Key issues for the future of the Internet will be focus of next week’s Ninth Internet Governance Forum

Network neutrality, cybersecurity, surveillance, social media, freedom of expression, digital inequalities and many more topics to be discussed at more than 100 events over four days

Ankara, Turkey, 29 August 2014—More than 2,500 participants representing governments, intergovernmental organisations, private sector, the technical community and civil society are expected to examine cross-border Internet governance issues at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), to take place from 2-5 September, in Istanbul, Turkey.

“This is an exciting and critical time for Internet governance with policy makers in the midst of determining the future of the Internet through many different approaches on surveillance, network neutrality, domain names, human rights and much more,” Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Thomas Gass said. “We have high expectations for this year’s Internet Governance Forum to bring together the widest range of voices on Internet governance so that we can encourage policymakers to base their decisions on what is best for everyone.”

With many more participants to join remotely, the IGF will bring together many high-level government officials, executives of major global private entities, as well as leaders of civil society organisations to address a wide range of Internet governance issues, including the Internet’s sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development. Mr. Gass will be the highest ranking UN official attending.

The theme for the Istanbul meeting will be ‘Connecting Continents for Enhanced Multistakeholder Internet Governance,’ and an emphasis will be placed on strengthening the evolving multistakeholder model for Internet governance. The IGF aims to provide a comprehensive dialogue among all stakeholders across a wide and diverse range of agendas.

The various main sessions and workshops included in the programme of the meeting will address a wide range of Internet governance issues, categorised under the following sub-themes: Policies Enabling Access; Content Creation, Dissemination and Use; Internet as an Engine for Growth & Development; IGF & The Future of the Internet Ecosystem; Enhancing Digital Trust; Internet and Human Rights; Critical Internet Resources; and Emerging Issues.

In addition, the topic of network neutrality and the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) stewardship transition will be addressed within two main sessions. Best practice forums will look into issues related to: development of local content, regulation and mitigation of unwanted communications, multistakeholder participation mechanisms, online child protection and Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).
The IGF provides a platform for the involvement of all stakeholders, from developed as well as developing countries, in Internet governance debates needed for the future evolution of the Internet and its governance mechanisms.

**Bridging the digital divide**

By the end 2014, there will be nearly three billion Internet users, and two-thirds are from developing countries. However, this means that more than four billion people still do not have access to the Internet, and most people without Internet access live in developing countries. In Africa, only 20 per cent of the population is expected to be online by the end of 2014.

The IGF is expected to emphasize the need for increasing Internet access to those without it by raising awareness and initiating discussions to identify innovative ways to address the digital divide and inform policymakers.

**Day Zero**

The IGF will be preceded, on 1 September, by a High Level Leaders Meeting on Capacity Building for Economic Development, hosted by the Republic of Turkey, as well as by other pre-events hosted by various stakeholders in the Internet governance community.

**About the Internet Governance Forum**

Each year, the United Nations convenes the IGF meeting, through the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to bring together various stakeholders to discuss current and emerging Internet governance issues, as well as related opportunities and challenges.

The IGF is an open, inclusive and transparent forum for dialogue on public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance. It is intended to foster a common understanding of how to maximize Internet opportunities and address the challenges that arise.

While the IGF does not have a decision-making mandate, the discussions held during IGF meetings can contribute to shaping international agenda and preparing the ground for negotiations and decision-making in other Internet governance entities. The IGF also gives stakeholders from developing countries the opportunity to engage in debates on Internet governance, and contributes to capacity building and to enhancing their knowledge on matters related to the Internet, thus facilitating their participation in other Internet governance institutions and arrangements.

**For additional information, including a provisional schedule, visit:** [http://www.intgovforum.org](http://www.intgovforum.org)

**Remote participation:** Media and other stakeholders not present in Istanbul can participate remotely and send text questions and/or video/audio interventions using the remote participation platform (Webex). Further details about remote participations are available at: [http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/remote-participation-2014](http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/remote-participation-2014)

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