

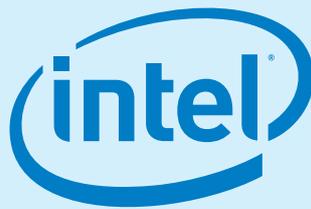
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Disclaimer: *This White Paper comprises of the summary of the discussions of the series of the three 'The Digital Dialogues' (TDD)[™] on Internet Governance and action areas from India's perspective on Digital Cooperation, based on the Roadmap for Digital Cooperation released by the UN Secretary General. The views in the paper are entirely of the two authors. Any errors or omissions are our own.*

Executive Summary

The Internet has dramatically revolutionized many facets of our lives, both social and economic. The transformative power of Internet is very evident in the way we communicate, seek information, conduct trade, access health and other citizen centric services, etc. The recent COVID-19 crisis further reiterated the important role of internet not only for individuals but for the industry and the government as well.

Along with the growth of internet, there has been a significant rise in the issues pertaining to its governance. Globally there are ongoing deliberations on these issues at various forums, both at inter-governmental level as well as on multistakeholder internet governance platforms. Today, when India aspires to be a leader in the digital revolution, it is important that Indian interests are articulated and protected both in the multilateral and global Internet Governance forums such as Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Number (ICANN), Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), etc.

At a time when the internet is undergoing major changes, Indian interests need to be articulated, suitably positioned, and protected in global multistakeholder forums. Unfortunately, weak participation and contributions by Indian stakeholders is posing a veritable risk for India, especially as the country is focused on ensuring embarks on its journey to a fully Digital India.

Therefore, the Indian Think Tank [Broadband India Forum \(BIF\)](#) and [CCAOI](#) along with [Bharat Exhibitions \(BE\)](#), [TDSI](#) and with [ICRIER](#) as Knowledge Partner organized **The Digital Dialogues (TDD)[™] series on Internet Governance**. This series of TDD was focused towards building awareness among the Indian stakeholders on key aspects of Internet Governance, the different actors involved, key issues and concerns being globally discussed and opportunities for the community to participate and then formulate key action areas from the Indian view point.

Simultaneously BIF decided to evaluate the [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#) which was released by the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres from the Indian perspective and identify possible areas where India could focus on.

The summary of the discussions of the series of the three TDD on Internet Governance and the action areas from India's perspective of the Digital Cooperation are the key takeaways from this White Paper.

Summary of The Digital Dialogue Series on Internet Governance

Indian Think Tank, [The Broadband India Forum \(BIF\)](#) and [CCAOI](#) along with [Bharat Exhibitions \(BE\)](#), [TDSI](#) and with [ICRIER](#) as Knowledge Partner organized **The Digital Dialogues (TDD)™ series on Internet Governance**. This series of TDD was focused towards building awareness among the Indian stakeholders on key aspects of Internet Governance, the different actors involved, key issues and concerns being globally discussed and opportunities for the community to participate.

There were three sessions in the series and all the sessions witnessed over hundred participants each, both from within the country and overseas.

The first session “Introduction to Internet Governance: Actors, Issues, Trends & Opportunities” was organized on 29 June. The speakers at the session were: Mr. Chengetai Masango, Head of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat; Mr. Jovan Kurbalija, Director of Diplo Foundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform, Ms. Ankhi Das, Director - Public Policy, Facebook.

The second session “Role of Internet Governance Platforms: ICANN & Internet Society (ISOC)/IETF” was organized on 2 July. The speakers at the session were: Dr. Gulshan Rai, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Mr. Samiran Gupta, India Head, ICANN, Mr. Rajnesh Singh, Regional Vice President, Asia-Pacific Internet Society, Mr. T Santhosh, Scientist E, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India; Mr. Anupam Agrawal, Chair India Internet Foundation (IIFON), Mr. Molay Ghosh, General Manager, JIO Network Planning & Architecture Reliance Jio.

The third session of the series “Introduction to Internet Governance Platform: Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC)”, was organized on 6 July. The speakers at the session were: Mr. Paul Wilson, Director General, APNIC, Mr. K Ramchand, Member (T), Department of Telecommunications (DOT), Mr. Sanjay Goel, Joint Secretary, MeitY and CEO, National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and Mr. Ramesh Chandra, Vice President – Network Planning & Engineering, Reliance Jio.

