

MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy
Online Meeting
31 October 2024 at 15:00 UTC

Summary Report

The 86th virtual meeting of the IGF MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on 31 October 15:00 UTC. The meeting was moderated by Titti Cassa, and a recording of the meeting is available upon request.

The co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the agenda.

Agenda

1. [Pact of the Future/GDC](#)
2. [WSIS+20 review draft letter](#)
3. [IGF strategic vision](#)
4. AoB

Discussion

1. [Pact of the Future/GDC](#)

Titti introduced the agenda, and passed on apologies for Chris, Bruna, and Amrita. She noted that there had been a roundtable session hosted by the Office of the Tech Envoy (OSET) in the past week. She noted that there had been discussion of greater integration and coordination between the OSET, the IGF, the GDC, and the WSIS processes. She noted that there had also been efforts to highlight the role of NRIs in this area.

Jorge noted that the discussions about the establishment of the office under the Secretary-General (as requested in paragraph 71 of the GDC), and the Tech Envoy is planning to be in Geneva next week to meet with missions, agencies, and other stakeholders (relating to the GDC implementation plan). He also noted that the ICT4D Resolution is currently being negotiated, and there are elements that relate to the GDC and to the report from the AI Advisory Board (which contains some proposals that go further than the GDC in relation to AI governance structures).

Justin suggested that people remember that the GDC doesn't have a single implementation process - alongside the OSET initiative, the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance is ongoing, there are conversations on other elements of the GDC during the ITU WTSA-24 (which is more on technical standards), and more recently at the UNESCO Executive Board, particularly on AI. The ITU Council Working Group on WSIS and SDGs is also discussing these issues. Hopefully these processes will complement each other, but he noted that it's clear that the IGF can and should play an active role in relation to implementation of the GDC. Titti agreed that it is difficult to follow the many processes and discussions.

Wout noted that he participated in one of the OSET Town Halls and asked about the "black box" nature of the processes - as a Dynamic Coalition that contributed to GDC discussions, there was no indication of what happened to that input. However, he noted that Dynamic Coalitions are seen as a significant element in how the IGF can follow up - he suggested that

the IGF itself should stress the role of DCs, to capitalise on the awareness that seems to exist in New York circles.

Titti noted that another Town Hall will be held on 24 November. Jennifer noted that some details of mapping were expected to come out in November; she also noted that in relation to the endorsement process, there was some unclarity, but the indication from OSET was that organisations wishing to be considered in the implementation mapping exercise need to complete the endorsement (or "interest") form. There is no deadline; however, current endorsers are expected to be announced in late December. It's important for the community to have this information.

2. WSIS+20 review draft letter

On the draft letter, Titti noted that it had been shared to the MAG mailing list, and there was a post from Juan about concerns with this approach. Juan noted that there are some issues which are not comprehensively shared among the IGF community and UN member states (who will eventually decide on the extension or modification of the IGF mandate). One concern is that there is a discussion in New York about multistakeholderism and how it can be applied in other UN processes - that surpasses the IGF scope and is very politicised, and we may wish to tread carefully, or we risk undermining support for the renewal of a multistakeholder IGF. He believes that the IGF has enough merits with its current mandate (which he noted is in reference to the IGF Vision Document, discussed in the next agenda item).

Titti noted that there is a need to deliver the IGF message about the importance of a multistakeholder approach, particularly in light of the GDC process which recently concluded. This could strengthen the position of the CSTD. Juan agreed, but suggested we should be careful about references to NETmundial+10, as this is a red line for some countries. Our goal is not to evangelise a broader adoption of the multistakeholder model, but to highlight the positive role that it has played in the IGF (and should continue to play there).

Jorge noted that he agrees with the goal of preserving the multistakeholder approach and the IGF; there may be some divergence on how to go about it, and he believes that the IGF institutions (the LP and MAG) have a role in advising the Secretary-General about Internet governance, so it should not be out of scope to send a communication about the importance of the multistakeholder approach in this context. He noted that past communications have been useful, and this should continue that tradition (to which the Secretary-General has been receptive). If we remain silent, this could be taken as a signal of the IGF being more defensive (particularly in comparison to its engagement on the GDC). He agreed more work can be done on the tone to reach consensus.

