CSTD Working Group on IGF

Questionnaire on improvements to the IGF

Response from the Number Resource Organization (NRO)

19th November, 2010

1. What do you consider the most important achievements of the first five IGF meetings?

The first five years of the IGF were successful in establishing an agenda for discussion of the most relevant issues in Internet Governance within a comprehensive multistakeholder environment. The period produced significant progress in identifying the pieces of the Internet governance puzzle: what the issues and categories are, and what the most pressing dilemmas of Internet Governance are and will be. Of particular importance, IGF revealed the cross-cutting themes in Internet governance and comprehensively mapped the ecosystem of relevant actors and stakeholders. The IGF's multistakeholder environment, in particular, has enabled those who may not have been aware of cross-cutting issues relevant to them, to begin to actively engage in these issues and find solutions as needed.

A critical feature of the IGF was its coverage of the whole range of identifiable Internet governance issues, from the technical (such as Internationalized Domain Names and IPv6 deployment) to the legal (such as cybercrime and intellectual property) to the social (Internet access for all), as well as issues arising from all these areas. While forums have long existed for the discussion of Internet governance issues related to technical issues (IETF, ICANN, RIRs, etc), the IGF proved to be an invaluable forum for the discussion of less well-known, non-technical Internet governance issues such as diversity on the Internet, protection of children online, and balancing privacy and security on the Internet.

2. How satisfied are you with the delivery of the results of discussions at the IGF and the impact they have had on developments in national, regional or international Internet governance?

The NRO was very satisfied with the discussions that were able to take place at the IGF, and which we believe arose directly from its status as a non-decision making forum. We were very happy with the relevance of discussions that occurred on myriad topics, which allowed a broad map of the most pressing issues to be drawn, and enabled stakeholders to better navigate the Internet governance space. The NRO has observed and participated in a range of emergent IGF initiatives, at regional and national levels, which have encouraged active participation from a much wider range of stakeholders. We would encourage further development of mechanisms to deliver the results of such national and regional discussions into a future global IGF process,

as we have no doubt that they serve to identify new and emerging Internet governance issues, and potential solutions, that often have global significance.

3. Which, if any, new mechanisms would you propose to improve the impact of the IGF discussions, in particular as regards the interaction between the IGF and other stakeholders? Please specify the kind of mechanism (e.g. reporting, exchanges, recommendations, concrete advice, etc.) and the stakeholders (e.g. intergovernmental bodies, other fora dealing with Internet Governance, etc.).

Various mechanisms were used and developed in the course of IGF which strongly supported the effectiveness of the multistakeholder process. Among these were the IGF consultation process, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, and policies ensuring open access to all IGF sessions, which proved to be successful in engaging a truly diverse range of stakeholders. By the 5th IGF meeting, the Internet-based remote participation facilities had been developed to a very high standard, and were particularly important for those unable to travel to IGF events in person. The NRO recommends that these mechanisms continue to be developed and refined, and publicized further to encourage their use by a greater range of stakeholders and different language speakers.

One of the key IGF mechanisms that we believe should be further refined is the MAG nomination process. In particular, the nomination process could be improved by permitting organizations representing each non-governmental sector to make public nominations of MAG candidates, for consideration by the UN Secretary General. The Secretary General might augment that list in order to ensure a balance of stakeholders from the government, civil society, technical and business sectors, but we believe that the large majority of nominations, and the large majority of members selected, should be drawn from those nominated by the multistakeholder community.

4. In your view, what important new issues or themes concerning Internet governance have emerged or become important since the Tunis phase of the Summit, which deserve more attention in the next five years?

As the Internet ecosystem has developed since the Tunis Phase of the WSIS, a number of issues have emerged, or become more critical. Of particular interest to the NRO are:

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is an issue of ever-increasing importance and complexity, as more and more of the world's activities move to an Internet environment. Over 5 years of IGF, it has become a prominent cross-cutting Internet governance issue for many, if not all, Internet stakeholders.

The NRO asserts that rational, workable, and sustainable responses to cybersecurity will absolutely require a multistakeholder approach by which all considerations and impacts can be revealed. We believe that the Internet technical community has a

critical role to play here, though not a privileged one, in helping to ensure that security discussions are fully informed with current and correct technical advice.