The introductory session was moderated by Dr. Rajat Kathuria, Director and Chief Executive, ICRIER and the subsequent sessions by Mr. Rajat Mukarji, Director General BIF. For all the sessions, Mr. T.V.Ramachandran, President BIF provided the initial remarks and key takeaways of the earlier sessions, Ms. Amrita Choudhury, Director, CCAOI, provided an overview and context to the discussion and Mr. Shashi Dharan from BE, provided the vote of thanks.

The key takeaways from the stimulating discussion series on Internet Governance, from India's perspective were:

- It is essential to **reassess the existing Internet Governance views both from domestic and international perspective** in the light of the emerging technologies and the geo-political situation.
- India needs to **adopt different approaches between domestic and global strategies** on Internet Governance.
- Need for **enhancing digital cooperation among all stakeholders, both at the national and global level** for ensuring the objectives of India are met.
- Initiate a dialogue to **start a National Internet Governance Forum (India IGF)** for initiating discussions within the country on issues pertinent to India and then develop a national point of view in a very inclusive manner that could be articulated in regional and global IG forums.
- Need to **organize more such capacity building sessions, technical workshops** to build understanding among community members on technology, digital policies and issues, which in turn would improve greater participation from the community at the national and global level.
- Role of the **Industry and Academia needs to be enhanced significantly in standard setting bodies** such as IETF for developing standards that are in India's interest.
- Enhance stakeholder **participation especially of industry in Internet Governance platforms** and their policy development processes would be in India's strategic interest.
- India has an **opportunity to bid for hosting the future Global Internet Governance Forum** such as for 2024, since the venue is yet to be finalized and proposals for hosting the same is being invited.
- India should try to **host an IETF meeting in India** to enable more focus towards standard setting.



Session wise Summary Report

Session 1: Introduction to Internet Governance: Actors, Issues, Trends & Opportunities

Inclusion, enhancing engagement, capacity building and addressing issues in a holistic way in this age of digital interdependence for the growth of the digital economy were some of the key points highlighted during the inaugural session on Internet Governance.

Mr. Chengetai Masango, Head of the United Nations Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Secretariat and Mr. Jovan Kurbalija, Director of Diplo Foundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform highlighted the genesis of the Internet Governance discussions. Masango outlined the creation of IGF, its structure and the role of MAG. Ms. Ankhi Das, Director - Public Policy, Facebook highlighted the Indian involvement in IGF and WSIS summit. Masango, spoke about the format of IGF2020 including type of sessions expected this year and the IGF Plus model. Kurbalija hoped that IGF Plus model would help to create easy entry point for people and stressed on the need for proactive national, regional and global efforts for shaping sustainable digital future

Kurbalija shared an overview of the work of the High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (HLPDC), he referred to the HLPDC report "[The Age of Digital Interdependence](#)" as one of building block for digital social contract. He further shared that while there is no dearth of instruments globally for enhancing digital cooperation, however the challenge is trying to navigate and connecting the dots to address issues in a holistic way, which the report suggests.

Speaking on the roadmap on Digital Cooperation released by the UN Secretary General, Kurbalija referred to it as pro-development where interdependence is the key. Few of the missing elements of the roadmap that Kurbalija observed were related to, IoT, Block chain, mapping to UN existing processes such as United Nations (UN) Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). Das suggested that the roadmap should include future of commerce- digital trade, block chain, digital payment, health etc.

While discussing the recent trends and issues related to Internet Governance, Kurbalija, expressed his concern related to the risk for digital development with countries erecting borders around digital space. The notion of data as a national asset he opined was of great concern since all nations had benefited from cross border data flows. Further the integrated data initiatives pose a challenge to the concept of data sovereignty. Responding to questions related to concerns of monopoly by big tech companies, Kurbalija opined the need for online platforms to be more transparent and fairer on how they use data.

