In each issue, we explore the main developments in digital policy for the month. The developments in May and the IG Barometer reveal that sustainable development, security, infrastructure, legal issues, and e-commerce were under special focus.
WSIS Forum 2016, held on 2-6 May 2016 at the ITU headquarters, gathered the ICT for development and the IG communities for a full week of discussions on issues such as access and the digital divide, cybersecurity, and human rights. With a strong link to the SDGs, this year’s forum served once again as an efficient mechanism for multistakeholder discussions and consultations on the implementation of the WSIS Action Lines. The Geneva Internet Platform provided live updates, just-in-time reporting, and a final report Read more on pages 3 and 7.

The TechLunch on Information Security organised on 3 May by the Geneva Creativity Center, was dedicated to discussions on aspects related to the security of information systems and of data processed through them. The event started with an overview of the challenges that cloud computing is bringing in the area of cybersecurity and data protection. This was followed by a presentation on ‘the digital security of physical objects’, with a focus on digital technologies developed to allow end-users to verify the authenticity of physical products they purchase online. Another topic discussed related to quantum computing and cryptography; it was said that the evolution of quantum computing is making currently used cryptographic techniques obsolete, while, at the same time, offering the opportunity for the development of new, more powerful techniques.

On 4 May, the Geneva Internet Platform and ICANN organised an open discussion on Ensuring Civil Society’s Voice is Heard in ICANN, bringing together experts and newcomers to ICANN processes. Participants agreed that a tripartite classification of stakeholders (government - businesses - civil society) is difficult to apply in the ICANN context. They underlined that in order to reach meaningful participation, there is a need to help stakeholders that are interested in develop the capacities to participate. Moreover, since not all organisations have the resources to follow ICANN processes on a weekly basis, the main challenge is to involve civil society groupings that are tangentially interested in Internet-related issues. Finally, they found that there is a need to strike a balance between expertise and representation, and between efficiency and inclusion in order to have civil society’s voice heard in ICANN processes.

The 19th Session of the Commission for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), held in Geneva on 9-13 May reviewed the progress made in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, and discussed national science, technology, and innovation policy reviews. The meeting also drafted two resolutions for the Economic and Social Council: the Draft Resolution on Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Draft Resolution on the Assessment of the Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society. Read more about the negotiations behind the WSIS resolution on page 3.

An Inter-ministerial roundtable on ICT for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was organised on 24 May as a side event to the 69th World Health Assembly by the delegations of Costa Rica and Senegal, the ITU, and the World Health Organization (WHO) Secretariat. The WHO Director-General and the ITU Secretary General opened the session by remarking that ICT plays a key role in implementing SDG 3 on Good health and Well-being, and encourages public-private partnerships. Health ministers from Congo, India, Panama, the United States, Pakistan, and Burkina Faso held a roundtable discussion on the strategies and challenges of building a digital healthcare system, protecting personal data, and funding health services in their own countries.

The 2016 annual session of the ITU Council takes place in Geneva, between 25 May and 2 June. As underlined by the Council’s chairwoman, Ms Julie Zoller (US State Department), and by ITU Secretary General Mr Houlin Zhao in their opening remarks, the Council focuses on exploring modalities for enhancing ITU’s contribution towards the achievement of the SDGs. Delegates from 48 countries are discussing issues such as empowerment of youth and women through ICTs, child online protection, cybersecurity, the Internet of Things and other emerging technologies, and the interoperability of ICT products. The ITU’s operational plans for 2017-2020 and future ITU conferences are also on the Council’s agenda.
HOW TO WALK THE SDG TALK

Are you – like us – concerned that a lot of talk about the SDGs will make them less relevant? As with any type of inflation, the more we talk about the topic, the more we reduce its value. It becomes an inflated object. This is how we have felt in the past few weeks at different events we attended.

To some extent, this might have been expected. The SDGs are a major breakthrough for the international community and probably a rare global point of convergence. We have put a lot of store in them. And this should make us also very responsible in handling them carefully.

