

Internet Governance in Africa region: *Three IGFs later*

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IG in Africa Region

- ▶ New concept: Based on multi-stakeholder culture.
- ▶ Internet History in many countries on the continent started without much government direct involvement as Internet was perceived as competition to incumbent telecommunication companies. It was seen as a new media that emerged in a non-conventional manner. (Open protocol, peer-to-peer exchange, extremely deregulated environment, participative and industry lead development...)
- ▶ Fear (justified) about security issues and control over communication.

From the WSIS to the IGF

- ▶ WSIS has allowed these issues to be discussed, concerns to be raised, and to create an environment for awareness towards many government representatives on how the Internet really works and what its Governance model involves.
- ▶ Capacity building and open dialogue became critical for further discussions and better contribution from developing countries. And the creation of the IGF became an important tools to achieve that.

3 IGFs later

- ▶ Capacity building has been the cross cutting theme of the past IGFs in the following areas:
 - Multi-stakeholder approach
 - Internet Technology issues and their complexities
 - Internet governance itself
 - What is happening within different stakeholders to address or try to solve issues related to Internet Operation and its development.
 - Security matter ...etc

Any positive Outcome?

Perceived Outcomes

- ▶ A major outcome of the IGF could be the evidence to our community that:
 1. The Internet became a critical element of the world economy.
 2. It is important to see the Internet as a tool that is locally developed for a global impact.
 3. The need to strengthen local Infrastructure and build a *real* local Internet.

- ▶ Additionally, the concept of multi-stakeholder approach in addressing local issues started picking up. Many countries are trying to create a consultative environment involving all players.

Let's Face the Reality

- ▶ Are African stakeholders really interested in the IGF ?
 - The honest answer is NO, Africa as a whole has not shown a real interest in IGF.
- ▶ But why not?
 - Because the outcome of IGF is not evident for many people; they are not used to spending their limited resources to travel just to discuss issues. They prefer decisional meetings where they can have clear solutions to issues facing them.
 - They have real issues for which they simple want solutions to apply (assuming the result is a cost/time savings approach on their resources).

Narrowing Down the IG issue to Number Resources

- ▶ The NRO has used the opportunity of this global dialogue (WSIS and after the IGF) to increase its awareness and cooperation with non-conventional stakeholders through workshops, round tables and active participation/contribution to IGF events internationally and regionally.
- ▶ The NRO has also engaged into advanced dialogue with other organisations that have strong interest in Numbers Resource Management such as ITU and OECD.

Initiatives in Africa region

- ▶ The next IGF is planned in Africa (Egypt) and Africa is preparing to take the maximum advantage from it.

- ▶ Regional IGF meetings
 - EAIGF (7–9 September) in Nairobi, Kenya
 - WAIGF (14–16 October) in Accra, Ghana

- ▶ Localisation of discussions on IG issues is taking place. Even if the topics and models discussed may not always be exactly the same as the global IGF, the fundamental part of its concept (multi-stakeholder approach) remain constant.

Conclusion

- ▶ It is obvious that the IGF is the best model that could offer an open and smooth environment for stakeholders to discuss and share views on issue related to Internet.
- ▶ The increasing interest from African countries in Internet governance and their overall approach to it, is a clear demonstration that despite the apparent lack of interest, mindsets are changing and the seriousness of the fact that local IG is critical for the Internet development itself.

Thank you

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