

MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy

Online Meeting XIII
4 February 2021 at 2 p.m. UTC

Summary Report

The thirteenth virtual meeting of the IGF 2020 MAG's Working Group (WG) on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on February 4 2020 at 2 p.m. UTC. The meeting was hosted and moderated by the Group's co- chairs, Concettina Cassa and Anriette Esterhuysen. The list of participants is annexed to this report. The recording of the meeting is available only to the meeting participants upon request.

The co-chairs opened the meeting by introducing the agenda:

Agenda

- A. Reporting on the document [Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021](#) and next steps to follow up on the WG-strategy's proposals;
- B. Activity plan for 2021;
- C. Update on behalf of the Office of the Envoy on Technology;
- D. Update on IGF strengthening/improvements from UN DESA and the Secretariat;
- E. Update on parliamentary track;
- F. Updates on the other WGs related to the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation from WG-strategy participants;
- G. AOB.

A. Reporting on the document "Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021" and next steps to follow up on the WG-strategy's proposals.

Output Document:

[Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021](#)

Summary of key points:

Titti informed the participants that the document has been updated to collect the inputs received by the WG's participants and it has been sent to the MAG, UNDESA and to the Co-champions. The concrete "Proposals for IGF2021 process and design" were added as an annex to the overall document.

Wolfgang Kleinwächter observed that one of the key issues that needs further clarification is related to the MHLB's mandate, its composition and the linkages to the decision-making bodies. He highlighted the importance of knowing who will take the decisions on how to proceed.

Next steps:

WG's participants agreed to schedule a virtual call to share the content of the document to the MAG.

B. Activity plan for 2021.

Output Documents:

1. [Proposed activities for 2021](#)
2. [Action areas selected as priorities by the wg for further action](#)

Summary of key points:

Anriette opened the floor to collect more comments and suggestions on the two documents. She recalled that the purpose of the agenda item was to get the mandate from the working group so that the plan of activities could be presented to the MAG as a broad outline of what the working group will undertake in 2021.

Paul Blaker expressed support to the documents, particularly for what concerns the links to decision makers saying that decision makers also include private companies. He recalled the support to priority three related to the use of the IGF website to promote links to sources of information and observatories. On this aspect, he said that this could be done as part of the website project and that maybe it will not require a lot of policy discussion from the WG. He asked to add one more priority related to having actionable and concrete outcomes as this is considered one of the biggest challenges for the IGF as mentioned in the digital cooperation agenda for an IGF plus.

Jorge Cancio expressed support for the proposals indicated by Paul Blaker adding that for the document "proposed activities in 2021" it would be useful to see it as a sort of a rolling document. He said that it should be considered that the document on priorities finalized in January includes only a subset of what the WG will do in 2021.

Sophie Peresson suggested to have a mid-year review or assessment where it could be discussed and added other areas that need to be addressed by the WG.

Next steps:

WG's participants expressed support for the two documents and agreed to schedule a virtual meeting to share the document "*Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021*" and the plan of the WG's activities for 2021 to the MAG. It will be checked if there is space to present it during the Open Consultations and MAG meeting.

C. Update on behalf of the Office of the Envoy on Technology;

Summary of key points:

Jason Munyan gave an overview of the Roundtables/Recommendations Working Groups that have been activated to follow up on the High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. He recalled that the eight Recommendations Groups are all multi stakeholder and that they proceed at different paces in different levels. He reported the main ongoing activities:

