

COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CTSD)

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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in
2012 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

Internet Governance Forum

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on “Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels” (to the 16th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

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The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Input to CSTD Report 2012

Prepared by the IGF Secretariat

December 2012

Introduction

In the second year of its second five year mandate, the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) built on the strong momentum from the 2011 annual forum in Nairobi with an extremely busy and successful 2012 cycle of work which ended with the 7th annual forum in Baku, Azerbaijan from 6-9 November 2012. The main theme for the meeting was: 'Internet Governance for Sustainable Human, Economic and Social Development'. More than 1,600 delegates representing 128 different countries attended the forum. There was a particularly strong presence from civil society as they were the highest represented stakeholder group at the forum. Participation was regionally diverse and the participation of women at the forum increased significantly from previous years. Youth delegate representation and activity was also cited to be a notable achievement of this year's IGF.

As per now standard IGF practice, the entire meeting was web-cast and participation was offered remotely, more than doubling the active participation in both the main sessions and workshop rooms throughout the week. Real time transcription was also available to enhance the participatory experience for those present in Baku and around the world. A record number of workshops, best practise forums, dynamic coalition meetings and open forum were held throughout the week as well. These sessions allowed participants to delve into both complicated and oftentimes controversial issues in an open and intimate manner.

The preparatory process

As per now standard IGF practice, the preparations for the Baku meeting began immediately after the conclusion of the Nairobi meeting. This is done to ensure that the annual meeting's are planned using a broad-based, multi-stakeholder consultative process, based on the 'lessons learned' from the previous meetings. The IGF Secretariat collected suggestive contributions from all stakeholders following the Nairobi meeting on how the next meeting could be improved and enhanced. These inputs were then integrated into the larger planning process, which takes year-round online and is highlighted by open, participatory consultations of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) and other relevant stakeholders. These meetings took place in Geneva on 14-16 February and 15-17 May 2012. The discussions held during these meetings were web-casted and allowed stakeholders to participate remotely. The proceedings are archived on the IGF website and summary reports were made available as well.¹

Key trends and development in the Information Society

A number of key trends emerged throughout the IGF discussions in 2012. It was stressed that we are living today in a rapidly changing world, as information and communication technologies continue to transform our day to day lives that bring our society many opportunities as well as challenges. The annual IGF and increasing numbers of National and Regional IGFs² are able to best harness together all potential opportunities that the Internet presents us and to address the many challenges that the Internet also creates for all stakeholders in the IGF community.

¹ <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/preparatory-process-2012>

² <http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/igf-initiatives>

A collective affirmation of the necessity of the multi-stakeholder model in handling Internet governance issues was continually stressed at the IGF consultations, at National and Regional IGF meetings and during the annual forum. The IGF process is fulfilling its mandate to both reinforce and lift the ongoing enhanced cooperation efforts of the multi-stakeholder Internet governance community. In the IGF process the governments are eager to listen to their civil society and business communities. Capacity and partnership building within the IGF community has also increased significantly.

A universal call was made throughout the year to strengthen efforts to ensure both freedom of expression and the protection of basic human rights in the online world. As more and more people join this online environment each day, particularly in the developing world, policy makers and law enforcement agencies must ensure that they enjoy the same freedoms online that they do offline.

The importance of increasing the participation of developing countries in all discussions and policy making fora on Internet governance issues was also stressed. As critical infrastructures are expanded and mobile phones become increasingly more available the center of the Internet will soon reside in the developing world. This will soon be our new reality and Internet needs to compliment existing development activities in these areas in delivering basic education, health, and public service delivery.

Implementation and follow-up on WSIS Action Lines

Created as one of the major outcomes of the WSIS process, all of the work of the forum strives to facilitate implementation of the agreed action lines.

- C1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development

The annual forum was appropriately themed ‘Internet Governance for Sustainable Human, Economic and Social Development’. Public governance authorities use the IGF platform to engage with one another and all stakeholders in discussions on how to best promote the use of ICTs in development activities. Considerable discussions on how to best use both old and new/emerging ICT applications (Action line C7) were also held during the annual Forum and during the National and Regional IGF meetings.

- C4: Capacity building and C11: International and regional cooperation

Considerable efforts are being made to strengthen capacity building within the IGF community. Increasing developing country participation in the entire IGF process is a top priority of the Secretariat and MAGs work. The IGF, together with DPADM/DESA, is initiating a series of capacity building activities to both increase awareness of all Internet Governance issues and educate policy makers on how to best address emerging challenges in the field at all levels.

Increasing and enhancing International and regional cooperation on Internet Governance is also a primary goal of the IGF community. The increasing number of bottom-up, multi-

stakeholder National and Regional IGF initiatives spearhead these efforts. In 2012 the Arab and African IGFs both held well-attended meetings for the first time. The IGF Secretariat and MAG members are also actively participating and promoting the IGF at other relevant Internet Governance meetings and fora throughout the year and will continue to do so moving forward.