



## OPEN CONSULTATIONS, JOINT COORDINATION AND ARAB MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS

In Preparation for the Fifth Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab IGF)  
UN-House, Beirut, 16-19 July 2018

### PRELIMINARY INFORMATION NOTE

#### I. BACKGROUND

The process of the Arab Internet Governance Forum (Arab IGF) is an essential mechanism of bottom-up and multi-stakeholder policy dialogue between Arab governments and various regional stakeholders, and contributes to reaching a common understanding and enhancing cooperation on Internet-related policy issues. The Arab IGF was established in 2012 by ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) who serve as the umbrella organizations of its process and lead its activities through the Forum's Executive Bureau for Joint Coordination (EBJC).

During the first phase of the Arab IGF process that extended from 2012 to 2015, ESCWA served as a convener, host, and facilitator of its activities, conducted within the partnership framework between ESCWA and LAS and through the financial and in-kind contributions of international, regional and national partners. Efforts were made to engage and have a balanced representation of all stakeholders, as per the mandate of the Arab IGF. Furthermore, ESCWA has ensured that key UN principles regarding human development (such as human rights and freedoms as well as access to information) were respected in the deliberations.

The first phase of the Arab IGF process (2012-2015) was linked to the implementation of the 2010 Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance (2011-2015), which concluded at the time of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

During 2016 and 2017, the Arab IGF process underwent a transformation exercise led by the joint ESCWA-LAS AIGF2020 initiative for the development of a new phase of the AIGF process. The initiative brought together representatives of different stakeholder groups engaged in Internet governance (governments, business sector, civil society, and the technical and academic community) from 13 Arab countries to conduct a comprehensive survey, convene consultations and analyse five priority areas of development of the Arab IGF process: Objectives, Structure and Mechanisms; Financing Mechanisms; Content and Outputs; and Communication, Media and Outreach. The results of the work done were presented to ESCWA and LAS in a final report, which has served as the basis for developing a Charter for the Arab IGF and supported the development of a new Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance.

Both outcomes of the AIGF2020 initiative, the Arab IGF Charter and new Arab Roadmap for Internet governance, received public comments after posting through the Arab DIG subsite ([www.unescwa.org/ArabDIG](http://www.unescwa.org/ArabDIG)). These outcomes promote more inclusiveness in the Arab IGF process and guide it towards regional cooperation in-line with the identified priorities for the Arab region in Internet governance.

In 2018, the activities of the Arab IGF process will be resumed with two meetings in preparation for the programme of the Fifth Arab IGF, namely an Open Consultations that will be held remotely on 16 July and an Arab Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (AMAG) meeting, from 18 to 19 July 2018; and this meeting will be preceded by a joint coordination meeting for the Forum's EBJC, on 17 July 2018.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the meetings is to revive the Arab IGF process in its new phase through the convening of an Arab IGF Open Consultations, and an AMAG Meeting, in preparation for the programme of the Fifth Arab IGF. Efforts also aim at strengthening partnerships and cooperation amongst the various stakeholders towards achieving the development goals, as well as strengthening the Arab IGF process as the main platform for regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on Internet governance in the Arab region.

## III. TOPICS

The Preparatory Meetings will address the following topics:

- 1) Overview of the outcomes of the AIGF2020 initiative;
- 2) Strategic priority areas of the new Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance,<sup>1</sup> towards the identification of the main issues of priority for the programme of the Fifth Arab IGF.
- 3) Identification of priority topics for capacity-building towards better linkages with the SDGs.
- 4) Priority areas and slogan for the Forum, based on the outcome of the Open Consultations.
- 5) Programme structure of the Fifth Arab IGF, with main themes and focus areas for its components, including: capacity-building pre-event, thematic plenary sessions and workshops, exhibition.
- 6) Formation of working groups for the various tracks of preparations for the Forum, including a fellowship programme.
- 7) Methods and tools for effective collaboration on preparations for the Fifth Arab IGF activities, which feature openness, inclusivity and transparency.
- 8) Work plan of deliverables with an estimated timeline for all milestones.
- 9) Potential partner(s) and Host entity/country for the Fifth Arab IGF.
- 10) Work methodologies and better coordination of efforts on the Arab IGF process.

## IV. OUTPUTS

The expected outputs of the meetings include:

- 1- Draft programme for the Fifth Arab IGF, with an identified set of priorities to be addressed in its various components, including the capacity-building pre-event;
- 2- Work plan for the preparatory process with a timeline and key milestones;
- 3- Working groups identified for thematic and operations needed for the Forum.

## V. ORGANIZATION

The preparatory meetings for the Fifth Arab IGF programme are organized by ESCWA in partnership with the League of Arab States and will be held at the UN-House in Beirut, Lebanon.

The Open Consultations will be held remotely through WebEx on Monday 16 July 2018, and the AMAG Meeting will be held from 18 to 19 July 2018 at the UN House. The AMAG meeting will be preceded by a joint coordination meeting for the Forum's EBJC, on Tuesday 17 July 2018.

For the convening of the preparatory meetings, ESCWA would be relying on the financial support of the main partners who contributed to the 2014 Arab IGF, namely: OGERO Telecom- Lebanon; the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN); the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC); and the Kuwait Information Technology Society (KITS).

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic priority areas include: (a) Meaningful access for inclusion; (b) Security and trust; (c) Institutional empowerment; (d) Internet innovations and emerging eco-systems; (e) Human development; (f) Critical Internet resources and network infrastructure; and (g) Cultural and linguistic diversity.

## VI. PARTICIPATION

- **Main Meetings:**
  - Participation in the Arab IGF **Open Consultations (16 July)** would be **remotely through WebEx and is open to the public, including all stakeholders in the Arab Internet governance community and experts who have contributed to the Arab IGF activities since its establishment in 2012.** Registration for the one-day Open Consultations can be made through a registration link through WebEx <https://bit.ly/2KXpFce>, and will be shared on the event page.
  - The **AMAG meeting (18-19 July)** would involve the participation of members of the 2015 AMAG and of the Working Groups that contributed to the two-year review phase of the Arab IGF process. **Remote participation would be made available during the meetings through the UN WebEx platform.**
- Participation would also include **representatives from the main partners or donor institutions** as well as **potential partners who could contribute to the convening of the Fifth Arab IGF**, end of 2018.
- The **EBJC joint coordination meeting (17 July) preceding AMAG**, is mainly a meeting between LAS and ESCWA teams. For this particular meeting, the Heads of AMAG, Technical Secretariat, Roadmap Working Group as well as Technical Cooperation Working Group(s) are specially invited to participate in a number of consultations on specific issues.
- Within the limited available financial resources, and in accordance with UN Rules and Regulations, coverage of participation would be allocated on a first-come first-served basis, with priority to representatives of LAS, Technical Secretariat, AMAG members and Heads of Working Groups.

## VII. LANGUAGES

English and Arabic are the working languages of the meeting; however, interpretation will not be made available during meetings.

## VIII. INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCES:

The web page below provides additional information on the meetings:  
<https://www.unescwa.org/open-consultations-arab-multistakeholder-advisory-group>

Correspondences can be sent to the email: [ESCWA-ArabIGF@un.org](mailto:ESCWA-ArabIGF@un.org)