SCOPING MEETING THURSDAY 2 JUNE 2016
BEST PRACTICE FORUM GENDER 2016[1]
MEETING SUMMARY I

1. Context

In May 2016, at the first open consultations and multistakeholder advisory group (MAG) meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Geneva, Switzerland, input was gathered and feedback was given on the progress and outputs of the 2015 best practice forums (BPFs), including the 2015 BPF on online abuse and gender-based violence against women. At this meeting[2] the need was stressed for continuing to dedicate an intersessional[3] effort to the study of gender-related challenges where the Internet is concerned.

It was decided to continue the BPF Gender in 2016 and, more specifically, to a) build on and improve the outcomes of the 2015 BPF Gender: online abuse and gender-based violence against women, and b) to dedicate the work of the BPF in 2016 to women's access to the Internet (or the gender digital divide).

Consequently, the first scoping meeting for the 2016 BPF Gender took place on 2 June 2016 and lasted an hour; using a freely accessible virtual platform (Webex). The meeting[4] was attended by 13 participants and was led by the lead coordinator for the 2015 BPF, Jac SM Kee, with the support of Renata Aquino Ribeiro; both of whom had volunteered as MAG members to help coordinate the BPF's work in 2016.

The meeting was aimed at providing a platform to reflect on lessons learnt by the BPF in conducting its work on online abuse and gender-based violence against women in 2015; to delineate the BPF Gender's theme for intersessional work in 2016; to highlight possible areas and gaps for work and action; to evaluate methods for the BPF to operate and conduct its work; and to consider alternative means for publishing and issuing tangible outputs in 2016 in a manner that is most useful to the multistakeholder community, its diverse stakeholder groups, and relevant policymakers.

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[1] Note that this is the current working title for the BPF, and is subject to change when the scope of the BPF's work is decided upon.

[2] A transcript of the relevant session is available online: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/3063.

[3] 'Intersessional activities' at the IGF refer to activities that take place throughout the year, and that thus continue in the period between annual IGF meetings. See 'background' below for more information on such IGF outputs.

[4] The meeting recording is available online:
https://intgovforum.webex.com/intgovforum/ldr.php?RCID=b5d3ea945772008ebdf4464c616ee9c9.

2. Background

A report produced by the UN General Assembly Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Working Group on Improvements to the IGF called for the development of more tangible outputs to '*enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy*'. To enrich the potential for IGF outputs, the IGF developed an intersessional programme of BPFs and other initiatives intended to complement other IGF community activities. The outputs from this programme are intended to become robust resources, to serve as inputs into other pertinent forums, and to evolve and grow over time.

BPFs offer substantive ways for the IGF community to produce more concrete outcomes. While BPF outcomes have already been useful in informing policy debates, they are also viewed as iterative materials that are not only flexible but also 'living' in the sense that they can be updated at any time to accommodate the pace of technological change faced by Internet policymakers. BPFs have the freedom to define their own methodologies; tailored to each theme's specific needs and requirements. The term 'best' in BPFs should be interpreted lightly because the topics of BPFs often relate to themes that need to be addressed in a flexible manner in order to accommodate the pace of technological change.[5]

In 2015, the IGF MAG decided to dedicate one of six BPFs to the study of online abuse and gender-based violence. Over a period of nine months, fortnightly meetings were held by the BPF and an open, inclusive and transparent methodological process (including background desk research, a survey, case studies, gathering input on draft versions using online platforms, a social media campaign, and a 90-minute session at IGF 2015) was adopted to gather the input of a broad range of stakeholders (diverse in terms of stakeholder groups, regions and gender).

In December 2015, a 184-page report was published by the IGF, detailing the work and findings of the BPF, and today remains 'a living document' that 'can still be updated and changed as additional input and comments are received'.[6] In addition, a 10-page summary version of the BPF's full report, with examples and brief case studies, was also published as a part of the IGF BPF Handbook 2015.[7]

3. Sharing lessons learned from 2015 BPF process

During the BPF's first scoping virtual meeting on 2 June 2016, participants of the 2015 BPF process explained the methodology and working process followed in the past year, including the hosting of virtual meetings every two weeks; prioritizing outreach to different stakeholder groups through the use of methods like surveys, case studies, online platforms for gathering input, and social media campaigns; doing desk research and publishing an extensive report and a summary version of the report for the overall BPF 2015 handbook; and organizing and hosting a 90-minute session at IGF 2015 in November 2015 in João Pessoa, Brazil. It was noted that the BPF's work was only possible as

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[5] To learn more about BPFs from the consultants involved in helping to produce BPF outputs in 2015, see the BPF consultants' report *Looking back on the 2015 BPF process: Observations, Thoughts and Suggestions to Enhance the BPF Process, Participation and Outputs* (2016). Available online: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/igf-meeting/igf-2016/takingstock/694-contribution-from-igf-best-practice-forums-bpfs-consultants/file.

[6] IGF (2015). *Best Practice Forum Online Abuse and Gender-Based Violence: Fourth and Final Report.* Available online: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/best-practice-forums/623-bpf-online-abuse-and-gbv-against-women.

[7] See pages 33-46. IGF (2015). *Best Practice Forum Handbook.* Available online: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/documents/best-practice-forums/657-bpf-handbook.

a result of the significant time commitment that many volunteer and coordinating participants dedicated to the BPF's work, and that a similar commitment to stakeholder engagement should be prioritized in 2016.

