

# **APNIC 28**

## **Internet Governance and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**

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# The Internet as a bone of contention

- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) put a new issue on the agenda of international cooperation: the Internet.
- Recognition of the importance of the Internet as backbone of globalization.
- Clash between the private sector / Internet community and governments.
- Two visions of the world:
  - Bottom-up distributed cooperation vs.
  - Classical intergovernmental cooperation.

# Internet Governance

- Broad discussions on what is meant by 'Internet Governance' between the two phases of WSIS.
- Report by the Working Group on Internet Governance fed into second phase of WSIS.
- WSIS endorsed WGIG report to a large extent.
- Tunis Agenda:
  - adopted a broad definition of Internet Governance ("more than naming and addressing");
  - identified a broad range of public policy issues;
  - proposed a "new space for dialogue" ("Forum");
  - proposed further internationalization of Internet governance arrangements.

# Tunis Agenda

Recognizes that “existing arrangements (...) have worked effectively”, but notes that...

...there is room for improvement!

Two pronged decision:

- WSIS invites UNSG to “convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue”;
- WSIS recognizes “need for enhanced cooperation to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities”.

# Open questions

- Meaning of “enhanced cooperation” ...
  - reforms within existing institutions?
  - reform debate outside existing institutions ?
- Relationship between “enhanced cooperation” and IGF?

# Important cornerstones

WSIS recognizes:

- Academic and technical communities as a new stakeholder group.
- Importance of a multistakeholder approach at all levels – national, regional, global.
- Role of private sector and civil society as a driver of innovation in the development of the Internet.

# Roles of stakeholders

- Different roles for different stakeholders.
- Governments are the 'decision makers', but...
- ...decisions need to be based on solid understanding of issues.
- Need for dialogue between private sector, civil society, the technical community and governments.
- Governments need to signal issues of concern.
- Other stakeholders need to advise on feasibility and consequences of envisaged solutions.

# The IGF

What is the IGF? Easier to define what it is not....:

...not a UN Conference;

...not a new organization;

...not a decision-making body;

...no defined membership.

Provisional mandate of five years – subject to review.



# What the IGF is:

- Based on a 'soft governance' approach.
- IGF has the power of recognition:
  - can identify issues of concern;
  - can draw attention to an issue;
  - can put an issue on the agenda of international cooperation.
- Can shape public opinion and decision making.

# IGF annual meetings

- Annual meeting of four days.
- Three meetings so far:
  - Athens 2006;
  - Rio de Janeiro 2007;
  - Hyderabad 2008.
- After Europe, Latin America and Asia:
- 2009 is Africa's turn –  
Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

# From Athens to Sharm El Sheikh

## Athens:

- Four broad themes: Access, Diversity, Security and Openness
- Two cross-cutting priorities: development; capacity building

## Rio de Janeiro:

- Fifth theme: Critical Internet Resources

## Hyderabad:

- Linking up related themes (e.g. security – openness)

## Sharm El Sheikh:

- Treat different themes differently (What are we talking about? How do we address this problem? Share opinions and listen to each other.)

# The Sharm El Sheikh agenda

- Overall theme: “Internet governance - creating opportunities for all”.
- Agenda:
  - Managing critical Internet resources
  - Security, Openness and Privacy
  - Access and Diversity
  - Internet Governance in light of WSIS Principles
  - Taking stock and the way forward
  - Emerging issues: Impact of social networks.

# Development

- Sharm meeting will devote one session to WSIS Principles.
- Internet governance to be placed in WSIS and MDG context ('digital divide').
- "Internet governance for development"
- Two aspects:
  - Effective and meaningful participation in Internet governance arrangements;
  - Building of capacity to address Internet governance issues.

# National and Regional IGFs

Emerging interest in creating national and regional IGFs.

- LAC region (Montevideo 2008, Rio 2009)
- Caribbean IGF
- East Africa IGF (Nairobi 2008 and 2009)
- West Africa IGF (Accra 2009)
- EuroDIG (2008 and 2009)
- Commonwealth IGF
- UK
- Italy

Sharm El Sheikh:

opportunity to bring in regional perspectives.

# National and Regional Policy and Policy Coherence

- Much of the IGF discussion deals with international factors.
  - However: National policies are important
  - Enabling environment is a key factor to allow for development and deployment of the Internet
  - Need for policy coherence at all levels:
    - International
    - Regional
    - National
- => International coordination needs to build on coordination at the national and regional levels

# The IGF Mandate

- IGF mandate provisional for 5 years, subject to review.
- UN Secretary-General requested to hold “formal consultations with IGF participants on the desirability of a continuation of the Forum.”
- Consultations will take place at 4th IGF Meeting in Sharm EL Sheikh.
- Based on consultations, Secretary-General will make recommendations to UN Membership.
- Decision by UN General Assembly on whether or not to extend the IGF Mandate in December 2010



# IGF Review

Questions to be addressed:

- Did the IGF fulfil its mandate?
- Did the IGF have any impact?
- Was the IGF useful?
- Did the IGF foster multistakeholder dialogue? Etc.

# Strengths and weaknesses

Different views on strengths and weaknesses:

- Some see lack of decision-making power as a weakness:
  - They want the IGF 'to produce concrete results'.
- Others see it as a strength:
  - The lack of decision-making power creates a space for open dialogue.

# What IGF can offer

- Platform that promotes cooperation involving all stakeholders.
- Interaction with people and institutions that participants would not meet otherwise.
- Dealing with issues outside the remit of technical organizations.