

# WGIG+8: Stock-Taking, Mapping, and Going Forward

*Centre for Internet and Society* | 2013-03-31

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*On February 27, 2013, the Centre for Internet and Society conducted a workshop on the Working Group on Internet Governance report, titled “WGIG+8: Stock-Taking, Mapping, and Going Forward” at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) + 10 meeting at Fontenoy Building, conference room # 7, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris from 9.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.*

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Details of the event were published on the UNESCO website.

## Session Personnel

Pranesh Prakash was the moderator for the session. There were about 10-15 participants along with 5 remote participants.

There were four speakers:

- **William Drake**, International Fellow and Lecturer, Media Change & Innovation Division, IPMZ at the University of Zurich
- **Carlos Afonso**, Executive Director of the Núcleo de Pesquisas, Estudos e Formação (NUPEF) institute
- **Avri Doria**, Dotgay LLC, Association for Progressive Communications, International School for Internet Governance
- **Désirée Miloshevic**, International Affairs and Policy Adviser, Afiliás

## Summary of the Discussion

### Speakers Summaries

**\*\*William Drake:\*\*** Mr. Drake argued that the WGIG process demonstrated the benefits of multistakeholder collaboration, and facilitated the WSIS negotiations, and the multistakeholder process that WGIG embodied promoted public engagement in the Internet governance debate. The working definition of “Internet governance” that the WGIG came up with demystified the nature and scope of Internet governance. One important outcome of the WGIG report was the proposal of the establishment of the Internet Governance Forum. The WGIG began the holistic assessment of “horizontal issues,” including development, and made some broad but useful recommendations on key “vertical issues”. And lastly, the WGIG offered four models for the oversight of core

resources that helped to focus the global debate on the governance of the Internet's core resources.

**\*\*Carlos Afonso:\*\*** Mr. Afonso commented on the issue of international inter-connection costs, and pointed out that they continue to be complex and involve complicated cost accounting. Mr. Afonso then pointed out that the Number Resource Organization (NRO) and the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) could be doing more in the context of IPv6, in the way of stimulating backbone operators to ensure IPv6 visibility of the networks below them — many are already IPv6-ready but upstream providers do not provide corresponding transit. He also drew attention to “enhanced cooperation” as an issue that had not been anticipated at the time of the report, but had since become an important issue; similarly, he identified social networking and (in response to a question) military uses of the Internet, etc., as other such issues. He opined that the WGIG report needed to be elaborated upon in the present context.

**\*\*Avri Doria:\*\*** Ms. Doria argued that while the report was reluctantly accepted after having been first rejected by the governments, it has proven to be highly useful. She praised the report for its working definition of IG, as it is still being used, and because the report made a clear distinction between governments and the governance of the Internet. She then argued that the definition of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders is very loose in the WGIG report and that these definitions are something that needs further study as they do not take into account the full role and responsibilities of all stakeholders. She also argued that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration is transferring some of its oversight powers over technical governance of the domain name system, to multistakeholder processes as can be seen from the “Affirmation of Commitments” which has replaced the earlier “Memorandum of Understanding” it had with ICANN.” She argued that the Affirmation of Commitment based review teams are an important experiment that should be followed with interest.

**Désirée Miloshevic:** Ms. Miloshevic pointed out that outside the meta issue of keeping the Internet open for innovation, issues relating to freedom of speech and human rights were the most important challenges facing Internet governance today. She highlighted that several issues, such as economic benefits, consumer protection, freedom to connect and education are issues that have either not been addressed or have been addressed inadequately in the report. She then went on to argue that the IGF, which is an outcome of the WGIG report has had a tangible impact on IG, particularly on clarifying IG as a multi-stakeholder process rather than describing mere institutional regulation models. For example, the IGF allows for newly identified public policy issues to continue to feature as topics in the IGF as emerging issues, such as open data, etc. Ms. Miloshevic also emphasised the need for stakeholders to increase the development of capacity in dealing with IG issues at the global level.

## **Summary of General Discussion**

Overall, it was agreed by all panelists that the WGIG 2005 report and the WSIS process have had a large impact on Internet Governance (IG), particularly in terms of an increase in public awareness and participation in IG as well as in framing of IG as involving multiple stakeholders and not just governments. This has in turn led to a shifting of power equations as well as an increase in openness and transparency. The report has helped create the distinction between governments and governance of the Internet, and framed, through the working definition of IG that was later incorporated in the WSIS Tunis Agenda, the non-technical aspects of IG as a core part of IG. Further, the identification and mapping of issues associated with IG and the generation of institutional governance models were important outcomes of the report. The report was also seen as instrumental in the creation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

Panellists also noted the changed context and the progress (and in many cases, lack of progress) since the WGIG report. Issues were raised around the lack of progress in implementing the specific recommendations made by the report. Inadequate capacity-building of actors in the global South, and efforts of the Number Resource Organization (NRO) and the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) with respect to IPv6 were used as examples. It was also pointed out that a number of concerns have materialized that had not been anticipated at the time of the report, including 'enhanced cooperation', the emergence of social networking, and military uses of the Internet.

## **Moderator's summary**

The WGIG and its report, the background report and the book that followed from that report, have proven to be crucial in defining the formulation and direction of Internet governance for the past 8 years, and have resulted in a multi-stakeholder governance model for the Internet and the IGF, and have set many norms that have shifted power equations. However, many significant issues that weren't central to Internet governance during the formulation of the WGIG report have since emerged, the majority of the recommendations made in the WGIG report haven't seen much progress, the capacity of actors in the global South to engage in IG issues has not increased greatly, and the IGF needs to gain greater credibility and centrality. Transnational private corporations are emerging as increasingly powerful actors in Internet governance and are slowly shifting the balance, a development that was unforeseen in 2005 when governments were seen as the most powerful actors.

## **Any agreed recommendations from the session**

The panelists recommended the production of an analytical report that would explore the current status of the issues and recommendations laid in the original report issues as well as identify any new concerns that have arisen since 2005. An important aspect of this report would be an emphasis on the benefits of the IGF and the role of the WGIG process and report in underscoring the significance of

multi-stakeholder processes. Further recommendations included the continued advancement of Internet rights and principles and enhanced cooperation, as these are two focus areas that have emerged since the WGIG report, and the strengthening of the IGF.