

MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy
Online Meeting
17 October 2024 at 19:00 UTC

Summary Report

The 85th virtual meeting of the IGF MAG Working Group on IGF Strengthening and Strategy (WG-Strategy) was held on 17 October 19:00 UTC. The meeting was moderated by Titti Cassa, and a recording of the meeting is available upon request.

The co-chair opened the meeting by introducing the agenda.

Agenda

1. [Pact of the Future/GDC](#)
2. CoE Declaration on WSIS and IGF and [WSIS+20 review draft letter](#)
3. [IGF strategic vision](#)
4. Update from the IGF Secretariat
5. AoB

Discussion

1. Pact of the Future/GDC

Titti introduced the agenda, and asked if anyone had any further updates from New York on developments.

Jorge noted that there have begun discussions about the implementation of the new office proposed in the GDC, building on the current Office of the Tech Envoy (OSET). Discussions about the structure, funding etc. are happening this week, and various states are preparing written comments which will go to the relevant committee for decisions on budget (in the Fifth Committee). He noted that the Swiss position is to ensure an office that is supportive and collaborative with existing structures, such as WSIS.

Justin noted that in addition to elements that were clearly proposed in the GDC (such as the SG's office and a working group on data governance, which will be discussed in Geneva during the CSTD meeting (21-22 October), with an aim to launch next year), there are also some other elements that are beginning to spin up. For instance, at the WTSA there was an "AI Standards" meeting held to reflect what has been mandated in the GDC and the AI Advisory Group report. He also noted that in spaces including UNESCO and the OHCHR there work ongoing about how to integrate and implement what has come out of the GDC and other UNGA discussions.

Timea noted that the OSET is planning to hold a series of stakeholder roundtable meetings related to GDC implementation. When the information about those meetings is public, it will be shared to the WG-Strategy list. In terms of next steps, Timea understands that the PGA will appoint Co-Facilitators to work on the AI-related elements of the GDC, as well as the WSIS+20 - the statement from the SG is expected to outline thoughts on how the GDC and the WSIS processes can be integrated.

2. WSIS+20 review draft letter

Titti noted that she has added the suggestion from Wolfgang about splitting the WSIS into two separate phases (New York and Geneva).

Chris noted that there had been discussion on the last call about pivoting from a letter to a white paper, but that there had been some disagreement on the mailing list about the best format.

Jorge noted that the recent GDC process was an example of a sub-optimal multistakeholder process, so there is a need for us to be very vocal about the need for the WSIS review to be truly multistakeholder. In this, we should draw on our experience from the original WSIS and 20 years of IGF, and many of the learnings are crystallised in the São Paulo Guidelines (whose content is broadly accepted by the IGF community). The IGF community is well-placed to represent this position. We should also note the process for the WSIS review may be well advanced before the Co-Facilitators come onto the scene, so there is a need to communicate to the secretariat (likely UN-DESA) earlier in the process. He noted finally that, whether a letter or a white paper, it will need to be sent directly to the intended recipient.

Chris noted that there is a MAG meeting on 29 October, and a finalized draft of the letter/white paper could be shared ahead of that and agreed by the full MAG.

Wolfgang agreed with Jorge's concerns - he noted that in the original WSIS processes, the multistakeholder process was initially rejected, but civil society and other non-state actors were persistent and pro-active in ensuring the voice of other stakeholders was heard. He suggested that a multistakeholder coalition should be fostered to agree on expectations and goals (and could draw on existing groups, such as the [TCCM](#), ICC-BASIS, and various civil society groups). He suggested a drafting team be formed and utilize events between now and the WSIS Forum in July to develop a common position to be presented to the Co-Facilitators.

Justin suggested that the PGA is still quite fresh in the office, and may take time to find Co-Facilitators for the various positions (including the WSIS+20 facilitation). He also suggested that "advice" from the MAG or Leadership Panel, which are appointed by the Secretary-General, should be sent to the Secretary-General rather than UN-DESA.