At DiploFoundation and the Geneva Internet Platform, we made a practical contribution through just-in-time reporting from WSIS Forum 2016. This is in line with SDG 16, and in particular, with efforts to develop effective institutions and to ensure inclusive and participatory decision-making at different levels.

We walked the SDG talk together with the forum organiser – ITU – and ICANN and the Internet Society who supported our reporting initiative. The aim was to provide participants following the WSIS Forum – close to 2000 stakeholders attended the forum in Geneva; hundreds of others participated online – with simple, engaging, and professional reporting from the event.

We could have done it in two ways. One option, arguably an easier one, would have been to recruit professional rapporteurs. A second, more difficult option was to train rapporteurs from different regions in the world, mainly developing countries. We went for the second option.

A team of around 40 rapporteurs were involved in writing the reports following a three-month training phase. They learned first-hand how to write professional and engaging reports. Each report was ready a few hours after the session ended. The reports then fed into a final report prepared by our GIP Digital Watch team.

We also shared our reports with local communities worldwide, in a bid to help them follow and understand the developments and the main aspects of digital policy. At the same time, participants at the WSIS Forum acquired an overall grasp of the proceedings, which is difficult to achieve with so many parallel sessions. In addition, our reporting initiative is sustainable. Our rapporteurs are now trained to report on local events.

In contributing to SDG 16.8 on broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance, ours was a small step in the broader SDG scheme; a small step in a great journey that we should undertake together. We invite you to join us.

CSTD’s 19th SESSION ADOPTS WSIS DRAFT RESOLUTION

One of the tasks of the 19th session of the CSTD was to draft a text for a resolution of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the WSIS outcomes.

The 43 CSTD member states, together with other attending UN member states, as well as several stakeholders from civil society, the technical community, and the private sector, engaged in what proved to be a rather challenging exercise, using the previous year’s ECOSOC resolution as a starting point. The initial idea was to update the 2015 resolution in such a way that it would reflect the main points of contention during the negotiations. When the discussions moved on to the text on development issues, there was again disagreement. On one side, the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) wanted to consolidate such text to make it clearer and more succinct. Countries in the developing world found this concerning, as they felt it would lead to subtle, but important development-related provisions being removed to their detriment.

With these major points of contention on the table, the solution was to move forward with a so-called facilitator’s text, which would represent a compromise version of the resolution. The agreed draft resolution therefore included some of the development-related language proposed by WEOG, in addition to text from the 2015 resolution; new text on WSIS Action Lines and their linkages with the SDGs; compromise text on enhanced cooperation; and mostly existing language on IG and the IGF, plus a text recognising the progress made in regard to IGF inter-sessional work.

DEVELOPMENTS IN MAY

Global IG Architecture

G7 leaders welcomed the report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts in 2015, which reaffirms that no country should conduct or knowingly support ICT-enabled theft of intellectual property, and endorses the G7 Principles and Actions on Cyber. A G7 working group on cyber will be established.

The USA and China have met for the first Senior Experts Group meeting to address international norms of state behaviour and other crucial issues for international security in cyberspace. Details of the discussions were not made available.

The USA has warned against the fragmentation of the Internet as a result of new Chinese regulation on domain names. This comes after the Chinese government decided that all domain names in China must be registered through government-licensed providers in the country.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development and WSIS Action Lines were the underlying themes of WSIS Forum 2016, which also discussed ways in which ICTs can be utilised to attain the goals. The themes were heavily linked to development, including bridging the digital divide and strengthening access, and areas related to infrastructure and the digital economy. Read more on pages 3 and 7.

Security

A Chinese committee associated with the country’s Internet control bureau is scrutinising US technology products sold in China to the public for potential security threats. US tech companies fear the aim is to extract trade secrets.

Over 1 billion stolen credential records were in possession of an individual operating in the dark market.

US Intelligence claims foreign hackers are spying on presidential candidates.

Google has announced the introduction of HTTPS for every domain blog on blogspot.com, allowing users to access blogspot blogs over an encrypted channel. Its new applications Allo and Duo will also have end-to-end encryption.

Privacy and human rights

Privacy and security issues continue to heighten tensions between Silicon Valley and the US government, as Twitter barred US intelligence agencies from using Dataminr, a service that analyses the entire output of Twitter posts.