4. Defining theme and scope: BPF Gender 2016

One of the major points of discussion at the BPF Gender 2016's first meeting was what the focus of the BPF's work would be in 2016. It was agreed that the BPF's overall thematic area of 'gender' should be retained from year to year (subject to the agreement of the MAG) in order to ensure consistency and promote continuity; while a specific focus area may be selected annually to highlight a particular challenge with relevance to the overall theme. As to the working title of the BPF itself, it was noted that while the overall name of the BPF would be 'BPF Gender', it would also attain an additional sub-theme, like BPF Gender: Gender digital divide or BPF Gender: Access, to differentiate its work from a dynamic coalition on gender.

In terms of this specific theme for 2016, two potential approaches were discussed.

First, the need to update the 2015 report on online abuse and gender-based violence was emphasized; as was the importance of re-packaging the report published by the 2015 BPF in a way that would be useful and effective for relevant stakeholder groups. One aspect of the report that, it was noted, could be updated as a result of recent developments in the field, is a section on strategies and responses to online abuse and gender-based violence.

Second, participants also stressed the importance of addressing the gender digital divide in line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in general and SDG 5, which aims to ensure gender equality and empower all women and girls, in particular. One participant also noted that work on access is particularly relevant and pertinent in her region, Latin America. It was further pointed out that work on the gender digital divide could also feed into and support another IGF intersessional activity, namely *Policy Options for Connecting the Next Billion*, which has entered its second phase in 2016. It was noted that if the BPF were to do undertake work in this field, it could lay important groundwork and give direction if the output document is as comprehensive as the output for the 2015 BPF.

On the other hand, it was also pointed out that due to the limited time at the BPF's disposal this year, it will not be able to as much work as the 2015 BPF did. Some participants emphasized that other organizations are also dedicating time and resources to understanding and addressing the gender digital divide (including the Broadband Commission's new working group on the theme), and that the BPF should refrain from duplicating such work, but should rather focus on identifying gaps and dedicating its work to addressing particular aspects of the gender digital divide. Suggestions from participants included looking at barriers to access for women; studying women's participation and engagement in global Internet policy processes; and looking at innovative ways to enable women's access and related empowerment.

It was suggested and agreed that the BPF could, in 2016, aim to undertake both tasks by potentially dividing the group and assigning tasks that could continue 'offline' beyond fortnightly meetings. It was decided that a two-phased approach would not be feasible within the limited time available to the BPF.

5. Timeline, resources and other considerations

It was noted that due to processes out of the control of participants and/or the MAG, BPFs in 2016 will have approximately 30% less time at their disposal than BPFs had in 2015. For this reason, it is important that the BPF's work not only starts as soon as possible, but that its proposed objectives and work are designed in a manner that is reasonable and achievable within the time at its disposal.

The IGF Secretariat noted that it would provide reasonable resources necessary for the BPF's work, and is in the process of recruiting a consultant rapporteur to support the BPF's work. It would also provide logistical support for meetings and other requirements as and when it may arise.

It was noted that regular, fortnightly meetings were beneficial to the 2015 BPF in maintaining momentum and enabling more work to get done sufficiently. As a result, it was decided to continue hosting meetings twice a month for the BPF until a methodology for the BPF's work has been designed. It was also noted that alternative means for conducting the BPF's work, like Slack and Trello, could also be used to enable better cooperation.

6. Participants and participation guidelines

At the start of the meeting, participants were reminded that as per IGF procedure (which prioritizes transparency and inclusivity), all meetings are recorded and recordings are available online. For safety and transparency reasons, all meeting participants were asked to introduce themselves. It was noted that, in the future, if participants wanted to participate on the condition of anonymity, steps would be taken to ensure the safety and privacy of other participants.

Meeting participants included:

> Alejandra Errasmuspe (Uruguay)
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> Anri van der Spuy (South Africa)
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> Brenda Aynsley (Australia)
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> Brian Gutterman (USA)
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> Chengetai Masango (Zimbabwe)
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> Ginger Paque (Venezuela)
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> Jac SM Kee (Malaysia)
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> Jan Moolman (South Africa)
>
> Luis Bobo (Spain)
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> Marilyn Cade (USA)
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> Renata Aquino Ribeiro (Brazil)
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> Wisdom Donkor (Ghana)
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> Zeina Bou Harb (Lebanon)

7. Next steps

The meeting finished with a summary and the proposal of a number of follow-up actions, namely:

- *Action 1: Summary of the discussion and scheduling of next meeting.* A summary of the discussion will be prepared and shared by 8 June 2016, along with a Doodle poll for scheduling the time of the next meeting on 16 June 2016 (the time slots offered will be 10:00 am, 11:00 am, or 12:00 pm GMT).

- *Action 2: Creation of a collaborative mapping document for identifying areas of concern and future action.* To determine current initiatives and work related to the gender digital divide, as well as to identify potential gaps in the field, participants will be asked to help in a mapping initiative that will be created and shared using a collaborative and generally accessible online tool like Google Docs. The results of this mapping exercise will be shared with all participants at the next meeting of the group.

- *Action 3: Create mailing list and invite participants to BPF's work.* A new mailing list will be created for the BPF's 2016 work and participants will be invited to join the new mailing list and reminded of the fact that all messages shared on the list are publically available on the IGF's website. The coordinators will draft a brief outline of the BPF's objectives for 2016 as part of an invitation to participate that will be distributed to the MAG and broader community.