Timea suggested we should distill our message to concise messages, particularly on the need to create opportunities for substantive multistakeholder involvement (not just consultations), and drawing on the wider IGF ecosystem (including NRIs and intersessional work), and can subtly reference the NETmundial+10 process as inspiration or example. The exact role of the IGF can be developed separately, and she stressed the need for us to move quickly with a simpler message.

Chris suggested a date of 24 October to finalize a draft for sharing with the MAG.

3. CoE Declaration on WSIS and IGF and

Jorge noted the Council of Europe declaration (shared to the WG-Strategy list) signed by 46 countries, supporting the extension of the IGF and a text that is very reasonable.

Giacomo suggested that, as EuroDIG in 2025 will be held in Strasbourg in June, there will be an opportunity to build on this declaration.

4. IGF strategic vision

Titti noted that Juan has recently made some comments regarding the vision document and some possible changes, specifically including modification to the IGF mandate (which he feels should not change), the interpretation of that mandate (which he feels can be regarded as flexible, and including a broad mandate).

Chris noted that the discussion on the list has been very productive, and that he can work with Titti to continue updating the document. He also suggested that the document will be important input to the sessions in Riyadh, and that it can have some open questions to the broader community.

Anriette noted that the suggestions made by Juan can also help to guide the work and focus of the WG-Strategy; he is also correct to note the dangers inherent in changing language from Tunis, and the need to develop and document improvements to the IGF (including potentially building in the São Paulo Guidelines). She suggested that the vision document should have a more operational section, focused on steps for ourselves and the community.

Ana shared that in relation to Internet governance and AI governance, many people often feel that Internet governance still applies only to technical governance issues. She noted that WSIS brought in the idea of an Information Society, and there is a need to reflect an openness to a broader range of issues. She suggested that a change from "Internet governance" to "digital governance" could be useful in conveying these issues to people outside the immediate IG bubble. She feels that this will make it easier to engage governments and reinforce their motivation to engage.

5. Update from the IGF Secretariat

Celine noted that there are preferential rates being offered by the Saudi host. She also noted that the Secretariat has had meetings with the host about the event and plans to communicate more detailed information very soon.

It was also noted that the High-level leaders' track sessions will be on AI ethics, trade, health, digital future, and GDC & WSIS+20.

Anja noted that the process of inviting high-level speakers is still ongoing. They hope to announce the speaker list of the High-level sessions in the next 2-3 weeks.

6. AoB

Anriette noted that during the MAG meeting there was a presentation about the CSTD process and the reporting that it is compiling for the 20-year WSIS review. It was agreed that the IGF (including the NRIs) would provide input to this, and she believes it is important to do this - the deadline for the 20-year report is the end of November. This would be a good opportunity to focus on the breadth of activity that is happening in this space. The Secretariat will share the information with the WG-Strategy group to coordinate input from the relevant IGF stakeholders.

The next call will be at 14:00 on 31 October.

List of participants

1. Amrita Choudhury, Group's Co-Chair, CCAOI, former IGF MAG member
2. Anriette Esterhuysen, former IGF MAG Chair
3. Ana Christina Neves, Government of Portugal
4. Anja Gengo, NRIs Coordinator, IGF Secretariat
5. Celine Bal, IGF Secretariat
6. Chris Buckridge, Group's Co-Chair, IGF MAG member
7. Christine Arida, former IGF MAG member
8. Concettina Cassa, Group's Co-Chair, Government of Italy, former IGF MAG member
9. Desiree Miloshevic, Independent Expert
10. Fiona Alexander, former IGF MAG member
11. Flavio Wagner, CGI.br and University of Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil
12. Jennifer Chung, former IGF MAG member
13. Jim Prendergast, Independent Expert
14. Justin Fair, IGF MAG member
15. Lito Barra, IGF MAG member
16. Muriel Alapini, Independent Expert
17. Manal Ismail, Independent Expert
18. Jennifer Chung, former IGF MAG member
19. Poncelet Ileleji, Independent Expert
20. Giacomo Mazzone, Independent Expert
21. Saba Tiku, IGF MAG member
22. Timea Suto, ICC, former MAG member
23. Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus
24. Wim Degezelle, IGF Secretariat
25. Wout de Natris, Independent Expert
26. Xiao Zhang, IGF MAG Member