Mark noted the Dynamic Coalitions Coordination Group, and that this group has not received the draft or had a chance to respond, and that this should be included as a step in the drafting process.

3. IGF strategic vision

Titti noted that the draft IGF Vision document has been shared at the last MAG meeting, and we are still receiving comments and integrating those. She noted that there had been points about not changing the mandate (which is sufficiently broad), but this breadth should be

stressed in the IGF strategic communications. She also noted that the WG-Strategy Co-Chairs will discuss the document with the LP in the coming days.

Juan made two suggestions: on form, he suggested that it may be a little long - he noted that when developing the WGIG report in 2004, there were two versions produced - a concise version and a longer version for reference - for different audiences. This may be a useful approach for this document. On substance: he suggested that the larger document should include all views of the group. The shorter version could reflect the consensus opinion, but the full version should reflect the divergent view of all participants. He noted that this approach was taken both for the WGIG report and the report of the Open-ended Working Group. Titti suggested that the comments have been collected, and are reflected publicly; she agreed that it could be possible to have two versions; however, she was less certain about the need to include all opinions in the long version of the document.

Xiao suggested that we should look ahead, including looking to the AI governance processes outlined in the GDC, which can fall within the IGF scope - the vision document could make the call to attach this AI governance process to the IGF event.

Jorge agreed that we should diplomatically advocate that the IGF is well-positioned to host the global dialogue on AI governance proposed in the GDC. He has suggested some language in the document to this effect. Regarding the comments from Juan, he noted that he has not seen too many disagreements in the working group regarding the document, and we have a tradition of attempting to come to rough consensus in this group and the MAG more broadly. He agreed that the document is perhaps too lengthy, and it may be useful to have an Executive Summary attached.

Markus commended the authors of the document; however, he agreed it may be too long. He noted a couple of factual errors that he will provide updates on; he also noted that there is some sensitivity with regard to the IGF being part of the UN budget, and we should get some input from government stakeholders on the call whether this is even a realistic option, and what may be the associated political costs and risks.

Titti noted that the document draft was open for a long time, but can still integrate some further changes, and encouraged working group members to make their comments in the document.

Wout queried Juan's concern and whether a mention of NETmundial+10 should be a red line. On AI, he suggested that integration with the GDC proposal would potentially move the IGF away from being an annual event. He also noted that this kind of change would come with consequences for Dynamic Coalitions, and the DCs need to be involved in this discussion. There is a need to understand the appetite of DCs, generally, to be part of a more heavyweight institutional structure.

Isra reiterated that there won't be a single GDC implementation track or activity - it is spread across multiple agencies and venues; the key point for the IGF Vision is to begin identifying how the elements of the IGF ecosystem will integrate with these different GDC implementation activities. He suggested that a mapping of GDC implementation activities will be very useful and important - OSET is currently expected to produce something along these lines, but we need to look at how to best represent the IGF in this activity.

Wout highlighted that coordination across the IGF ecosystem is essential; having DCs taking part in implementation work and this not being reflected in the IGF self-mapping of its engagement on implementation activity would be a risk.

Titti also noted that the working group attempted a mapping exercise regarding Dynamic Coalition activities a couple of years back, which was useful.

4. AoB

The next call will be held on 21 November at 19:00 UTC.

List of participants

1. Ana Christina Neves, Government of Portugal
2. Carlos Shaban, Independent Expert
3. Celin Bal. IGF Secretariat
4. Concettina Cassa, Group's Co-Chair, Government of Italy
5. Flavio Wagner, CGI.br and University of Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
6. Jim Prendergast, Independent Expert
7. Justin Fair, IGF MAG member
8. Isra Rosas, ISOC
9. Giacomo Mazzone, Independent Expert
10. Jorge Cancio, Government of Switzerland
11. Juan Fernandez, Independent Expert
12. Jennifer Chung, former IGF MAG member
13. Neil Dundas, Independent Expert
14. Mark Carvell, EuroDiG
15. Yuping Ying, Independent Expert
16. Luisa Lendi, Independent Expert
17. Markus Kummer, former IGF MAG Chair
18. Muriel Alapini, Independent Expert
19. Rudy Nolde, German Government
20. Shinj Sato, Independent Expert
21. Wout de Natris, Independent Expert
22. Junko Kawachi, Independent Expert
23. Xiao Zhang, IGF MAG Member