



Thoughts for Rio: a Bureau for the IGF

The primary goal of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is to contribute actively to improve Internet related public policies. The Athens Forum has emphasized the vitality of free debates between the various stakeholders on a strict equal footing. But this spontaneity has led to unfocused exchanges without practical consequence.

The Rio Forum is therefore bound to play an essential role. Indeed, a repetition of the Athens Forum would most likely signal the lack of ability to produce useful effects in improving Internet Governance (IG) efficiency, and consequently bring multi-stakeholders Forums quickly to an end.

Thus, it will be necessary to carefully analyze the Athens Forum lessons and correct its shortcomings, while keeping working efficiency both during a Forum, and online between those annual meetings. This implies focusing debates and, after every Forum, assessing results to boost efficiency and visibility of the work between annual meetings.

So far, it is quite significant to stress that well after the Athens meeting, we are still in a convening phase, where none of the mechanisms required by the Tunis Agenda, see reference [1], have been established, namely, *inter alia*, for making recommendations on emerging issues ^[72 g], for achieving formal consultation on the IGF continuation ^[76], and for publishing proceedings ^[72 l]. The reason why these mechanisms have not been created is simply because the bureau, also mentioned in the Tunis Agenda ^[78 b] has not yet been created. Meanwhile the *ad hoc* Advisory Group, whose mission is just to help convening the inaugural IGF meeting, seems to be still in charge, while overstepping its mandate.

It appears therefore that the Rio Forum could be the decisive step whereby the IGF process, coming out of the convening phase, would really start a coordinated process in accordance with the Tunis agenda, under the lead role of a host country.

Furthermore, it could be also the step where a coordination could be initiated between the next three hosts (Brazil, India and Egypt) to anchor the IG orientations to better address the needs and expectations of emerging countries. This coordination could also allow for implementing a multi-year plan of action insuring continuity in IGF work and a more coherent quest for solutions. As an exploratory suggestion, this IGF coordination could be the nucleus of the “enhanced cooperation” process mentioned in the Tunis agenda, thereby providing a natural linkage between two processes that would otherwise diverge.

Within this perspective, it is appropriate:

- to start quite early preparing for the Rio Forum,
- to insure efficient interaction between partners,
- to define priority themes for structuring debates.

The key to success is to place the Rio Forum activities into the framework of the implementation of the Tunis Agenda, not just as a simple dialogue between stakeholders. The IGF mandate states that the forum should discuss ^[72 a], advise ^[72 e], recommend ^[72 g] in some cases, and facilitate, discourse ^[72 b], or exchange ^[72 d] in some other cases. The first step forward is to create a bureau as stated in the Tunis Agenda (§78 b in reference [1]).

During the discussion on 16-17 February 2006, it has been proposed in the spirit of the WSIS practices, by a significant number of states, among which Brazil and China, to constitute a multi-stakeholder bureau built with three components : an intergovernmental bureau, a civil society bureau, and a business sector bureau (CCBI), a combination that has proved its efficiency during the WSIS summit. However this three components bureau was strongly opposed by another group that claims to be recognized as yet another distinct stakeholder, the so-called “internet community”, with the help of states that support this “internet community”. The formation of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) was made extremely quickly, and it is not a surprise that most of the non-governmental MAG members are indeed representing the “internet community”, a special blend of private non-profit entities, of commercial companies and some civil society components. As Dr. Milton Mueller observed, “The MAG's size was set at 40 people. Of those, 20 positions were set aside for governments, and 20 more for a combination of private business, civil society, academic and technical "stakeholder" groups. Surprise number one is that of the 20 non-governmental positions, all but a handful are directly associated with the ICANN regime”, (see <http://www.icannwatch.org/article.pl?sid=06/05/18/226205&mode=thread>). The representative from CISCO was happy about the composition of the MAG. On the other hand, there were dissenting voices and no consensus within the Civil Society of the Geneva phase concerning the MAG composition.

Therefore, it is suggested to form a **four** components bureau composed of an intergovernmental bureau, a civil society bureau, a business sector bureau, plus an “internet community bureau” that could be composed of the 20 non-governmental members of the current MAG, and the five special Advisers to the Chair. Presumably members of this “internet community bureau” would be most satisfied to be chaired by Nitin Desai, whom they have praised for his handling of IGF. It is believed that it could be a good compromise, and the MAG would terminate itself easily, since the non-governmental members would not fight for their seats, as they would exchange them for a more permanent position.

As Nitin Desai said on February 16, morning, concerning the intergovernmental bureau : “In the case of the member states, there's a very simple process we have in the U.N. which is easy to use, which is you simply turn to the regional groups and say that we need two names from that regional group and they have their own process ». Brazil, as a host country, is *de officio* member of the Bureau. Then each Bureau within its own constituency would follow its respective rules of procedure. For the member states, it would be the well known UN rules; for the Civil Society, and the business sector, their own WSIS practices; and the “internet community” would have to establish its own rules, and it would be expected that they could do that, since it is a community with an exceptional gift for self-organization.

Within this four components framework, the governments could draft and agree on recommendations by consensus as in the WSIS, and the civil society would proceed with its own “rough consensus mechanism”.

The four components Bureau, hence a bureau with a multistakeholder approach, would only deal with procedural issues, not with matters of substance. Thus, it would clear the way for the formation of an International Scientific Committee (ISC) to deal with questions of substance. It would end up the current confusion of the MAG, which has been dealing dubiously in both procedural and substantive issues.



