

## Internet Governance Forum Geneva, 18-22 December 2017

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Report by *Tijani BEN JEMAA*

The 2017 Internet Governance Forum in Geneva was my 9<sup>th</sup> IGF. All my activities are detailed below.

This IGF represents a good move of the ICANN and At-Large participation in the Internet ecosystem. The coordination of the At-Large (and ICANN) activities before and during the forum was of great importance for the success of our participation.

### **Sessions**

Besides the opening and closing ceremony, I participated in the following sessions:

**High Level Thematic Session** 'Shaping our Future Digital Global Governance'

**WS #180** Body as Data: Dataveillance, the Informatization of the Body and  
Citizenship

**WS #050** Data is the New Oil: Shaping the Digital Economy of MENA

**Seed Alliance:** Fire Award Ceremony

**WS #076** Multi-stakeholder governance of the Domain Name System, lessons  
learned for other IG issues

**WS #123** Internet of Things and Cyber Security: Will "Regulation" Save the day?

**OF #051** ISOC Open Forum: What actions should we take today to shape our  
digital future?

**OF #050** ICANN Open Forum: Looking ahead: Challenges and Opportunities

**ISOC Middle East** meeting

**WS #134** Fake news: is blockchain the solution to assess information?

**WS #042** Internet of Things for Smart City: Green and Sustainability

**OF #006** African IGF Open Forum

**OF #066** UNESCO Open Forum: Exploring implications of Big Data and Artificial  
Intelligence for building inclusive Knowledge Societies and achieving  
SDGs

***I was one of the 6 panelists and I spoke about Users' data protection***

**WS #238** Local Content: an opportunity for human, economic and social  
development and free flow of information in underserved regions;  
The MENA as an example

***This is the AFRALO Workshop that I moderated (Separate report***

*below).*

**Taking Stock Open Mic**

## **At-Large Booth**

At-Large got the best booth position. It was situated at the entrance of the IGF Village, with no limitation on both right and left sides, which made it larger than the other ones.

I contributed in keeping the booth during slots where I didn't have sessions. I tried to make it attractive by speaking to visitors explaining ICANN, At-Large, ALAC, RALO and ALS meanings and functions, inviting them to join the right RALO....

It was a pity that there was no LACRALO flyer while for the other regions, flyers are available. Our booth was very well visited. A special report on the booth activities will be provided by the whole At-Large participants (Gleen MckNight is the lead for the booth).

## Internet Governance Forum 2017

### Workshop #238 Report

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Session Title: Local Content: an opportunity for human, economic and social development and free flow of information in underserved regions; The MENA as an example

Date: 21 December 2017

Time: 11:50 – 13:20

Session Organizer: AFRALO & MAHARAT

Chair/Moderator: Tijani Ben Jemaa

Rapporteur/Notetaker: Olivier Crépin Leblond

List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:

- Abdelaziz Hilali      Professor at the Rabat University, Morocco  
AFRALO & NomCom at ICANN
- Roula Mickael      MAHARAT Foundation: a Lebanese NGO working on freedom of expression and media development, Lebanon
- Glenn Mcknight      ISOC / IEEE / NARALO at ICANN, Canada
- Layal Bahnam      Legal Expert / MARARAT Foundation, Lebanon
- Khalid Ibrahim      Gulf Centre for Human Rights
- Marie Noémie Marques      Orange, France

Key Issues raised:

- Local content in local language is almost absent in the underserved regions
- In general, underserved communities are almost always content consumers, not producers.
- A focus should be made on local content in local languages
- Statistics about MENA Region:
  - Internet penetration: in the MENA region:
    - 498 million people living in 23 countries.
    - Digital Divides between:
      - Gulf Countries and the other ones,
      - social class
      - Men & Women
  - One third of top 50 Web Sites are not available in Arabic.
  - Growth of Internet users: +15% since Jan 2016.
  - Arabic language users has highest growth of 7247% from 2000-2017.
  - Nearly 50% of Arabic users prefer Social Media