Speaking on contract tracing apps, Kurbalija observed the discussions in most countries was becoming highly political. Das suggested the need for standard setting and shaping

norms for such apps, and the need to ensure that these apps are built adhering to privacy principles and balancing trade with health.

To address the concern of most policies being drafted without participation of developing countries, all agreed that there is a need to build capacity and encourage participation from developing countries such as India to participate in these discussions, to ensure policies are more nuanced.

For improving Indian engagement in Internet Governance issues, Das emphasized on the need to improve Indian participation in IGF and Asia Pacific regional IGF (ApriGF). She also stressed the need for India to start a national IGF which would help to encourage more discussions within the country on issues which are of importance. This suggestion was unanimously supported by all. Supporting the call for starting an India IGF, Amrita Choudhury, Director CCAOI, highlighted the Youth India IGF initiative in India. Mr. T.V.Ramachandran, President BIF and Mr. Shashi Dharan from BE also expressed willingness to take a lead in this initiative and also plan to spearhead the initiative to hold the 2024 chapter of the World Internet Governance Forum in India.

Key Takeaways:

The key takeaways from this discussion from India's perspective were:

- Need for **enhancing digital cooperation among all stakeholders, both at the national and global level** for ensuring the objectives of India are met.
- Initiate a dialogue to **start a National Internet Governance Forum (India IGF)** as this would encourage all stakeholders to start discussing on issues pertinent to India and then develop a national point of view in a very inclusive manner. This would then help stakeholders to articulate these views in all regional and global forums, including the IGF.
- India has an **opportunity to bid for hosting the World Internet Governance Forum in the future**. For example, bid for 2024, since the venue is yet to be finalized and proposals for hosting the same is being invited.
- Need to **organize more such capacity building sessions**, to build understanding among community members on digital policies and issues, which in turn would improve greater participation from the community at the national and global level.

The recording of the session can be viewed using this [link](#).

for the organization currently: Infrastructure and Community development, Encryption, Internet way of networking, securing global routing, time (MANRS) security, promoting open standards and protocols, measuring the Internet. Singh also shared the origin and structure of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), its mandate, the open process through which open standards are developed and how it works.

Dr. Rai and T Santhosh, Scientist E, MeitY, Government of India, highlighted Indian governments engagement in ICANN over the years, including hosting two ICANN meetings in India and the rationale for India adopting the multistakeholder approach. Santhosh highlighted the contribution of government in the various policy discussions at ICANN: IANA transition, the new gTLD program, issues related to DNS abuse; India's position on .RAM and two character of country code top level domain name (ccTLD), etc.

Speaking on the Indian engagement in ICANN, Gupta and Santosh both highlighted the active contribution of Indian stakeholders in policy discussions related to Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and Universal Acceptance. Anupam Agrawal, Chair India Internet Foundation (IIFON), shared his experience of starting a root instance in Kolkata and the work his organization is doing along with STPI to create an internet measurement framework in India. As an example of industry collaboration with ICANN, Molay Ghosh, General Manager, JIO Network Planning & Architecture Reliance Jio highlighted, the collaboration of Jio with ICANN for DNS improvement in their network.

For enhancing Indian participation in ICANN, Santhosh shared the multistakeholder consultations the government had undertaken within the country to discuss key policy issues being discussed in ICANN and for enhancing. However, all speakers opined the need for enhancing Indian engagement in ICANN.

On the issue of Indian engagement in IETF Agrawal shared that while the participation numbers are still low, over the years it has improved. Sharing his experience in building Indian engagement in IETF, Agrawal shared the initial challenges faced such as perception of the IETF community of Indians not having much understanding of standards and hesitation of academia and Indian IT companies to participate in standard development. He then shared the initiatives taken to remove change perception and increase participation. Santhosh shared the initiative of the government of supporting people to attend face to face meeting at IETF and initiatives underway with Indian Institute of science and CDAC. Ghosh highlighted the collaboration Jio has initiated in IETF and the work they are doing on drafting RFC for newer protocols.

All speakers highlighted the need for Indian stakeholders to actively participate and contribute in standard setting bodies. For improving participation, Agrawal stressed on the need to bring in more academic institutions into the standard development dialogue.