- 1) The Working Group on **Global Connectivity** is convening an expert discussion on financing connectivity that will be a priority topic over the course of 2021.
- 2) The Working Group on **Digital Public Goods** is very active on open data and the different aspects of making content available and particularly on data related to the SDGs.
- 3) The Working Group on **Inclusion** has started a multi stakeholder coalition on gender and will guide the development of other coalitions for different demographic groups
- 4) The Recommendation Working Group on **Capacity Building/Digital Help Desks** led by UNICEF and ITU is discussing the capacity building needs.
- 5) The Working Group on **Human Rights** together with the team of USG, Fabrizio Hochschild, and other partners have been involved in a task force that will launch in three weeks, before the Human Rights Council, a website, a one stop digital shop on human rights that is going to have human rights mechanisms to give guidance on different issues related to human rights online.
- 6) As one of the recommendations from UN SG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation to the Working Group on **Artificial Intelligence** is to have an advisory body on artificial intelligence, the WG is collecting inputs, on a platform that has been set up for different stakeholders to give thoughts, on what should be the scope of this advisory body. This process will take a while. UNDESA takes part in the WG and has prepared a draft guide on artificial intelligence.
- 7) One of the recommendations from UN SG's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation to the Working Group on **Global Commitment on Digital Trust and Security** is to have a declaration that is on hold (<<"A broad and overarching statement, endorsed by all Member States, in which common elements of understanding on digital trust and security are outlined, could help to shape a shared vision for digital cooperation based on global values.....">>). The meeting with the Open Ended Working Group as a key element for some collaboration with the working group on trust and security has been postponed to May.
- 8) The Working Group on Recommendation 5 A/B of Digital Cooperation Architecture has received several recommendations by UNDESA, the MAG, the strategy WG, etc. On the MHLB's implementation, the final decision on how to implement it will be taken by the UN SG that will consider not only the structure or composition that is proposed for the MHLB but will also look at its sustainability.

Jason added that there seems to be a substantial interest in having a multi stakeholder Task Force working on Environment that will look at not just on how mitigating the harms caused by e-waste, energy consumption and adverse impacts that digital technologies could have in the environment, but will also focus on contributions, and different ways (monitoring, etc.) on how to improve the environment using ICT and smart technologies. Jason mentioned that for the General Assembly that will be held on the 27th of April, the President of the General Assembly has convened a high level thematic debate on digital cooperation and connectivity that will be a one day event.

Jorge Cancio recalled the IGF intersessional activity on "Policy network on the environment". He suggested avoiding duplication and using this initiative instead of setting up a new group.

Anriette asked if UN DESA will be involved in the establishment of the MHLB or if it will be part of the consultation process. She also observed that the different thematic areas related to the Recommendations WGs would require some kind of platform where people could get together to talk about the progress. She observed that it could be useful to start a conversation to have the opportunity to use the IGF as a space for all these different streams to come together.

On the first question, Jason replied that UN DESA could be involved in the further consultation process that could be activated by the USG Office. On the second question related to the platform, Jason said that probably the "Spark Blue platform" created by UNDP could be used as it has already been used for collecting inputs from the Roundtable on Artificial Intelligence. He added that one of the priorities for the team of the Technical Envoy will be to establish a website to share information on these different thematic areas but he doesn't see the IGF as being the platform to be used for this scope. He added that for the follow up to the Roadmap, he does see the IGF as an important contributor to the different recommendations groups.

Wai Min Kwok recalled the discussion UN DESA is having with the USG's team on Recommendation 3A and the steps taken to get a fundraising/evaluation consultant. On MHLB he said that it should find a way to have a wider engagement and to be sure that all Member States are fully aware about it. He added that there will be a consultative process and more information on this process will be shared in the next months. He also recalled the UN Secretary-General's remarks to Member States on Priorities for 2021

where the Internet Governance Forum was explicitly mentioned in the remarks related to digital technologies. He observed that this is quite rare to happen.

Jorge Cancio recalled the position from the Swiss Government on the IGF as the main platform for having discussions with Member States and the whole IG Community on many of the issues that are part of the UN Secretary General Roadmap. He said that the IGF platform should be used to the utmost possibility avoiding creating duplication for what could be channeled through the IGF at the annual meeting.

He also explained that the "Policy Network on Environment" is intended to cover environmental and digital issues in a holistic manner saying that one of the rationales for creating this policy network came from the Roadmap itself. He added that duplicating efforts should be avoided, especially considering that many stakeholders are showing interest in joining this policy network and that it is open to everyone.

On the Multi Stakeholder High Level body, Jorge reminded that there have already been very long conversations and consultations with Members States and all stakeholder groups He hoped that the work that has been done will be the basis of any further consultation on that.

Fiona Alexander shared that the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation was a very important initiative to give a concise vision of the ongoing initiatives and ideas on IGF+. She added that, on the opposite, the coordination of the activities related to the Roadmap seems adding more work and some confusion. She asked if there is any document or website to get information on the ongoing activities related to the roundtables connected to the Roadmap.

