

IGF 2017: Pre-event Workshop report

- **Session Title:** Towards Meaningful Multistakeholder Mechanisms in Internet Governance

- **Date:** 17 December 2017
- **Time:** 1:00-3:00 pm
- **Session Organizer:** UNESCO
- **Chair/Moderator:** Guy Berger, UNESCO Director for Freedom of Expression and Media Development.
- **Rapporteur/Notetaker:** Ms. Xianhong Hu, UNESCO
- **List of speakers and their institutional affiliations:**
 - Prof Kyung Sin (KS) Park, Korea University Law School
 - Ms. Jac SM Kee, APC
 - Mr. Benedicto Fonseca, Brazilian Ambassador for Internet issues
 - Ms. Grace Githaiga, Kenya ICT Action Network
 - Mr. Frank La Rue, UNESCO ADG for Communication and information

- **Key Issues raised** (1 sentence per issue):
 - UNESCO launched the 11th edition of its [Series on Internet Freedom](#) titled *[What if we all governed the Internet? Advancing multistakeholder participation in Internet governance](#)* during the session.
 - Discussing about Internet governance and multistakeholder participation, participants insisted on the “crucial need to institutionalize the multistakeholder approach in Internet governance at the national, regional and global levels”.
 - The study was elaborated in an effort to implement UNESCO’s Internet Universality framework, which advocates for a Human rights-based, Open and Accessible Internet, governed by Multi-stakeholder participation.

- If participants said that the current trend is “turning in favor of the multistakeholder approach”, they also raised the issue of the legal challenges as well as the need to “institutionalize multistakeholder dialogue in order to guarantee common standards in practice”.

- **If there were presentations during the session, please provide a 1-paragraph summary for each presentation:**
 - UNESCO launched the 11th edition of its Series on Internet Freedom titled What if we all governed the Internet? Advancing multistakeholder participation in Internet governance during a session held on 17 December 2017 at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Geneva, Switzerland. With the presence of Benedicto Fonseca, the Brazilian Ambassador for Internet issues as well as Frank La Rue, UNESCO’s ADG for Communication and Information, the Organization presented the study which unpacks assumptions on how the Internet is shaped and stresses the ongoing relevance of involving multiple actors in the development of a collaborative and sustainable Internet.
 - At the end of the session, Guy Berger and Benedicto Fonseca, Brazilian Ambassador for Internet issues, took the opportunity to launch the Portuguese and Spanish versions of UNESCO’s publication Keystones to foster inclusive knowledge societies: access to information and knowledge, freedom of expression, privacy and ethics on a global Internet. This work was made possible thanks to the contribution of the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society (Cetic.br).

- **Please describe the Discussions that took place during the workshop session (3 paragraphs):**
 - UNESCO launched the 11th edition of its Series on Internet Freedom titled What if we all governed the Internet? Advancing multistakeholder participation in Internet governance during a session held on 17 December 2017 at the Internet

Governance Forum (IGF) in Geneva, Switzerland. With the presence of Benedicto Fonseca, the Brazilian Ambassador for Internet issues as well as Frank La Rue, UNESCO's ADG for Communication and Information, the Organization presented the study which unpacks assumptions on how the Internet is shaped and stresses the ongoing relevance of involving multiple actors in the development of a collaborative and sustainable Internet.

- UNESCO representatives Guy Berger and Xianhong Hu, opened and moderated the session, highlighting that the study was elaborated in an effort to implement UNESCO's Internet Universality framework, which advocates for a Human rights-based, Open and Accessible Internet, governed by Multi-stakeholder participation (the R-O-A-M principles). It responds more specifically to the action recommended by the CONNECTing the Dots Outcome Document that UNESCO "supports Member States in ensuring that Internet policy and regulation involves the participation of all stakeholders, and integrates international human rights and gender equality".
- As pointed out by Anri van der Spuy, independent expert commissioned for the research, "our understanding of multistakeholder participation in Internet governance must adapt to meet new challenges as the Internet becomes more central to knowledge societies". To strengthen UNESCO's role in the field, this Study provides the results of a comprehensive investigation of the evolution of multistakeholder participation in Internet governance in theory and in practice. Four good practices are assessed, covering the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet), the Marco Civil da Internet, legal challenges in South Korea and the Internet Governance Forum's "best practice forum on Gender". Referring to her experience in Kenya, Grace Githaiga (KICTANet) said that "there is no single multistakeholder approach and each experience is linked to a specific context". She also mentioned that "we should keep realistic expectations from these approaches". Jac SM Kee from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) then talked about the ways in which the multistakeholder approach "helped recognize online gender-based violence" in the IGF context.

- **Please describe any Participant suggestions regarding the way forward/potential next steps/key takeaways (3 paragraphs):**
 - As pointed out by Anri van der Spuy, independent expert commissioned for the research, “our understanding of multistakeholder participation in Internet governance must adapt to meet new challenges as the Internet becomes more central to knowledge societies”.
 - Referring to her experience in Kenya, Grace Githaiga (KICTANet) said that “there is no single multistakeholder approach and each experience is linked to a specific context”. She also mentioned that “we should keep realistic expectations from these approaches”.
 - Jac SM Kee from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) then talked about the ways in which the multistakeholder approach “helped recognize online gender-based violence” in the IGF context.

Gender Reporting

- **Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 60**
- **Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: 30**
- **To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women’s empowerment?**
 - The Internet Universality Indicators are developed within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, thus keeping a special focus on gender, children and youth. One of the major questions raised during the session is how to bring more rights, openness, accessibility participation to women around the world, and to improve their participation in Internet Governance issues. Gender equality is, in fact, part of the cross-cutting indicators meant to be broad public policy goals affecting the overall indicators framework.

- **If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:**
 - Jac SM Kee from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) talked about the ways in which the multistakeholder approach “helped recognize online gender-based violence” in the IGF context.