

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2017

*Internet governance from the edges:
National and regional IGFs in their own words*



GISWatch 2017
SPECIAL EDITION

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

Global Information Society Watch 2017 Special edition
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Project coordinators

Maud Barret Bertelloni
Deborah Brown
Anriette Esterhuysen

With the contributions of

Cathy Chen
Flavia Fascendini
Anja Gengo
Lori Nordstrom

Publication production

Cathy Chen and Flavia Fascendini

Proofreading

Valerie Dee
Lori Nordstrom

Graphic design

Monocromo
info@monocromo.com.uy
Phone: +598 2400 1685

Cover illustration

Matias Bervejillo

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Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition:
Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words

Disclaimer: The views expressed in survey responses are not necessarily the views of APC or of its members.

This report is a special companion edition to Global Information Society Watch 2017: National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs), which can be downloaded from <https://www.giswatch.org/2017-local-and-regional-internet-governance-forums-igfs>

CAMEROON IGF

Cameroon

Agence Nationale des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (ANTIC) •
bouba@antic.cm • www.igf.cm



NRI founding stories and development

*What is the story of the founding of your NRI?
What were its inspiration, its objectives?*

The country was part of the two phases (2003 and 2005) of the World Summit on the Information Society that paved the way to the Internet Governance Forum. Cameroon firstly organised in 2012 the sub-regional Central Africa IGF in Douala with the aim to have a view on the state of internet processes within the six countries in Central Africa. Cameroon started its first national IGF in August 2013 with the objective of a view on internet processes with respect to laws, rules, infrastructures, operators, intermediaries and users.

How did it develop and what difficulties did you experience along the way?

The governmental ICT Agency (ANTIC) took the lead, inviting other partners to join the organising committee, but took hand over the calendar and each articulation of it. On the other hand civil society organisations were not well organised to play a key role.

How do you imagine your NRI and its activities in the future?

Involving more civil society organisations and other partners in the organising committee. Setting up a real national secretariat in charge of the whole organisation.

NRI internal governance and initiatives

Who are the people involved in your NRI and how do they contribute to it?

- The National ICT Agency (ANTIC), a government institution, as the main organiser
- The Ministry of Telecommunication sharing laws, rules and government strategic plans

- Civil society organisations involved in panel discussions or/and proposed topics
- The technical community (ISOC) sharing the ongoing technical processes
- The private sectors like operators, mostly as funders.

Have you experienced difficulties in ensuring all stakeholder groups participate fully and more or less equally?

As the main organiser is the government, the multistakeholder approach is not yet a reality. Other stakeholders are not taking part fully when the government institution keeps control over the calendar, the agenda, the budget, the date and the venue.

*Do you measure gender balance in your NRI?
Did you undertake measures to encourage gender balance?*

As the multistakeholder approach is not taken under account in the setting up of the organising committee, gender balance, measured in terms of the number of women taking part on the committee, is not achieved. We as civil society organisation take care during the selection of presentations that gender balance be observed.

How was your last forum organised, what were the topics chosen and the outcomes of discussion? How was it financed?

The last forum took place on 17-30 June 2017 in Kribi, a seaside area city here in Cameroon. The topics chosen concerned:

- A brief history of the IGF
- Environment of legislation in term of laws and rules
- Internet rights and duties
- Rights in regard to the “African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms”
- Internet and education
- Internet and critical resources

- The challenge of the IPv6 process
- Cloud computing and its challenges for Cameroon
- Internet and security
- Internet and cyber crime
- Cameroon's national strategy plan 2020.

The outcomes were:

- Process of knowing legislation
- Awareness on what to do and what is forbidden
- Familiarisation with African Declaration in terms of rights and freedoms
- The benefits for enterprises to set up IPv6 in term of opportunity space
- Advice on how to be secure online
- Awareness on the digital strategic national plan.

Are there controversial topics that have been difficult in your NRI and if so, why?

We suppose that for what concerns national actuality, there is the talk about the internet shutdown, but strategically the government removed it from the agenda, saying or proclaiming that it is for security reasons. As is known, the internet was shut down in two regions (Anglophone) for three months due to political disapprobation or contestation.

Perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance

What is your take about the role of your NRI in internet governance processes, at the level of your country, region and globally?

At the level of my country: Public awareness on internet issues and challenges to overcome in terms of protecting rights and taking over internet in the development of my country.

Regionally: Working hand in hand with other African countries to advocate for common views and involving the African Union on internet matters in the continent.

Globally: To care about the recommendations provided as outcomes during global IGF, and seeing that these recommendations can be followed at national and regional level.

How do you perceive your role and position towards other NRIs, the IGF and the IGF Secretariat?

Towards other national IGFs in Africa especially:

- Looking at what is done at different levels of governance
- Ensuring that recommendations are implemented
- Sharing the challenges to overcome.

Towards the IGF:

- Ensuring relevant issues are raised at national level
- Implementing recommendations according to national contexts
- Raising recommendations at global level.

Toward the IGF Secretariat:

- Asking help for Cameroon to set up its own IGF Secretariat
- Having a look over the IGF calendar at different levels, in order to harmonise them at national, regional and global level.

Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) emerged in response to the success of the first two global Internet Governance Forums (IGFs). The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the outcome document of the final phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), alongside the call for the creation of the IGF, served as the foundations for the model of bottom-up, multistakeholder internet governance. The first NRIs were set up in 2007 and 2008, and there are now close to a hundred initiatives, comprising national, sub-national, regional and youth initiatives, which organise autonomously and cooperate with the global IGF Secretariat. The importance of NRIs has increased throughout the years, as they have grown in number and their work has expanded in scope. They have acquired such relevance within the IGF that an NRI session was included in the IGF 2016 and 2017 main sessions agendas.

This year, APC has taken the initiative to compile two editions of Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) focused on the work of NRIs. While the main 2017 GISWatch annual report provides independent and analytical perspectives on the role of NRIs in internet governance broadly, the present companion edition, *Internet governance from the edges: National and regional IGFs in their own words*, aims to give voice and visibility to the stories of each NRI, share their experiences and achievements, and highlight their perspectives on internet governance.

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