Jason explained that the working groups related to the HLPDC and to the Roadmap are all open. Several stakeholders joined and are participating but some of them do not feel comfortable having their internal plans of actions released to the public. He added that the USG's Office is planning to put some of these updates on the new website after the Co-champions and others stakeholders agreed to release them.

About the Environment Task force, Jason shared that the idea of the taskforce was presented by David Johnson and some other people and that the USG's team, as from its role, should listen and see what could be done to move the things forward. Jason said that he will update the network on this aspect to see if the IGF PNE initiative satisfies the request presented or if some complementary action is needed. He added that the role of the Technical Envoy is to create liaisons with the IGF, the MAG and all the different involved entities avoiding duplication and see how best they can work together.

About USG's suspension, he said that there were some allegations and that Fabrizio Hochschild will be on leave while these allegations will be investigated, in the meantime the USG's office is continuing its activities.

Next steps:

Jason Munyan will check the possibility to create synergies between the proposal presented by David Johnson to create a new multistakeholder Taskforce on the Environment and the IGF Policy Network on Environment.

D. Update on IGF strengthening from UNDESA and the Secretariat;

Summary of key points:

Wai Min Kwok shared some information about the initiatives undertaken by UN DESA to strengthen the IGF. He referred to par. 93 c) of the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation on the Parliamentary track that will become an IGF recurring event and could expand to the NRIs level. On fundraising he said that UN DESA is recruiting a consultant that will support UN DESA and the IGF Secretariat to define a strategy and a more sustainable IGF. He added that more will be done by UN DESA on capacity building also using the remaining funds made available by the German Government in IGF 2019. These funds will be used primarily for supporting global South.

Chengetai gave an update on the Parliamentarians and High Level Leaders sessions saying that both tracks will be strengthened. For 2021 there will be several intersessional activities that will lead to the parliamentary track while for the High Level Leaders track the discussion is ongoing with the Poland host country; the idea is to involve more Ministers and High Level Leaders from the global South. He added that the fundraising consultant UNDESA is going to recruit will be also involved in improving IGF visibility.

Chengetai informed the WG's participants that the funds from the UK Government will be used to redesign the IGF website. A consultation from the different stakeholders and users will be activated and has been included in the terms of reference of the people who will take care of the development. He also mentioned the multiyear plan saying that the IGF Secretariat is discussing it with the Polish and Japan Governments. He added that UNDESA and the IGF Secretariat are participating in the Capacity Building Roundtable led by UNDP and ITU saying that the IGF Secretariat is putting efforts on PNE track seeing how it could be increased synergy with the other programs, including the proposal from David Johnson to the USG's team. The IGF Secretariat is also working together with the Polish Government on Youth program to strengthen Youth participation.

Jorge observed that there is a need for close cooperation between UNDESA, the IGF Secretariat and the Strategy WG on implementing §93 of the Roadmap, especially now that the WG is finalizing the implementation plan of activities for 2021 – and inquired whether there were any specific questions to the MAG WG where this WG could be helpful.

Wai Min Kwok observed that the plan of activities the WG is proposing should be considered in the whole IGF context and that duplication should be avoided by trying to synergize the efforts. He added that a further discussion with Anriette is needed on this aspect.

Anriette suggested to Wai Min Kwok to join the call the Working Group is scheduling with the MAG to share the content of the document “*Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021*” as it could be a good opportunity to talk about the follow up and to work on a “Collaborative Implementation Plan”. She added that one of the main points raised by the WG is that it is not clear who takes the responsibility for the follow up. She suggested to Wai Min to share his comments to the document and to use them as a basis to be sure of not duplicating efforts and initiatives.

E. Update on parliamentary track;

Summary of key points:

Wolfgang Kleinwächter gave an update on the Parliamentarians track proposal saying that it is suggesting to set up an informal Parliamentarian IGF Group. He added that the German Digital Committee started the process of collecting the experience from parliamentarians via questionnaire. The outcomes of this consultation will be presented by the former MAG representative of German Government in the next Open Consultations and MAG meeting.

