



COMMUNIQUÉ

NEW HORIZONS FOR THE ARAB INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

5 December 2016

The first mandate of the Arab IGF, established by ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS), extended from 2012 to 2015, coinciding with the Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance (2011-2015), and the Arab Internet governance community has called for its renewal. Four annual meetings were held since 2012 for the Arab IGF (*Kuwait 2012, Algeria 2013, and Beirut 2014 and 2015*), the last of which was in December 2015, concluding the first mandate of the Arab IGF process (2012-2015), which was coupled with many challenges and the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

AIGF2020 Initiative

The Fourth Annual Meeting of the Arab IGF (AIGF-IV) (Beirut, 16-18 Dec 2015) concluded with the launching by the Arab IGF Umbrella Organizations, ESCWA and LAS, of the **AIGF2020 initiative, aiming at developing the Arab IGF process in its second mandate that could extend until 2020.**

Announced by ESCWA and LAS Executive Bureau for Joint Coordination of the Arab IGF, on 18 December 2015, the **AIGF2020 initiative stipulated the temporary freeze of annual activities for a limited period of time until the conclusion of the AIGF2020 initiative, and had the following main objectives:**

- (1) Assess the achievements of the first mandate of the Arab IGF process (2012-2015) with regard to the targets of the ESCWA LAS Arab Roadmap on Internet Governance (2010);
- (2) Assess the impact of the Arab IGF on Internet governance policies in the Arab region;
- (3) Discuss challenges that faced the first mandate; and
- (4) Propose enhancements for developing the second issue of the Arab IG Roadmap as well as the second mandate of the Arab IGF, to be geared towards implementation of SDGs.

The **implementation** of the AIGF2020 initiative includes several components and interrelated activities, along two major parallel tracks. One is related to improvements of the Forum and the other relates to improvements of the Roadmap.

Activities along the Forum track started with the formation of the **Technical Cooperation Working Group (TCWG)** from various stakeholders in Internet governance from the Arab region, and seeks to assist ESCWA and LAS, in the implementation of the AIGF2020 initiative in a bottom-up democratic inclusive approach.

Multi-stakeholder Efforts of TCWG

In 2016, ESCWA and LAS convened several physical and online meetings to facilitate the work of the TCWG members towards the implementation of the AIGF2020 initiative. The TCWG has designed,



prepared, and propagated a comprehensive survey that was widely disseminated to stakeholders during the last two quarters of 2016, and kept open until 18 November 2016. Currently, the survey results are being analysed by the TCWG, and the outcome of the survey will be reflected in the final outcome of the AIGF2020 TCWG that will be raised to ESCWA and LAS to take into consideration during the next phase of the AIGF.

Within the AIGF2020 TCWG meetings, several topics were identified and addressed, and five TCWG sub-working groups were formed to study and propose improvements needed for the development of the Arab IGF process in its next phase. The TCWG sub-working groups will propose enhancements to the Arab IGF process under five areas: Objectives, Structure and Mechanisms; Financing mechanisms; Content and outputs; and Communication, media and outreach. The Technical Cooperation Framework will also analyze the engagement of the various stakeholders in the process and the strategy for sustainability and future collaborations.

Envisaged Outcome

The **implementation of the AIGF2020 initiative will assist** the Arab IGF Umbrella Organizations, ESCWA and LAS, **in producing a new Technical Cooperation framework (Charter)** for the Arab IGF process in its second mandate 2017-2020. On the other hand, AIGF2020 Initiative aims also at **designing a new Roadmap for Internet Governance** in consultations with the Arab Working Group on Internet Issues, one of the working groups of the Arab Telecom and Information Technology Council of Ministers, responsible for Internet policies and governance in the Arab region. An updated version of the Arab Roadmap would help in gearing Internet policies in the Arab region towards implementation of the SDGs, hence complementing the efforts of the TCWG regarding the Forum.

In line with the advanced progress of work on the AIGF2020 initiative, **it is expected that the annual Activities of the Arab IGF will be resumed soon within the next few months.**

The Arab IGF Community is following-up with great interest on the global and regional IGFs, and is looking forward to their active engagement in the next phase of the Arab IGF process.

On behalf of the Arab IGF

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