Updates on Internet Governance: No 3 AFRICA and GLOBAL

Internet Governance Update: From NetMundial to IGF 2014.

What does the crystal ball say for the Internet in 2014 so far? Here is a synopsis of what has shaped the global and regional Internet Governance (IG) ecosystem and what to expect in the coming months.

Brief Background;

Today the Internet Governance Eco-System can be compared a little bit to the rainforest. In the rainforest an uncountable number of diverse plants and animals live together in a very complex system. In the "virtual rainforest" we also have an endless and growing diversity of networks, services, applications and other properties, which co-exist, in a mutual interdependent mechanism of communication, coordination and collaboration. We also know that one player cannot manage the rainforest as a whole. But it can be damaged and destroyed. Likewise, in the Internet Governance Eco-System many players with very different legal status operate on many different layers, on local, national, regional and international levels, driven by technical innovation, user needs, market opportunities and political interests but none can claim overall management or custody of the Internet.

2014 has seen a flurry of developments and activities beginning with the revelations of Edward Snowden in summer 2013. The Brazilian president Dilma Roussef gave a speech at the 68th UN General Assembly in September 2013 and called for a new approach to Internet Governance, which resulted in the convening of NETmundial in April 2014. The result of this successful event was the formulation of key principles of Internet Governance and a roadmap for the development of the Internet. On May 20, 2014, The *Panel on Global Internet Cooperation and Governance Mechanisms* also released key recommendations on how to evolve the Internet governance ecosystem to accommodate global needs for collaboration, interconnectivity and Internet growth.

Other related events especially under the UN and the ITU including WTDC held in Dubai, WSIS+ 10 review process and the NTIA announcement on the intention to transition the IANA functions stewardship and the re-invigorated calls to strengthen the IGF are all poised to affect the Internet in one way or another in 2014.

The challenge is to find flexible mechanisms for enhanced communication, coordination as well as formal and informal collaboration among the various players at the different layers to allow all stakeholders to play their respective roles on an equal footing without discrimination in an open and transparent mechanism. Among the key principles for such an enhanced cooperation are, inter alia, mutual respect and recognition of the role of other stakeholders, legitimacy, checks and balances in a workable and recognized accountability system.

The questions remains on what role and to what extent Africa is ready and willing to play effectively in these processes in this defining moment in the history of the Internet.

Key Negotiation Channels and Processes in going on.

1) **UNCSTD, WGEC and the ITU.**

2014 started with a meeting of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development UNCSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation (WGEC) in Geneva in February 2014. This was the 3rd meeting in a series of meetings intended for an exchange of views among stakeholders and to report the outcomes to the CSTD at its 17 session in 2014. The outcome of

these meetings will be a draft resolution for the ECOSOC meeting in July 2014 and eventually to prepare the discussion for the 69th UN General Assembly in fall 2014 in New York. The UN General Assembly will then decide about the renewal of the IGF mandate, the WSIS Follow Up and the establishment of a possible new mechanism for enhanced cooperation.

The ITU held its 6th World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) at the Dubai World Trade Centre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 March to 10 April 2014 at the kind invitation of the United Arab Emirates. This was followed by the WSIS 10+ high-level meeting (extended version of the WSIS Forum) in June (See report) 2014. The main objective was to review the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes under the mandates of participating agencies, and to take stock of achievements in the last 10 years based on reports of WSIS Stakeholders, including those submitted by countries, Action Line Facilitators and other stakeholders with the view of developing proposals on a new vision beyond 2015, potentially including new targets. This process also took into account the decisions of the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly. The event was coordinated by ITU and co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNCTAD and UNDP.

The results of the above 2 meetings will feed the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Busan (Republic of Korea) in November 2014. In Busan we will see whether the group of governments which during the WCIT (World Conference on International Telecommunications) in December 2012 in Dubai wanted to extend the mandate of the ITU to the Internet and called for the legal recognition of a "National Internet Segment" will try to introduce similar language into the negotiations around the two legally binding ITU instruments; the *ITU Constitution and the ITU Convention*. 5 Key elections within the ITU will also be done: The Plenipotentiary Conference will elect the ITU Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Directors of the Bureaux and the members of the Radio Regulations Board. The Plenipotentiary Conference also elects the Member States that will constitute the next ITU Council.

The 69th UN General Assembly, which starts end of September 2014 in New York, discusses Internet issues in three committees: In the 1st Committee governments negotiate a resolution on cyber security and confidence building measures, in the 2nd committee they negotiate, as said above, the WSIS Follow Up and the renewal of the IGF and in the 3rd committee they discuss privacy, surveillance and human rights.

2) NETMundial: April 23-24, 2014 - Brazil

In the same year that World Wide Web celebrates 25 years, Brazil hosted **NETmundial – Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance**. The meeting was a partnership between the **Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br)** and **/1Net**, a forum that gathers international entities of the various stakeholders involved with Internet governance. This meeting focused on the **elaboration of principles of Internet governance** and the **proposal for a roadmap for future development of this ecosystem**. The goal was to consolidate proposals based on these two topics.