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day (3 May), the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression has warned that the fight against violent extremism could be used as an ‘excuse’ to curb free speech. Read more on page 6.

The European Parliament, Council, and Commission agreed on a new set of rules to make public sector websites and mobile apps more accessible, especially for persons with disabilities.

The first nationwide network dedicated to the Internet of Things is being deployed in South Korea by Samsung and SK Telecom. LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) will use the 900 MHz frequency band, part of the unlicensed public spectrum. It will be available as a commercial service as of mid-2016.

Facebook and Microsoft plan to build a subsea cable between the USA and Europe. Project ‘Marea’ will bridge more than 6600 kilometres between Virginia (USA) and Bilbao (Spain), with an initial estimated design capacity of 160 Tbps.

As of 1 June, Apple will require all apps submitted to its App Store to support IPv6-only networking.

New legislation by a US state (Arizona) will require state institutions to migrate their IT resources and operations to the cloud.
In a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a number of Internet companies are requesting that the US FCC evaluation of zero-rating plans by several Internet service providers (ISPs) be made public. The FCC’s net neutrality rules, passed in 2015, allow the agency to review zero-rating plans on a case-by-case basis.

India’s telecom regulator is exploring options to provide free Internet without violating net neutrality rules.

The Greek government has passed a package of tax reforms, including a tax on Internet use. The Nigerian parliament is also considering a new ICT tax.

Estonian legislation will allow residents to open bank accounts remotely. The rules will allow for identification through electronic means; the face-to-face requirement will be replaced by a new digital ‘three-stage identification process.

The European Commission’s plans to reshuffle its digital policy department, DG Connect, foresees a new unit dedicated to e-commerce and online platforms, one of the most controversial areas currently under the Commission’s scrutiny.

A new report by Google and Temasek - e-conomy SEA - estimates that the Internet economy of Southeast Asia has the potential to reach $200 billion by 2025, a growth driven by the expanding young population, a lack of big-box retail, and a rapidly growing middle class.

Google has won a legal battle against Oracle over Google’s use of Java in its Android smartphone operating system. The San Francisco jury ruled that Google’s use of the software amounted to ‘fair use’ as it was part of a larger system which the tech giant created for a new purpose.

Russia is seeking China’s expertise in Internet management, as Chinese and Russian officials discuss China’s Internet sovereignty model and content control of the Internet during the 7th International Safer Internet Forum.

Brazil blocked WhatsApp nationwide for 72 hours after the company refused to comply with court requests for user data in a criminal investigation. The suspension, applied across the country, affected millions of Brazilians.

The ICANN Board adopted a new set of ICANN bylaws required as a result of the recommendations contained in the IANA stewardship transition proposal and the accountability proposal. The new bylaws relate to the ‘empowered community’ (which will be able to exercise powers such as rejecting ICANN budgets and operating plans, and removing Board members), and the creation of a ‘Post Transition IANA Entity’ (as a separate legal entity that will provide the IANA services).

For more information on the IG Barometer, consult www.giplatform.org/barometer
Terrorists have been using the Internet for a wide-range of purposes. On the operational side, they are using ICTs for internal communication and fundraising, while on the public relations side, they are using the Internet to disseminate and promote their ideologies.

As terrorists have been growing increasingly sophisticated in using social media, and as these online platforms are able to reach more and more people around the world, the threat of youth radicalisation by terrorists has come into the focus of many decision-makers. However, countering radicalisation and extremist messages is a different undertaking than countering operational terrorist activities. Questions have arisen concerning the line between free speech and countering terrorist content, as well as the actors who should be involved in making this effort and striking this balance.

The developments over the last two months signal the heightened concern about online radicalisation. In April, foreign ministers of Russia, India, and China highlighted the need to counter the rise of online terrorist content in official statements. A closer look into the operations of the British counter-terrorism unit was given in the same month, which stated that the number of instances whereby extremist online content was removed has risen from fewer than 2000 in 2012, to a rate of almost 300 pieces a day this year. This month, the topic reached the level of the UN Security Council, which held an open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism and the topic was further addressed by the G7 leaders in Japan.

