

LACIGF 12 Report

Title of the session: Session 4 – The Future of Internet Governance - PART I – Perspectives on the Future of Internet Governance (panel – 30 min)

Session summary:

The Future of Internet Governance Session / Study Presentation on LACIGF & Open Microphone, moderated by Raúl Echeberría (Consultant, Uruguay), dealt with the theme the future of Internet governance. The session was divided into three moments. First, it was the speech of six panelists on the panel theme. The second one was the presentation of a study with data and suggestions to improve the LACIGF model, made by Raúl Echeberría. In the third moment there was an open microphone for public intervention on the future of LACIGF. This report will cover PART I - Perspectives on the future of Internet governance, summarizing the panelists' talk about the prospects for the future of Internet governance.

Raúl Echeberría mentioned that, last year, the Secretary General of the United Nations made the decision to create a High Level Panel to explore the digital and technological challenges of the contemporary world, ensuring that they are benefiting humankind. It was a starting point for thinking and rethinking the best models of governance. If you have built a lot since the creation of the IGF, then you need to think about the new steps for the IGF and the general government. That is the purpose of the panel.

Chengetai Masango (IGF) reiterated the moderator argument. The high-level panel of digital cooperation was invited by the UN secretary general in June 2018 to address proposals and foster cooperation between government, civil society, private sector, and academic. The study is not multistakeholder, is multidimensional, the goals are to raise awareness of the transformative impact of technologies on society and the economy, and to contribute to the debate on digital collaboration. The panel drafted a report that was presented to UN. The report is divided into three parts: not to be outdone, human resources and mechanisms for global digital cooperation.

To **Jacqueline Morris (ISOC Trinidad y Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago)** one of the things she has noticed in the region and global scenario is the difficulty to involve all the relevant actors. She pointed that many people do not consider Internet governance important, because they are not working on it. Therefore, there is a need to have accessible and understandable materials for all, because it is not easy to understand a technical document on Internet governance and it is necessary to integrate more people in an appropriate way.

Adela Goberna (ALAI, Argentina) started talking about the need to be very precise when we ask ourselves what is the future of Internet Governance. The main challenge would be to understand the socio-political context of each countries, and how there are different perspectives on Internet issues. She feels that before there was more consensus than now, because there was less dissent and less economic, political and social elements that converge on Internet governance issues. The Internet is no longer just the Internet, it became an understanding of how each concept is handled. When the moderator asked her about the meaning of understanding the governance context, she explained that understanding the

context and making substantive differences in how public policies are formed in each country is the challenge and trying to understand why we do not reach a homogeneous political level and common ground on the future of governance.

Andres Piazza (LACTLD, Argentina) began commenting that in the discussions previously sought to protect a series of Internet principles and bring it to universalization, but even at that time when there was consensus of various sectors, public policies were reached. At first Internet Governance wasn't about regulation, but over time it became necessary. Today we have the challenge of embodying the original consensuses, that were ignored, into regulations and public policies. The ability of the actors to contribute to the discussion has increased, even in the forums. But the ability of forums to impact regulations has diminished. He believes that we must evolve the superstructure, increase the legitimacy of the governance structure, with a co-governance of the existing structure, creating the necessary ones and strengthening the IGF.

To **Sebastián Bellagamba (ISOC, Uruguay)**, it is only possible to understand the future of Internet governance if we understand the present and the past. It took mankind years to understand the challenge of coordinating the Internet in global collaboration and so far, he got some pretty poor results, which require a critical review. According to Sebastian, the great lesson we have learned is that, at all levels, global collaboration is essential because the Internet is global and collaborative. The Internet is the desire of networks to connect with each other, and the network of networks does not have a central infrastructure. In this sense, with an understanding of how the Internet is structured and how it works, one must be aware that the interests at stake on the Internet, today are not necessarily the same as in the past. It is necessary to have a better understanding the present, which makes the discussion more complex. Finally, the panelist concluded with a warning that the biggest challenge of the present is to adjust the current regulation to the current reality of the Internet. The challenge is great when one realizes, that the reality of what regulators think should fit into regulation often does not correspond to reality itself.

Flávia Lefevre (CGI.br, Brazil) speech starts with a call to the rescue of the public nature of Internet, both in terms of logical networks, and the communications physical structure, as recognized by the NETmundial event, which culminated in the São Paulo declaration, signed by over a thousand people and 110 countries. The panelist pointed out the main future challenges of the digital world and the need for a strong and committed multisectoral model to address the problems, assuming that the premise of the search for knowledge of the public interest is essential, even in a strictly private space. Flávia warned about two main problems: monopolies of technology communication companies that concentrate data and information flows in the hands of few actors with an economic power that had never been seen before in the history and practice of zero rating, affecting human dignity, especially in Latin America, where there are restricted franchise data plans with few applications, which reduces Internet access. For her, governance must be more committed to the public interest, needing to face monopolies, educate users and create lines of defense against surveillance capitalism. To this end, the CGI.br has always defended and continues to argue that multi stakeholder governance mechanisms are the best and most powerful ways to achieve the objectives of an ethical, open and democratic Internet.

The three questions asked were about strategies to involve youths in these discussions on the future, about the challenges for an antitrust policy and initiatives that seek to establish a dialogue on Internet governance and about the future perspective of governance in non-binding spaces of Internet governance.

Chengetai Masango pointed out that the moments of discussion are the beginning of the solution, not the end. After that, he addressed the issue of binding standards and mentioned that the common practice is to try to distance themselves from them, since the Internet is not traditionally an environment built by binding standards. Therefore, they prefer to use instruments attached voluntarily. Referring to monopolies, Masango mentioned that they do not force these companies to adhere to certain models, but rather open dialogue with them and the governments that are interested in this discussion.

Jacqueline Morris reinforced Masango's approach, as she disapproved the binding norms in the multisectoral model. In addition, she highlighted the difficulty of some actors, within the context to have the resources or general conditions to adapt to such standards, and the number of actors on the Internet makes such a practice impossible.

Adela Goberna, in her answer, preferred to resume the approach by suggesting that panel issues were avoiding the proposed issue. She admitted that in multisectoral issues such as Internet governance, there is a normal loss of focus and addressed the importance of greater attention to the issues under discussion.

Sebastián Bellagamba mentioned the importance of working with the current experience in the subject. He considered that the United Nations High Panel is an excellent place to start and listed among the reasons for this, the legitimacy evoked by the UN. He also emphasized that IGFs should not become regulatory forums, since this is not the full scope of governance.

In turn, **Andrés Piazza** highlighted the innovative capacity of the Internet and the pace of innovation that it brought. With this, the panelist was in favor of the mechanisms that promote the discussion and against binding regulations, since these can be considered illegitimate and, consequently, could be disobeyed.

Finally, **Flávia Lefèvre** think about how Facebook and WhatsApp relate to Internet providers, representing a great risk for our personal data. According to her, the large volume of information that these companies work with makes their practices absolutely decisive and worrying. Although, today it is difficult to face the monopoly of these companies, this challenge must be met. The panelist ended up asking regulators to understand that reality cannot change, but the laws can.

Outputs and other relevant links:

Full session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEixgkGamV8>

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