

## **IT for Change's contribution for the second meeting of the WG on improvements to the IGF**

### **1. Review of IGF vis-à-vis Tunis Agenda – paragraphs 72 to 80**

Paragraphs 72 to 78 of Tunis Agenda that deal with Internet Governance Forum (IGF) are prefaced with a number of paragraphs that lay out the context in which the IGF was created. These preceding paragraphs express the concerns of the world community regarding the important global Internet policy issues that have remained unaddressed, and the need to move forward on these, including through new institutional developments. It is important to situate the rationale and the mandate of the IGF in this context. Paragraph 72, which lays out the mandate of the IGF, is also clear on its primary global Internet policy role. It is therefore vis a vis IGF's contribution to global Internet policy making that its success should be evaluated and, accordingly, improvements in the IGF sought.

The second role of capacity building that is also associated with the IGF is an area where it has done quite well in its first 5 years. This significant achievement of the IGF should be noted in the report of the Working Group (WG) on improvements in the IGF. However, the main parts of the report should concern itself with areas where the performance of the IGF has been less than satisfactory, in which context alone the needed improvements can be suggested. This, in our view, is the clear mandate of this WG.

Specific sub-sections of paragraph 72 speak about the role of IGF in discussing key policy issues, giving relevant advice and recommendations in different policy areas, interfacing with international organisations concerned with IG issues and facilitating a discussion among them on important policy issues. It is difficult to see any significant achievement of the IGF in most of these mandate areas related to its primary role of contributing to global Internet policies. These required functions of the IGF should dictate the needed improvements in the IGF.

### **2. Improving the IGF with a view to linking it to the broader dialogue on global Internet governance as directed by the UN General Assembly Resolution on “Information and communications technologies for development” (adopted on 24 November 2010)**

The mentioned UN General Assembly resolution specifically requires the WG on improvements to the IGF to seek improvements to 'the IGF with a view to linking it to the broader dialogue on global Internet governance'. It reasserts that the Tunis Agenda's principal mandate for the IGF is in the area of 'global' Internet governance. It also connotes concern that meaningful linkages between the IGF and other global bodies dealing with Internet governance is an area of lack, requiring significant improvements. Thus, the WG should focus on developing concrete processes and mechanisms for such linkages. However, creating any meaningful concrete linkages with other global IG bodies first of all requires that there are specific outcomes from the IGF on important global IG issues. Without such specific outcomes, it is difficult to imagine how the IGF can be linked to the 'broader dialogue on global Internet governance'.

It is for the above reasons that we think that the main substantial recommendations of the WG should concern itself with laying out appropriate processes to ensure that the IGF is able to produce concrete outcomes in the area of global Internet policies. It should also recommend how these outcomes can be channelled into the proceedings of other global Internet governance related bodies.

### **3. How to enhance the contribution of IGF to socio-economic development and towards IADGs including enhancing participation of developing countries**

IGF is most of all about participation. That is the principal objective of its open and multistakeholder platform. The central tenet of participatory development is that those people and groups with whom development is directly concerned know best what is needed for and as development. Internet governance for development should thus, before all, seek to get these groups, and those who work closely with them, into decision-shaping and decision-making processes about global IG. The 'choice' spoken of here however refers to 'informed choice' that requires adequate enabling conditions of information and organising for these groups. It is therefore often required to work through groups and organisations that 'demonstrably' represent the perspectives and interests of these groups. IG would start contributing meaningfully to socio-economic development only when the different 'development constituencies' are strongly represented in the IGF debates, which, regrettably, is not the case at present.

Another important issue is that global IG has not to just focus on 'directly evident' individual issues vis a vis the Internet among marginalised groups but also the more structural issues, which requires an informed articulation and representation. Development agendas at various global policy spaces like those concerning intellectual property, trade, climate change, cultural diversity etc largely consists of such structural issues, and not so much of 'direct' individuals-related issues. Such an articulation of structural development related issues is largely absent in the IG, and the IGF should pro-actively provide a space for, and enable the shaping of, such a comprehensive development agenda for IG.

Enhancing participation of 'development actors' (various people and groups systematically dealing with development issues) in the IGF, and providing enabling conditions for developing a concrete development agenda in the area of IG, are the two principal ways through which the IGF can begin to meaningfully contributing to socio-economic development.

**Since the other questions in the present questionnaire are repeated from the questionnaire that was circulated before the first meeting of the WG, our responses to these questions are contained in our earlier contribution. While we are sure that all contributions of the earlier round will be considered at par while compiling contributions for the consideration of the second meeting, we are enclosing our earlier contribution as an annexure to this one. We request it to be treated as a part of the present contribution.**