In addition to discussions on a political level, this has also become a concern for the private sector, most notably the Internet industry. On 23 May, Microsoft published its policies related to online terrorist content, as it feels a responsibility...not to contribute, however indirectly, to terrible acts. Although the tensions between Silicon Valley and US authorities have been growing in different policy areas (e.g. on topics such as encryption, privacy, and taxation), Internet companies seem to increasingly engage with the public sector in the fight against online terrorist narratives. This was also evidenced by the speech given by Microsoft’s Vice-President during the Security Council meeting, who stressed the need for public-private partnerships, arguing that ‘if there were an elegant solution, industry would have adopted it.’

The evident willingness of both the public and the private sectors to counter online radicalisation together presents a hopeful message. Yet the practical operation of counter-extremist campaigns needs to be very carefully balanced with the right to freedom of expression. There is a delicate line between protecting security and promoting online censorship, and the location of this line is very much open to interpretation. This concern was highlighted by David Kaye, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, who argued that ‘violent extremism’ could be used as the ‘perfect excuse’ by governments to limit freedom of expression. The right formula for content policy, that ensures the maximum level possible of freedom of expression, while lowering radicalisation to a minimum, can only be found through a continued dialogue between security and human rights communities.

Apart from ensuring a continuous consideration of free speech in the design of counter-radicalisation policies, the topic of online radicalisation and extremism itself needs to be explored in further detail. As was explained by UNESCO’s Chief of Research at the WSIS Forum earlier this month, there are too many assumptions at the basis of counter-extremist measures that have never been validated by proper investigation. According to him, we need serious, interdisciplinary, scientific research and evidence to understand whether our assumptions about online radicalisation are valid, so that we do not create policies that do more harm than good.

In short, the commitment of world leaders and industry chiefs is an important step towards counter-radicalisation in a time where terrorists have great potential to influence and radicalise youth online. At the same time, the search for solutions needs to involve constant attention to the protection of free speech and a commitment by researchers to understand the complexity of the phenomenon. This was also recognised by the G7, which stressed ‘the need for continued cooperation with the private sector, civil society and communities in investigating, disrupting and prosecuting terrorists’ illegal activities online while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. We will see whether this approach will further crystallise during the meeting of the UN Security Council’s Counter Terrorism Committee on 2 June.

With society’s increasing dependence on the Internet, strategic targets are becoming vulnerable. The future of warfare might be very different. A more secure and trustworthy cyberspace leaves less room for use of cyber-weapons.

This illustration is one of a series of cybersecurity-themed postcards designed by Diplo’s CreativeLab. The postcards illustrate the main challenges related to cybersecurity, and are aimed at raising awareness about the issues. View the gallery.
While ICTs have become essential tools in promoting growth and sustainable development, their potential in this regard can and should be further maximised. This was the underlying message of this year’s WSIS Forum.

In 2003–2005, the WSIS Summit explored modalities for bridging the digital divide and using ICTs for facilitating the implementation of the millennium development goals. The summit resulted in a set of principles, objectives, and Action Lines aimed to contribute to building an inclusive and development-oriented information society.

In May 2016, more than 12 years after the first WSIS phase, similar issues featured in the programme of this year’s WSIS Forum.

Building on the Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015, as well as on the WSIS+10 Resolution adopted in December 2015, the discussions at the WSIS Forum 2016 revolved mainly around the role of ICTs in achieving the SDGs. The forum applied the WSIS-SDG matrix, which shows the linkages between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDG targets; session organisers and participants were asked to emphasise these linkages in the outlines of their sessions, as well as throughout the discussions themselves.

The overarching message of the Forum was that, while ICTs have become essential tools in promoting growth and sustainable development, their potential in this regard can and should be further maximised. And the first step is to ensure that end users and businesses worldwide have access to such technologies and are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to make the best use of them.

