

## TALKING POINTS

IGF MAG Chair 2024 at [27<sup>th</sup> CSTD Annual Session](#)

### **High-level Panel 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 level”**

#### **When?**

- Wednesday, 17 April 2024 from 04:00 to 07:00 EST
- Programme available [here](#).

#### **Duration?**

- 3-hour event, 5-minutes statement

#### **Content of discussion?**

The Panel aims to assess the progress made in 2023 in implementing the WSIS outcomes. It also provides an opportunity to discuss WSIS' alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and consider the interaction between the WSIS and other international processes, particularly the Global Digital Compact being negotiated, and the Summit of Future to be held in September 2024.

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Distinguished Participants,

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- It is my pleasure to be here with you today at the 27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, an important meeting that, among others, reviews system-wide the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international level.
- I take this opportunity to thank the organizing committee as well as the Secretariat of the commission for convening us all in Geneva.
- I am Carol Roach from the Cabinet Office of the Government of The Bahamas. I was appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General as the new **Chair of the Internet Governance Forum Multistakeholder Advisory Group**.
- At today's meeting, many stakeholders who are present, greatly the IGF in various capacities: as participants, expert contributors, session organizers, speakers but also donors. I want you to know that we are all immensely grateful for your **valuable participation and support**. To those who have not yet taken part in an IGF, I

warmly invite you to join us in our annual Forums! It is stakeholders like you who make the IGF alive, relevant, and needed.

- I have been entrusted with the crucial task of leading the **IGF MAG in assisting the UN Secretary General in the programming of the annual** Forum and its intersessional work. I am taking my role particularly seriously, as we are at an important moment for the Internet and digital space given several important processes happening.
- UN member states continue negotiating the **Global Digital Compact (GDC)** aiming to have it agreed upon during the Summit of the Future in September 2024. These processes have a huge global impact, and it is therefore crucial that all parties keep apprised of what is happening and be fully involved by putting their position forward.
- As you may know, the **IGF is one of the major outcomes of WSIS**, mandated by the Tunis Agenda. Currently in its third mandate, the IGF and its mandate extension will once again be a critical aspect of the upcoming **WSIS+20 review process in 2025**. Considering that the IGF 2024 takes place prior to the **review process**, it will mark a significant milestone of two decades of progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes.
- Building on the foundations of the great achievements of the WSIS process and with those of the IGF so far, this critical review process presents an opportunity for continuity and progress toward the aim of a **people-centred and multistakeholder approach** to global digital transformation.
- We must **nurture the WSIS legacy and historic achievement of integrating the multistakeholder model for governance of the Internet and digital into a traditional multilateral process**. The MAG is committed to protecting and strengthening the multistakeholder open, inclusive, and people-centred model of Internet governance. In this mission, we are particularly focused on engaging missing voices, particularly stakeholders of all disciplines from the Global South.
- We have strong partners to achieve this. For example, thanks to a growing network of 170 **national and regional IGF initiatives**. These organically created and independent initiatives provide a multistakeholder platform to discuss digital policy issues of communities at local levels.
- Youth is our present and certainly our future. Perspectives of **young leaders** have continuously been integrated in the IGF programme, and their participation has been strengthened in IGF activities through the development of a strong youth track.

- We must ensure cooperation and collaboration with everyone across sectors. As one of the many IGF capacity development initiatives, over 420 lawmakers have successfully been included in key digital policy discussions in the **IGF Parliamentary Track** since 2019.
- As part of the IGF intersessional work, **IGF Policy Networks, Best Practice Forums and Dynamic Coalitions** have continued to provide in-depth expert views to decision-makers on various digital governance topics, such as on Artificial Intelligence, always following the bottom-up, multistakeholder approach.
- These efforts of the past two decades led to a record number of over **9,000 participants** at last year's IGF in Kyoto, Japan, who participated in over **300 sessions**. And, as the Prime Minister of Japan rightly said in his welcoming statement, "by bringing together participants from all over the world, from different perspectives and bringing together their wisdom through a multi-stakeholder approach, we can maximize the benefits of the Internet while reducing risks."
- That said, I would like to share with you some information about this year's IGF: The 19<sup>th</sup> annual Forum will take place from 15 to 19 December in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the **overarching theme** "Building our Multistakeholder Digital Future". The programme will be shaped according to four sub-themes:
  - Harnessing innovation and balancing risks in the digital space
  - Enhancing the digital contribution to peace, development, and sustainability
  - Advancing human rights and inclusion
  - Improving digital governance for the Internet We Want
- As a leading hub for tech development and digital entrepreneurship in the MENA region, we are working with the Host Country to ensure the **19th IGF** is a success in terms of stakeholder engagement and programme quality.
- In our efforts to build capacity and increase participation of key decision-makers, we will also launch the **Judiciary Track**. With the rapid advancement of technology, we aim to provide extensive support to judges for well-informed decision making.
- We are also working with partners to **further engage the private sector**, as businesses are valuable actors in advancing digital transformation.
- In my role as the Chair of the MAG, I invite you to cooperate and collaborate with us. Join us in working together for a strong IGF that stands for good, multistakeholder digital governance. Thank you very much.