forming an embryonic DC Coordination Group has been regularly working over the past year developing valuable proposals, such as the use of the Idea Rating Sheets for feedback assessment, and promoting coordination and valorisation of the DC works. Initiatives such as the use of the Idea Rating Sheets are a straightforward exercise, but the IGF community needs to be more informed on how to participate if true democratic participation is the goal to be pursued. Some possible ways to enhance such process are:

- The production and distribution of leaflets, explaining the DCs outputs and providing guidance on how to use the Idea Rating Sheets to assess the DCs works. They could be distributed in IGF backpacks and, ideally, should be translated in UN and the host-country languages in order to foster better understanding as well as greater participation of the local community.
- The promotion of further debate regarding the DC outcomes. Participants need to have the chance to read the outcome documents produced by DCs in advance. DC session included discussion of the DC outcomes but such discussions should also be fostered during the DC main session. The readouts of the DC outcome documents during the DC main session was hard to follow and did not leave enough room for discussion. Further diffusion of the DC outcomes during the IGF may help fostering debate and participants engagement in the debate.
- The use of a more ample spectrum of communication tools. Video is a powerful tool for information spreading. Videoclips featuring DC chairs and members explaining the work of the DC and the outcomes they produced could be made available prior to the IGF.
- With regards to the dynamics of the main session on DCs outcomes, it would be advisable to hold discussions right after the presentation of each outcome, so that the participants can have fresh thoughts on the presented work. A final segment to receive feedback can be organised either within the same time slot of the presentation & debate segment or scheduled in a different and subsequent day in order to leave some time for reflection.

ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

We would like to commend the Secretariat and the MAG for choosing João Pessoa to host the IGF. Taking the IGF to the Northeast of Brazil, a developing region, exposed local communities to information, knowledge and networking that could hardly be acquired otherwise. The decision was completely in tune with the need to democratize Internet Governance discussions and widening the spectrum of stakeholders by guaranteeing the participation of a plurality of (new) actors, specially Internet users on the grass roots level. Although airline connections presented challenges for some participants, we believe that the city of João Pessoa was very well prepared to receive the IGF and the hosts made sure that the event itself ran very smoothly. The media coverage of the event shows that the local community got effectively engaged with the subject in all its aspects.

The organization of the meeting was generally good, including the meeting venue, the transportation and the restaurant area. More careful attention needs to be paid next year with regard to rescheduling sessions. More effective ways of communicating these changes, such as a sound system, could have been useful in order to avoid negative impact of attendance of these sessions.

SIDE EVENTS

There was also confusion with the assignment of rooms to pre-events. The agenda of day zero took a long time to be publicized and there were conflicts of schedule that were only noticed a few days prior to the IGF. The fact that so many actors are planning activities on day zero makes careful planning and preparation even more important.

In the week prior to the IGF, CTS co-organized a capacity building event aimed at empowering the local community and fostering the engagement of local actors in partnership with ICANN, ISOC, CGI.br, ANID and the government of the State of Paraíba. The event aimed at sharing knowledge about key topics on the agenda of the IGF, such as network neutrality, privacy, and multistakeholder governance. We believe that this moment was very valuable and we recommend that future IGF hosts consider organizing or giving support to similar initiatives. Partnerships with local institutions (universities, companies, NGOs) could be built, so that local actors can engage in the debates and fully enjoy the unique opportunity that hosting an IGF represent for a city. We believe this is an essential element of a truly open, inclusive and democratic IGF, focused on tearing down the barriers between global and local communities.

YOUTH@IGF

As a positive innovation, we would highlight the youth participation at the 10th IGF and the importance of maintaining this type of program to foster the engagement of new actors in Internet governance. We salute the organisation of such initiative and praise their organisers for making possible to include younger generation into Internet Governance debates. It seems indeed unrealistic to discuss the future of the Internet without including the future of Internet users as active participants.

With regards to the substance of the program, even though it provided an important opportunity for capacity building, being at the IGF and understanding how youth could impact the IGF meaningfully was quite confusing. In certain workshops, the views of young people were not given due consideration. Quoting from one of the Youth@IGF members' statement on the open mic session:

“We had many youngsters, we had lots of support, but we had to overcome hurdles. It was difficult to take space at the panels. We tried to take a stance by asking questions, but sometimes people were not interested in our positions. Sometimes they did not answer our questions. Yesterday, there was this panel with youth, about youth, and there was no youth participation. When we complained, they said you can complain about it in Facebook. Let me say that we are the future of IGF. We young people, we grew in this environment. We have a lot to say. But we need to hold voice. We are not here just for you to see us along the corridors. We need to be heard. Thank you very much.”

It is important to acknowledge the creative potential of youth to innovate, transform and strengthen the legitimacy of the IGF. During the IGF, some of these young participants came together to create a Youth Declaration (<http://igf2015.br/declaration/>) and a Youth Observatory, which recently was awarded with a sponsorship by the Beyond the Net Funding Programme of Internet Society. This seems a very concrete example of how youth empowerment can create tangible IGF outputs.



THE DISSONANT NOTE ON A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

During the IGF, a group of local civil society activists conducted a peaceful protest, holding signs during one of the main sessions. The signs were torn apart and there are concerning reports that activists were monitored henceforth, or even forbidden to enter the venue (a disproportionate decision that was recalled on the course of the event). We would like to suggest that the topic be discussed by the MAG. On the one hand, UN rules should be made clear in advance to IGF participants, so that they are fully aware of the activities that would not be allowed. On the other hand, if peaceful manifestations do happen, UN personnel needs to be instructed on how to properly react. We hope that this IGF sets a precedent and that no other IGF participant is forbidden to enter the venue because he/she exercised the fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association. Lessons learned from this and other cases should be exploited by the MAG to positively improve the IGF process strengthening democracy and fostering the full enjoyment of IGF participants' rights.