IPv6 deployment

While many Internet governance issues are largely social or legal in nature, the issue of IPv6 deployment is primarily driven by technical and business factors. Over the past five years of IGF, as the available IPv4 pool continued to reduce, the deployment of IPv6 onto networks has come to be regarded as an important Internet governance issue as stakeholders seek to ensure an effective and timely transition.

The NRO predicts that IPv6 deployment, and IPv6 co-existence with IPv4 networks, will continue to be a topic of interest within the IGF for the next five years. However, once widespread IPv6 deployment is achieved and IPv4 networks begin to wane, this issue will naturally lose that significance.

5. What do you think should be the priority themes and areas of work of the IGF during the next five years?

It is clear that as the Internet grows and evolves into a platform for social, civil and business interaction, a range of new and challenging social and legal issues have emerged. It is also clear this range of issues will become much wider as the Internet becomes truly ubiquitous. The NRO has no role in general societal matters, but expects that governmental and civil society organizations will be eager to see such issues addressed within the IGF. Within the technical arena, we believe that IPv6 will require ongoing attention in the short term, but will be an issue of diminishing prominence in some 2 to 4 years, as deployment continues. On the other hand, cybersecurity is likely to increase in importance and, as mentioned above, it will require a very inclusive global multistakeholder response.

6. How can the capacity of those groups that are not yet well represented at the IGF be improved? In particular, what could be done to improve the capacity of representatives from developing countries?

It is important for the IGF to recognize and support existing efforts to build capacity amongst stakeholder groups less well represented in current Internet governance discussions. For example, the technical community has for many years worked to train stakeholders in technical Internet governance matters.

The IGF can also enable capacity building by increasing the effectiveness of remote participation in its forums. Remote participation is a process; it should not be assumed that all stakeholders can immediately contribute publicly to Internet governance discussions, but the ability to follow discussions remotely and in real time allows stakeholders to gain an understanding of the issues and the processes used. In future IGFs, such stakeholders can then build on this knowledge to begin actively participating in the discussions.

7. How do you think more awareness of Internet governance issues and the IGF process can be raised amongst groups whose lives are affected by Internet governance but who are not yet part of the IGF process?

Capacity building is a large part of building stakeholder awareness of the issues that affect them. So is outreach through the participants and organizations that attend IGF meetings. The success of IGF meetings has already led to the growth of regional and national IGFs by those enthused by IGF discussions and wishing to broaden discussions at a local level. This effort should be encouraged and built upon.

8. How, if at all, do you think that the IGF process (including the format of the meeting, the preparatory process, the development of the agenda, etc.) needs to change to meet changing circumstances and priorities?

The NRO believes the success of the IGF over the past five years is directly related to its current format, including the meeting format, preparatory process, agenda development, and participation mechanisms. The NRO believes the current open and multistakeholder process does not need to change. Instead, the current mandate should be extended without modification. The IGF, as a flexible, multistakeholder discussion space, reflects the flexible and quickly changing nature of the Internet environment. Incorporation or formalization would encourage bureaucratic and inefficient practices. Instead, there should be a focus on refining the IGF's current processes, such as developing a more inclusive and transparent approach to establishing the MAG, and encouraging more remote participation in multiple languages.

9. Do you have any other comments? (You may find it useful to refer to the Note by the Secretary-General on the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (document A/65/78 – E/2010/68) or to the contributions made in the formal consultations held online and during the IGF meeting in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in 2009 (http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/2009-igf-sharm-el-sheikh/review-process)).

It would be useful to open analysis of IGF discussions beyond the formal yearly digest of discussions published by the United Nations on behalf of the IGF. Many of IGF's participants produce their own analyses of IGF discussions, and it would be useful if the IGF website could aggregate these, encourage participants (both onsite and remotely) to post their own summaries of IGF issues and discussions for publication on the IGF website. This would allow a greater of diversity of analyses of IGF discussions to be read, and would allow for a greater range of stakeholder voices to be heard.