Suggestion was made by Agarwal to host an IETF in India as that would provide a great opportunity for India to participate in the process. This was unanimously supported.

The key takeaways from this discussion from India's perspective were:

- Need to reassess **the existing Internet Governance views both from domestic and international perspective** in the light of the emerging technologies and the geo-political situation.
- India needs to **adopt different approaches between domestic and global strategies** on Internet Governance.
- Need to **enhance industry participation and contribution** in Internet Governance issues and platforms such as ICANN.
- Role of **the Industry and Academia needs to be enhanced significantly in standard setting bodies** such as IETF for developing standards that are in India's interest.
- Need to understand **and engage in policy issues that are of Indian interest** in these platforms.
- India should try to **host an IETF meeting in India** to enable more focus towards standard setting.



Session 3: The Digital Dialogue Series on Internet Governance: Role of APNIC

Mutual cooperation and capacity building through collaborative efforts for the growth of an open, secure, resilient Internet was the main takeaway from the highly interactive, concluding session “Role of Internet Governance Platform: APNIC” organized under “The Digital Dialogues” series on Internet Governance on 6 July.

During this well attended session, there was a discussion on the role of APNIC as the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) for Asia Pacific, the relevant issues faced by the community and dialogue on ways to enhance Indian engagement in APNIC.

Highlighting Internet as one of the greatest examples of human collaboration, Paul Wilson, Director General, APNIC as the Guest Speaker, outlined the evolution of the IP address management system, the role of RIRs, emphasizing the role of collaborative efforts which has led to the growth of the Internet and the multistakeholder model.

While discussing the bottom up APNIC Policy Development Process (PDP) which is led by the community, Wilson highlighted the initiatives taken by APNIC in creating policies for managing IPv4 and supporting IPv6, routing security through Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI) and encouraging participation in PDP. He shared that PDP is a community driven initiative and even existing policies could always be reworked if the community decided and agreed upon it.

From the Indian stakeholders, Sanjay Goel, Joint Secretary, MeitY and CEO, NIXI, narrated the history and role of NIXI and its engagement with APNIC, while K Ramchand, Member (T), Department of Telecommunications (DOT) highlighted the initiatives taken by DOT related to IPv6, including drafting the National IPv6 deployment roadmap ([v-I](#) and [v-II](#)). Sharing the industry perspective Ramesh Chandra, Vice President – Network Planning & Engineering, Reliance Jio, outlined how his organization has built their technical capability and deployed IPv6 and their long standing engagement with APNIC.

Despite networks deploying IPv6, all the speakers acknowledged the increasing demand for IPv4. To meet this demand, Chandra, Goel, and Ramchand suggested the need to use the reserved block of unused IPv4. Responding to the suggestion, Wilson highlighted the APNIC Transfer Policy and the measures both long and short term being taken by APNIC to meet this demand. He further elaborated on the process being set up for IPv4 address space recovery and accelerating IPv4 recovery.

Suggestions were made by Chandra for Registry Data Access Protocol (RDAP) service improvements and APNIC to drive systems and processes beneficial for the community, such as RPKI implementation.

On the suggestion of delegating resources to National Internet Registries to re-delegate them to their members shared by Goel, NIXI, Wilson responded that this is not part of the APNIC Transfer Policy, while when being drafted, the focus of the community including NIRs was to ensure a process for members to get number resources efficiently and transparently.

Replying to the question on the engagement of APNIC with members of the community, Wilson highlighted the importance of the two yearly open wide survey which the APNIC EC uses to gather feedback from serving the APAC community better.

Responding to a question on APNICs technical training initiative for the community, Wilson highlighted the role of the APNIC Foundation to build a network of community trainers across the region and create better linkages with education institutions. He reiterated the importance of sharing expertise and best practices within the community to ensure the Internet functions efficiently.

For enhancing Indian stakeholder engagement further in APNIC, Goel suggested further capacity building activities in India with the support of APNIC including deploying dedicated trainer in India. Ramchand suggested conducting joint capacity building initiatives between departments (DOT & MeitY) with APNIC for future training programs.