- Alternative Digital Media content in Arabic language is facing Challenges.
- Living under political change & technological change.
- New platforms profit from the new political environment that allow for more freedom of expression.
- More progressive content in Arabic challenges existing political regimes, gives many points of view and challenges taboos – for example criticism of public figures, sexuality and societal issues.
- Good content is produced but not on a long term ongoing basis.
- Many challenges to quality media content:
  - Accessing reliable content to start with (sources)
  - Restrictive media
  - Access to Internet
  - Filtering and shutdown
  - Lack of media management skills
  - Lack of culture of innovation
- There is a need to find incentives to create local content.
- There is a need to perform capacity building.
- Promoting entrepreneurship in Youth to start projects.
- There is a need to find incentives to create local content
- The IEEE project on Humanitarian Technology includes a focus on Content Creation
- In MENA region, when it comes to redistribution of local content, the laws either do not exist or are not put in practice. They are more a formality than a tangible tool
- In some countries, the law is not in line with international standards. Government allowance of free-flow of information is the exception. Processes for request of information are too complicated (formalities).
- There is a lack of Interest in the region on working on Copyrighted Content
- Improvisation of Digital Communications appears to have helped with the creation of local content
- Governments should promote the creation of content
- Problem with having local content is affecting the work of online activists and of Civil Society
- There is a lack of Network Neutrality: ISPs are either run by Governments or by Entities that are Government controlled (filtering) which is a barrier for local content to be disseminated.
- Current climate of war is negatively affecting the freedom of expression and content creation
- Online activists speaking about public affairs and trying to defend people rights is considered as opposing/hostile content
- Local content is relying on an Enabling environment to be deployed in rural and

- underserved regions for a transformation of the local society
- Local content may be for learning, healthcare, agriculture, digital governance services etc.
- A Digital Broadband infrastructure is paramount to Local content creation and dissemination
  - To be cost effective, the necessary infrastructure should:
    - Be common or shared
    - Make use of Satellites where necessary
    - Use Adapted energy solutions (Solar, Wind, etc.)
- Local content is a challenge for developing countries on many levels
- Transformation of the state broadcasters of the past into dynamic production of online content in Europe
- Convergence of broadcasted content into professionally produced content
- EBU presented a report to UNESCO regarding the production of content from National Broadcasters
- In the MENA region, broadcasters are not ready to be in the online world
- There is a concern regarding the competing international good quality content
- The enabling environment may include copyright laws and e-payment systems
- The content generated in the MENA region is not used by its citizens, but collected by the others and processed for their interests.

#### Some conclusions:

Not only producing the content but also distributing it is important.

Sometimes there is a lot of restrictions especially when digging deeper into topics.

Talking about business models is done more and more to promote the local content production and distribution.

There are hopes that a lot could be done for capacity building across the MENA region. E-payment helps a lot. There are many motivations that can be utilized for the data to be re-used. Intellectual Property and Copyright should be developed in the region.

Being an e-consumer only is a real concern that needs to be addressed.

50 seconds of video clip is good – but not good enough to have a presence on the net. Local content in local language is very important for underserved communities because content produced by others wouldn't respond to the specific needs of these communities. Local content should cover Cultural & scientific production, as well as software applications. With IPV6 and the coming Internet of things, the need for applications to command and monitor these things remotely will be huge, and local applications will be an opportunity for underserved communities to enter the content industry

**Important remark:**

We received on Tuesday 19 December 2017 a request from the “Best Practice Forum on Local Content” through the IGF Secretariat to merge our Workshop session with their one that is scheduled at the same time to avoid dividing the participants interested in local content. We accepted the request and stressed that the merged session shall be in the room assigned for our workshop (XXVII – E), and the BPF accepted (Wim degezelle).

We were surprised to see that the session has been displaced to room XII – A a few minutes prior to the beginning of the session. This made our workshop poorly attended (40 participants only) because the reminder we made on Wednesday through all our lists insisting on the date, time and room number (XXVII-E) made people go the wrong room.

The BPF took 40 minutes in the beginning of the session to present the forum and its ongoing work, and then our workshop started to last 50 minutes only while it was scheduled for 90 minutes.