Chengetai said that IGF Secretariat is working on Parliamentarian track and will be happy to work with German Government that started this initiative during IGF 2019 in Berlin.

Adam Peake observed that Parliamentarians should be involved not only in separate tracks but also in other intersessional activities as BPFs and DCs. He suggested to draft a brief summary of the IGF intersessional activities so that they could have a better opportunity to participate in the groups they are interested in.

Wolfgang highlighted that there are two layers on the Parliamentarians track. One is related to the communication among the parliamentarians themselves and the other is related to the communication between parliamentarians and the existing groups. On the first one there is no intersessional work. On the second layer there is a lot of work to be done to create sensitivity and to inform Parliaments about the IGF intersessional works related to the issues that are on the agenda of national Parliament's as this could help parliamentarians to improve their process to adopt laws related to digital issues.

Anriette raised the point of “*Communicating IGF 2020 outcomes*”, as a way of connecting the parliamentarians to the work of the BPFs, the thematic tracks and of the DCs.

Chengetai informed the WG’s participants that the IGF Secretariat is constructing a mailing list of parliamentarians who are in charge of Committees dealing with Internet Governance and that after the mailing list will be completed the IGF Secretariat would move forward trying to communicate with the parliamentarians at large. He said that this would be the first step that will be done. On the question related to the role the MAG would have in the development of the parliamentary track it was said that this would need further discussion.

Wolfgang suggested including the item of Parliamentarian track as a special item to be discussed in the agenda of the Open Consultations MAG meeting that will be held at the end of February. He added that there are several players involved in this discussion (UN DESA, IGF Secretariat, Polish Government, German Government, etc.) and the model that will be adopted will impact the IGF till 2025.

Roman Chukov, shared the position of Russian Government with regard to the High Level body saying that is something which should be proposed by UNDESA as it has the mandate by the General Assembly.

Wai Min Kwok added that UN DESA has always been in close touch with the previous office of the UN 75th anniversary and also with the Tech Envoy office. On the consultations that UN DESA plans on the MHLB, further details will be given in the future.

Next steps:

WG’s participants agree to present the document [Proposals on strategic improvements to the IGF and operational measures in 2021](#)” to the MAG and to update the documents:

1. [Proposed activities for 2021](#)
2. [Action areas selected as priorities by the wg for further action”](#)

Next meeting: the next virtual meeting of the WG is planned for **February 18 – 2 PM UTC.**

Annex 1:

List of participants

1. Adam Peake, MAG Member, ICANN
2. Anja Gengo, IGF Secretariat
3. Anriette Esterhuysen, IGF 2020 MAG Chair, Group’s Co-Chair
4. Ben Wallis, Microsoft, Independent Expert, past MAG Member

5. Chengetai Masango, IGF Secretariat
6. Chris Disspain, Independent Expert
7. Concettina Cassa, Group's Co-Chair, Government of Italy, past MAG Member
8. Eileen Cejas, Youth IGF Argentina, Independent expert
9. Esteve Sanz, European Commission rep on the MAG
10. Flavio Wagner, CGI.br/ University of Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil, past MAG Member
11. Fiona Alexander, Independent expert, past MAG Member
12. Jason Munyan, HLPDC Secretariat
13. Joice Chen , Independent Expert, MAG Member
14. Jim Prendergast, Independent Expert
15. Jyoti Panday, Internet Governance Project, India
16. Jorge Cancio, Government of Switzerland, MAG Member (host country rep)
17. Luis Bobo, IGF Secretariat
18. Lynne Broke ?
19. Markus Kummer, IGFSa
20. Paula Martins, APC, Independent expert
21. Paul Blaker, Government of UK
22. Paul Charlton, Government of Canada, MAG Member
23. Peace Oliver, Independent Expert
24. Roberto Zambrana, ISOC Bolivia, MAG Member
25. Roman Chukov, Mag Member, Russian Government
26. Sophie Peresson, MAG Member, ICC
27. Susan Chalmer, MAG Member, NTIA
28. Tereza Horejsova, MAG Member
29. Wim Degezelle, Independent Expert
30. Wai Min Kwok, UNDESA
31. Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus, past MAG Member