

## HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, 18 November 2009

- The Internet Governance Forum concluded today in Sharm el-Sheikh at the end of four days of meetings, total attendance in Sharm el-Sheikh reached more than 1800 participants from 112 countries, the largest participation since the first meeting in 2006. Delegations from 96 governments were represented.
- On the last day of the meeting, a special event was held on the subject of "Preparing the Young Generations in the Digital Age: A Shared Responsibility", chaired by the Her Excellency Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- The issue of the "desirability of the continuation of the IGF" was the focus of attention during a main session meeting held today, to examine whether the Forum should continue to meet beyond its initial five-year mandate. The session was chaired by Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who will report to the UN Secretary-General. Mr Ban Ki-moon will then make a recommendation to UN Member States on whether or not to extend the IGF mandate.

### Host Country Honorary Session

- An honorary session organized by the Egyptian Government heard a keynote address by Suzanne Mubarak, First Lady of Egypt, President and Founder of the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, in which she said that positive trends in the development of the Internet had a profoundly positive impact on society, especially in terms of youth empowerment. Through its dynamic infrastructure, diverse content, and interactive communities, the Internet is playing a key role in helping young people access quality education, find employment, and enhance their participation in all fields of life. She highlighted the launch, in Egypt, of the cyber peace initiative, promoting young people as equal and active partners in solving global challenges and which aims at using Internet technology for disseminating principles of tolerance, respect, justice, and human rights across nations. The initiative is also devoted to promoting and fostering Internet safety through education, awareness raising, multistakeholder cooperation, and active community involvement. "And, of course, as we have seen in this forum, there is so much more that we can do together on the international scene".
- Also attending was Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who stressed that the future of the Information Society will be led by today's youth and children and that sustainable development was about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. He also underlined the importance of ensuring that the Information Society was safe for children.
- The session, on "Preparing the Young Generations in the Digital Age: A Shared Responsibility", was chaired by Tarek Kamel, Egyptian Minister of Communications and Information Technology, heard panellists from Government, the private sector and other experts on issues related to youth and the Internet, specifically child safety on the Internet. Panellists discussed how IGF 2009 had created "Opportunities For All", with a special focus on young people, as the primary users and innovators of the Internet. They said young people were gradually integrated in the debates on diversity, openness, privacy and development, and most importantly on empowerment and online safety issues.

## Taking Stock and Looking Forward – on the desirability of the continuation of the Forum

- United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang led formal consultations with IGF participants on the “desirability of the continuation of the Forum”, as stipulated by the Tunis Agenda on the Information Society, which gave birth to the IGF in 2005.
- Opening the session, Mr. Sha noted that, in the last few days, clear views were expressed on the issue of the extension of the mandate of IGF, starting with the Prime Minister of Egypt.
- Bob Kahn, CEO and President of the Corporation for National Research Initiative and inventor, along with Vinton G. Cerf, of Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and the Internet Protocol (IP), said the IGF has provided a neutral venue in which important Internet issues can be discussed. He believed the IGF played an important and valuable role, and that it should definitely be continued. He also acknowledged the role that both Nitin Desai, UN Special Advisor on Internet Governance, and Markus Kummer, IGF Executive Coordinator, have played in shepherding the beginnings of the Forum. Vinton Cerf, presently Google Vice President, also spoke at the meeting through video conferencing, saying the Internet Governance Forum was an ideal setting in which to raise many issues ranging from abuses of the Internet to cooperation. He called on participants to continue to support the IGF meetings and to use them as a tool for making the Internet a better, safer, and more effective place in which to conduct global affairs.
- Several other speakers supported the extension of the IGF mandate in the future. Speakers said the IGF should continue to operate under the auspices of the U.N., while continually aiming to enhance its multistakeholder nature and ensuring the IGF Secretariat's independence.
- Representatives from China and Saudi Arabia, while welcoming the success of the IGF in promoting dialogue on issues of Internet Governance, said it had not met expectations as regards enhanced cooperation for developing countries in the area of Internet governance, as called for in the Tunis Agenda. They also stressed the failure to resolve the issue of unilateral control of critical Internet resources. They thought more work was necessary in these areas.
- A representative from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa said the impact of the IGF at the African continent level was producing satisfying results. More than 80% of African states have adopted an ITC policy or have integrated Internet technologies into their development policies and in their production-strategies.
- A representative from Kenya said his country was hosting the ICANN Africa meeting in 2010 and looked forward to hosting the Internet Governance Forum in 2011.
- Switzerland, as one of the largest contributors to the IGF trust fund, invited all other stakeholders to contribute into that trust fund, for the funding of the IGF Secretariat and the participation of stakeholders from the developing world.

## Emerging Issues - Impact of Social Networks

- On the emerging issue of the impact of social media, participants focussed on the development of social media -- social networks, user-generated content sites, microblogging, collaboration tools -- and the issues it raises regarding privacy and data protection, rules applicable to user-generated content and copyrighted material, as well as freedom of expression and illegal content. The session also addressed the importance of the “terms of service” of large platforms, how they are developed and their relationship with emerging business models based on behavioural analysis.

## Other events

- Early morning workshops examined issues such as child online safety indicators, legal issues related to social media and Internet governance; access to information and transparency in Internet governance; issues of intellectual property, competition and human rights; among others.
- Workshops on this last day of the fourth IGF also considered issues related to promoting freedom of information in the Internet governance; child online safety; child safety dimensions of the mobile internet in developing economies; global capacity building for internet governance; content regulation, surveillance and sexuality rights; online education; network neutrality; peace and security in the cyberspace; multilingualism and promoting cultural diversity.

### Closing session

- Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed the importance of issues covered during the meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, recalling that children and youth are the driving force behind many of the new technologies and services that are of increasing importance to the information society; but we must also be aware of the threats to their well being that the Internet can bring. He said consensus has been building that cybercrime, cybersecurity, privacy and openness was the joint responsibility of all stakeholders, adding that the UN General Assembly was considering the issue of cybersecurity in its current session. He also noted agreement that issues of access and diversity remain central to the IGF; that the Internet offered unprecedented opportunities for countries and people in all corners of the world but that the conversion of that potential into reality required that the Internet be managed for the benefit of humanity as a whole.
- Concerning the emerging theme of social media, Mr Sha said the real issue was whether, on balance, the variety of content available on the Internet through social media was ushering in a better-informed society, and this was a perspective that was worth discussing further.
- On the continuation of the Forum beyond 2010, Mr. Sha stressed the centrality of the principle of inclusiveness and the need for continued discussions on public policy issues related to the Internet in some form. A report on these consultations will be presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who will then communicate his recommendation to the General-Assembly.
- It was announced at the closing session that next year's IGF meeting, in Vilnius, Lithuania, would be held from 14 to 17 September.

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