Suggestions for an ISC structure, and documentation management are in annex.

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REFERENCES

[1] excerpts from the **Tunis Agenda**.

72. We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the *Internet Governance Forum* (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

- a) Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet Governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
- b) Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;
- c) Interface with appropriate inter-governmental organisations and other institutions on matters under their purview;
- d) Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities;
- e) Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
- f) Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet Governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries;
- g) Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations;
- h) Contribute to capacity-building for Internet Governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise;
- i) Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet Governance processes;
- j) Discuss, *inter alia*, issues relating to critical Internet resources;
- k) Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users;
- l) Publish its proceedings.

73. The Internet Governance Forum, in its working and function, will be multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent. To that end, the proposed IGF could:

- a) Build on the existing structures of Internet Governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process - governments, business entities, civil society and inter-governmental organisations;
- b) Have a lightweight and decentralised structure that would be subject to periodic review;
- c) Meet periodically, as required. IGF meetings, in principle, may be held in parallel with major relevant UN conferences, *inter alia*, to use logistical support.

78. The UN Secretary-General should extend invitations to all stakeholders and relevant parties to participate at the inaugural meeting of the IGF, taking into consideration balanced geographical representation. The UN Secretary-General should also:

- a) draw upon any appropriate resources from all interested stakeholders, including the proven expertise of ITU, as demonstrated during the WSIS process; and
- b) establish an effective and cost-efficient bureau to support the IGF, ensuring multi-stakeholder participation.

source: Tunis Agenda

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Annex

Some suggestions for the IGF in Rio

Besides managing hotel/visa logistics and an internet infrastructure, it would be much more significant if Brazil took a proactive stand in fostering participation and debates focusing on IG core issues.

Admittedly, due to its first occurrence, the Athens IGF organization was quite late and lacked precision in shaping up the programme. Knowledgeable persons have to be booked at least 6 months in advance (rather than 4 weeks) to participate in plenaries or workshops. These time constraints are well known and customary in organizing an international event.

A - INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Therefore it is suggested to set up without delay an International Scientific Committee (ISC) to help building the IGF programme in Rio, including possible side events. The tasks of the ISC could be:

1. - Use the Tunis Agenda as a basis for setting priorities;
2. - Identify “emerging issues” requiring awareness and debates;
3. - Assess the IGF themes as discussed in Athens, and synthesize valuable contributions and positions;
4. - Determine desirable modifications and orientations for Rio;
5. - Produce technical contents as needed for a call for contributions to the IGF and side events in Rio;
6. - Organize the review, rearrangement and selection of proposed contributions;
7. - Select a programme, invited speakers, rapporteurs, and other contributors;
8. - Review the Tunis Agenda progress;
9. - Produce a report on the meeting contents (IGF and side events);
10. - Produce drafts of recommendations on emerging issues.

For the sake of dovetailing with the IGF framework, a dynamic coalition (DC) could be launched to encapsulate ISC constitution and operation. Members of this DC would logically be the next IGF host countries, or organizations representing them, plus any other volunteers for active contribution. There is no doubt that civil society groups will be interested.

As time is running out, setting up the ISC should not be procrastinated.



ISC MEMBERS

Taking account of the IGF nature, ISC members should bring a diversity of expertise covering, inter alia, political, jurisdictional, technical, linguistic, cultural, societal or economics fields. It might be reasonable to shoot for a 40 to 50-person membership. In addition, ISC debates and selections could at times draw upon more experts proposed and agreed by ISC members.

ISC member selection could be by cooptation, based on personal capacity, as customarily practiced in scientific fields. To be clear, representing a government, institution, or lobby would “not” constitute a proper qualification.

B - DOCUMENT PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

The IGF mandate, as defined by § ^[72], could not be implemented without exchanging documents. Discussion lists and contributions to various events are useful. However, their signal/noise ratio is varied, and referencing them is chaotic. Some organizational principles are needed for accruing valuable information and make it easily available.

For long the internet milieu has been using a method called “Request For Comment” (RFC), which appears to be a balanced compromise between distribution flexibility and archiving stability. A similar method has been proposed for managing documents in IGF (by an Indonesian delegate, as we heard).

This document series could be labeled RFC4D (RFC for development).

RFC4D numbering might be a unique sequence (like in IETF), but due to the IGF diversity of fields, it would probably be more convenient to introduce a limited number of document classes. Each class would need a single registry.

Some countries (institutions) would have to volunteer to keep a registry for RFC's (number, date, authors, title, etc). A certain number of archive sites would have to be set up by volunteers to provide for downloading. Access tools (browsers, search, editors, etc.) should be made available as free (no cost) open source software. Original documents could be in one UN language, with subsequent translation in other languages as needed. Sponsors might be willing to support some of the costs involved.

The initial implementation of such a scheme requires minimal resources, as the number of RFCs will likely not be important for a few years.

In order to insure that the RFC4D mechanism fits user needs, its organization could be defined in a DC framework, say the RFC4D dynamic coalition. Civil society groups would certainly be willing to contribute to this task.

Could this shared resource be offered initially by Brazil ? It certainly would enhance a spirit of cooperation among stakeholders, and signal the less developed world that new channels are opening for expressing their viewpoints.

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Acronyms:

DC	Dynamic Coalition	ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IETF	Internet Engineering Task Force	MAG	Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group
IG	Internet Governance	RFC	Request For Comment
IGF	Internet Governance Forum	RFC4D	RFC for development
ISC	International Scientific Committee	SG	Secretary-General



UN
WSIS

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