In response to the key takeaways from the previous sessions on The Digital Dialogue series on Internet Governance, shared by T V Ramachandran, President, BIF, that included a need to set up an India IGF, suggestion to hold IGF and IETF in India, Wilson expressed APNICs willingness to support such endeavors.

Overall, it was a highly interactive and lively discussion where it was agreed that more such dialogues and discussions should be held on a regular basis and BIF, NIXI and DOT expressed willingness to take this discussion ahead.

The recording of the session is available [here](#).

Key Takeaways:

The key takeaways from this discussion from India's perspective were:

- Encourage **cooperation and sharing expertise and best practices** both within the Indian community as well as in the region, to ensure the Internet functions efficiently.
- Conduct **regular training programs and technical workshops** in India with the support of APNIC to build capacity in the country.
- Encourage **stakeholders to participate in the APNIC process**, including the APNIC policy development process so that concerns of stakeholders can be raised at right forums to resolve.

Roadmap to Digital Cooperation: Action areas from India's perspective

Background

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres released the [Roadmap for Digital Cooperation](#), which builds on the recommendations of the [UN High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation](#) report. The Roadmap provides a direction on initiatives that could be taken to enhance digital cooperation.

It proposes eight action items: achieving global connectivity by 2030; promoting digital public goods; digital inclusion; digital capacity building, protecting digital human rights; cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI); enhancing digital trust and security and building a more effective architecture for digital cooperation.

For achieving global connectivity, the report speaks about achieving meaningful connectivity. To address issues of affordability of access and equipment, the report suggests the need to establish baselines regarding the fundamental level of digital connectivity. At the national level, governments and communities, with the support of multi-stakeholder coalitions, need to conduct local and regional assessments of connectivity needs in order to develop comprehensive connectivity plans.

For promoting digital public goods, the challenge identified in this report is that most existing digital public goods are not easily accessible since they are unevenly distributed in terms of the language, content and infrastructure required to access them. The report highlights the work done by Digital Public Goods Alliance in setting up the Global Data Access Framework. It is also mentioned that central to the implementation of digital public goods are robust human rights and governance frameworks to enhance trust in technology and data use, while ensuring inclusion.

On Digital Inclusion the report suggests scaling up and improving coordination at a global level and the need to set up metrics to measure digital inclusion. The report further suggests that while developing these metrics, the underlying definition of what it means to be digitally literate and have digital access has to be based on the fundamental premise that everyone should have an equal opportunity to become empowered through ICT.

Regarding Digital Capacity Building the report emphasizes on the need for sustained digital capacity building which should be need based; the need for greater coherence and coordination in capacity-building efforts; and a concerted effort at scaling up solutions. The report also refers to the suggestion of the panel to set up "digital help desks" as one potential solution that could leverage regional institutions and platforms.



For protecting digital human rights, the report mentions the need for more efforts to develop further guidance on how human rights standards apply in the digital age. It speaks against blanket Internet shutdowns and generic blocking and filtering of services; Raises concerns on technologies being used to violate and erode human rights, issues related to data protection and privacy; human rights violation w.r.t digital identity, facial recognition technologies; the need for content governance to address issues of online harassment and violence. The report also speaks about addressing the legitimate concerns underlying the need for encryption without undermining legitimate law enforcement objectives is possible, along with human rights-based laws and approaches to address illegal and harmful online content.

Regarding Cooperation on AI the report identifies three areas of challenge: lack of representations and inclusiveness, international coordination, collaboration, and governance. The report mentions the intent of the UN to establish a multi-stakeholder advisory body on global artificial intelligence cooperation aimed to provide guidance to the UN and the international community on AI. The advisory body will comprise Member States, relevant United Nations entities, interested companies, academic institutions, and civil society groups.

Regarding Digital Trust and security, the report talks about cyber-attacks, data breaches, disinformation and highlights the voluntary initiatives (such as Paris Call, GCCS, GFCE, Christchurch call for Action) and the initiatives of the UN. However, the report apart from mentioning to work with members does not propose concrete steps on addressing cybersecurity issues.

For Global Digital Cooperation, the report suggests having common standards for open data that can guide the private and public sectors on how to provide open access to data sets, ensuring that more data become available as digital public goods, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

