Internet Governance and Development

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Definitions

• Before we can start to talk about Internet Governance and Development, need to define our terms
  • Internet
  • Governance
  • Development
Internet

- Lots of speakers have discussed this - many here in the past days.
- So- network of networks running TCP/IP is the basic. It’s global in nature, becoming a major communications infrastructure, distributed, fault tolerant.
Governance

- **WGIG** - Governance, in the sense we use it, influences political processes and public institutions by shaping the way people interact with government and how government interacts with them.
- Governance is a part of many different processes related to the Internet, including the development of technical standards and the management of core resources, as well as regulation of the misuse and abuse of the Internet.
Development

- the advancement of the management and use of (natural) resources to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of human life. For development to be sustainable it must take account of social and ecological factors, as well as economic ones, of the living and non-living resource base, and of the long-term and short-term advantages and disadvantages of alternative actions.
Millennium Development Goals

• In 2000, the UN adopted a resolution which stated:
  • We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want.
  • We resolve therefore to create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty.
MDGs

• To that end, the UN has developed 8 MDGs.
• These goals are measurable, time-based
• ICTs are invaluable in attaining these goals
MDGs

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development
Internet Governance and MDGs

- Access to ICT resources, including the Internet, is vital to enable all to be empowered to self-determine their lives in all sectors of society, be they economic, political, social, cultural or environmental. Access and use of ICTs, including the Internet, is becoming fundamental to the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals. Differentiated access to ICT resources is reinforcing a ‘digital divide’; a structural divide between developed and developing countries, and within a country between urban and rural communities, rich and poor, young and old, able and disabled and women and men, minority and dominant cultures.
Internet Governance and MDGs

- In its Declaration of Principles, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), asserted a commitment “to build a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society, where everyone can create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge”. The goal of this commitment is to enable “individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life”.

Given a working definition of the Internet that embraces the development and use of the Internet there is an inextricable linking of Internet governance and development issues. Not only are there myriad issues within this cluster but also many of these issues are cross-cutting in nature and therefore manifest themselves in several of the other three clusters.
Cross cutting IG&D issues

- facilitating participation of all in the ‘information age’;
- promoting national economic, political, cultural and social development;
- supporting information and communication rights for all;
- reducing urban-rural disparity;
- contributing to poverty alleviation;
- taking up challenges posed by global technological and economic trends;
- preventing the marginalisation or people and communities from the global networked economy;
- delivering on economic and social developmental objectives.
Specific IG&D issues

- Specific issues related to infrastructure development and access, content development and access and human capacity building in relation to these challenges.
Specific IG&D issues

- Affordable and universal access for all
- National and regional backbone infrastructure development
- International interconnection costs
- Multilingualism, content accessibility and cultural diversity
- Capacity building and meaningful participation in global policy development
Affordable and universal access for all

- One of the basic issues is access to the Internet for everyone and such concerns have a direct impact on the nature of policies for universal service and universal access.
National and regional backbone infrastructure development

- With the rise of new ‘last mile’ technologies, such as those based on wireless, and regional licensing of multiple players, investment in and development of national and regional backbone capacity is becoming a major policy issue.
International interconnection costs

• For many ISPs in developing countries, the cost of buying international circuits and transit services for end-to-end connectivity in the Internet remains a major issue. In essence the nature of the cost of transit depends on the volume and flow of traffic within a network and within a country. The total cost to ISPs is influenced by many factors including local and regional connectivity, the availability of local content as well as the cost of international circuits.
Potential measures to alleviate ...

- A shift towards a "peering" regime between and among regional ISPs will help reduce the high cost linked with international component cost. This, in turn, will encourage better optimisation in the use of international bandwidth, lowering the overall cost of Internet access in developing countries;
- The development of local content and the stimulation of Internet use and market expansion;
- A public-private partnership approach could be employed, with the support of intergovernmental organizations and the donors, in the establishment of the sub-regional clusters of IXPs and liberalization of the telecommunication industry to lower costs of international connectivity;
• In Small Island States (SIS), funding of basic infrastructure by the public sector or international funding mechanisms, with competition by the private sector on top of the government created infrastructure may contribute towards lowering of access costs and increased access in unserved and underserved areas;

• The establishment of national telecommunications policies that provide an environment conducive to the establishment of network access points in the country by backbone providers.
Multilingualism, content accessibility and cultural diversity

- Affordable access to information is a pre-requisite to knowledge development and capacity building that can lead to more informed engagement in ICT policy and Internet governance processes.
- Content that is hosted on websites is often inaccessible due to the lack of application of global usability standards such as the W3C WAI (web accessibility initiative) standards in website design.
Capacity building and meaningful participation in global policy development

- Need to ensure that all stakeholders have the ability to participate. It is necessary to strengthen developing countries’ participation in international ICT decision-making fora.
Common barriers to participation

- Lack of a coherent ICT policy in many developing countries and an understanding of the role that ICT’s can play in helping these countries achieve their development objectives.
- Insufficient number of, and support for, regional and sub-regional bodies that can address issues of infrastructure access and insufficient local exchange points.
- Weakness in national and regional institutions that deal with policy issues;
- Lack of easy, affordable, timely access to information about ICT-related issues, decision-making fora and processes by stakeholders in developing countries.
- Limitations with the structure, functioning and working methods of international ICT policy fora.
• Flaws in the processes for identification and selection of the right people to receive funding that many institutions make available for people from developing countries to participate in international ICT conferences.

• Unused ICT capacity due to either unfinished development projects or a lack of knowledge on how to utilize the technology effectively, to take advantage of existing and emerging technologies.

• Lack of participation from women, indigenous peoples, civil society and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

• Limited resources for participation in the relevant international meetings.