Over 1,480 stakeholders with active voices (including remote participation), from a diversity of 97 nations participated and more that 188 submissions were received. It was the first of its kind. It hopefully contributed to the evolution of the Internet governance ecosystem. The outcome was key principles of Internet Governance and a road map for future evolution of Internet Governance. Please see the report here

3) IANA Functions Stewardship Transition

Shortly after the NTIA announcement of 14 March 2014, the Internet technical community welcomed this announcement. And as per the NTIA conditions and criteria, ICANN has since launched a multistakeholder process and discussion to gather community views and input on the principles and mechanisms for the IANA functions stewardship transition process. Following a month-long call for input on the community-driven draft proposal, on June 6, ICANN posted the Process to Develop the Proposal and Next Steps (see announcement). An overview of community input, the composition of the Coordination Group, a call for names, as well as other process-related topics can be found here.

Each community represented in the Coordination Group is invited to fill in a submission form by 2 July – 23:59 UTC to announce its representatives in the Coordination Group. The form should be completed to reflect the number of seats allocated to each community.

4) High-Level Panel on Global Internet Cooperation and Governance Mechanisms

The Panel, was a result of partnership with the Annenberg Foundation and the World Economic Forum formed alongside the work of ICANN's four strategy panels as an independent panel exploring the global issue of Internet governance, and chaired by Estonia's President Toomas Ilves, and vice-chaired by Internet pioneer Vint Cerf. The panel boasted an impressive cohort of panelists, representing a broad array of stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, the technical community, and international organizations. In addition, a team of experts in Internet governance helped inform and energize discussions in support of the panelists.

The Panel has released key recommendations on how to evolve the Internet governance (IG) ecosystem to accommodate global needs for collaboration, interconnectivity and Internet growth. The report released on May 20, 2014 follows a third and final meeting by the panel and adopts the IG principles established at NETmundial. The Panel believes the principles including human rights, culture and linguistic diversity, security and stability, and open unfragmented space, among others are fundamental to implementing a 21st century model of Internet governance.

5) ICANN 50: June - London

The ICANN 50 meeting scheduled in London from June 21-27 will also provide another avenue to further evolve the various discussions that have been going on around the IG space including The globalization of ICANN and USG transition of IANA functions, ICANN accountability and the Netmundial outcome amongst other issues.

The At-Large community will also hold the second At-Large Summit (ATLAS II) during this meeting. The theme for ATLAS II is "Global Internet: The User Perspective.'' The first At Large Summit (ATLAS I) took place in 2009 in Mexico-City.

6) 9th IGF: September 2014.

The 9th IGF scheduled for September in Istanbul, Turkey could also contribute to a more output oriented discussion. Building on the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals, and the mandate given at the Second Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (WSIS), the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a United Nations led-activity initiated in 2006 as a global platform for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue on prevailing and emerging issues on Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability, and development of the Internet.

The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has since appointed Jānis Kārkliņš of Latvia to be the Chair of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) of the Internet Governance Forum. The MAG advises the Secretary-General on the programme and schedule of the Internet Governance Forum meetings and comprises 56 members drawn from Governments, the private sector and civil society, including representatives from the academic and technical communities

Before the IGF in Istanbul there will be numerous regional and national IGFs around the globe, including the 3rd African Internet Governance Forum to be hosted in Abuja Nigeria in July 10-12, 2014

These IGFs will discuss critical issues of relevance and concern to the Continent as part of a global 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+10) from a very practical perspective relevant to individual countries, businesses, technical groups and civil society organizations

7) Conclusion

The reality of the existing and evolving Internet Governance Eco-System is at critical stage in the history of the Internet. The level of participation and focus globally has been unprecedented and the importance of the Internet as a global business resource can never be overstated. The recent ICANN commissioned BCG report on "***Greasing the Wheels of the Internet Economy***" has only confirmed this fact.

The decisions stemming from all these processes are definitely bound to affect the Internet and the way the world is going to treat and manage the biggest resource in history going forward. Africa and indeed the AUC need to rise up and take her rightful place on the Internet governance table both in policy development processes as well as contribute to innovation.

As ICANN, we remain committed to working very closely with all our stakeholders across the continent in an equal and true multi-stakeholder manner as we discharge our remit as per the Affirmation of Commitment (AOC) requirements. The resiliency, security and interoperability of the Internet need to be safeguarded and it will take our collective effort as stakeholders (Governments, civil society, academia, private sector and end users) to make this happen.

Links and References:

- Internet Governance processes towards WSIS + 10: http://bestbits.net/wp-uploads/diagram.html
- Africa IGF: http://www.uneca.org/media-centre/stories/nigeria-host-3rd-african-internet-governance-forum#.U5WzdS9uFpk
- WTDC 2014: http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Conferences/WTDC/WTDC14
- NETMundial: http://netmundial.br/about/
- NTIA announcement: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press-release/2014/ntia-announces-intent-transition-key-internet-domain-name-functions
- ICANN 50 (London): http://london50.icann.org/en/
- Global IGF: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/component/content/article?id=1557:2014
- WSIS + 10 review: http://www.wsis.org/review/mpp