Main themes

As already noted, this year’s WSIS Forum had a strong emphasis on the connection between the WSIS Action Lines and the SDGs. Various sessions included in the Forum’s programme explored this connection when discussing issues such as bridging the digital divide, strengthening the digital economy, and enhancing cybersecurity while protecting privacy and other human rights. At the same time, aspects related to the broader IG ecosystem were also touched on within the framework of sessions dedicated to the Internet Governance Forum, ICANN, and the process of enhanced cooperation, among others.

Much like was the case more than ten years ago, during WSIS itself, the digital divide was the focus of many discussions at the Forum. It was underlined that the digital divide exists in various dimensions, not only between developing and developed countries, or rural and urban areas, but also between different groups within the society (uneducated vs. educated, poor vs. rich, youth vs. elderly, women vs. men, etc.). If the Internet is to fully achieve its developmental potential at a global level, then more efforts need to be put into narrowing these divides. This can be done most efficiently through collaboration between governments and other stakeholders.

Emphasis was also placed on the fact that, while deploying and enhancing infrastructure is an essential element, complementary measures also need to be taken in other areas such as affordability of access, digital literacy, and availability of local content.

The potential of ICTs to significantly contribute to economic growth was repeatedly emphasised during the discussions. ICTs in general, and the Internet in particular, are now used by businesses as tools to increase productivity, reduce costs, and more easily connect with customers. Such opportunities need to be equally available not only to large companies in developed nations, but also to small and medium–size enterprises (SMEs) in the developing world. For this to happen, an enabling policy environment is needed, and governments have key responsibilities in this regard.

Another cross-cutting topic which was high on the agenda was cybersecurity. Discussions revolved around security-related risks and challenges, and possible modalities to address them. It was stressed that issues such as cyberincidents, spam, online threats to children, and the use of new technologies for criminal purposes could be most effectively tackled through multistakeholder cooperation and dialogue. Trust between stakeholders was perceived as the starting point. Cybersecurity and cybersafety education for end-users and private companies alike, the adoption and implementation of adequate legal frameworks on cybercrime and cybersecurity, and the use of encryption and other protective tools were among the measures highlighted that can contribute to enhancing cybersecurity.

Many sessions at the Forum touched on issues related to the protection and promotion of human rights in the digital space. Online privacy, freedom of expression, access to information, gender equality, and rights of persons with disabilities were stressed as important foundations for an open, trustworthy, and inclusive cyberspace. The need to achieve a balance between ensuring security and safety online and protecting fundamental rights and freedoms was also underlined.

But the WSIS Forum was not only about ICTs and sustainable development. Topics related to the global IG architecture were also brought into discussion. It was stressed that, as IG processes continue to evolve, they need to be made more inclusive, effective, transparent, accountable, and responsive to the public interest. In this regard, reference was made to the IGF and the emerging national and regional IGF initiatives, as well as to the ongoing IANA stewardship transition process and the related work on enhancing ICANN’s accountability.


In 2016, the forum helped participating organisations and countries to target 16.8, aimed at broadening and strengthening the participation of all, especially women and girls, in ICT-related fields; 16.9, aimed at bridging the gender gap in access to ICTs and the internet; and 16.10, aimed at improving access to ICTs and the Internet in rural and remote areas, as well as for the promotion of women’s and girls’ empowerment.

It is a culmination of the work of over 30 rapporteurs—many of whom were represented at the final session. Other key contributions came from ICANN, the Internet Society, and DiploFoundation.

In this final report—prepared by the Geneva Internet Platform, with support from ICANN, the Internet Society, and DiploFoundation—this year’s WSIS Forum is a platform for bringing together the ICT for development and Internet governance (IG) communities, the United Nations (UN) agencies, and others who work on these issues. The report highlights the contributions of the various stakeholders and structures that have played a role in the WSIS Forum, the goals and objectives of the WSIS process, and the outcomes of the WSIS Forum 2016.
DECIPHERING ACRONYMS IN DIGITAL POLICY

Digital policy and Internet governance parlance includes many abbreviations of names of actors, processes, or frequently used terms. Unfamiliarity with acronyms and initialisms can inhibit our understanding of concepts and developments. Using Diplo’s *IG Acronym Glossary* (2nd edition), you can decipher these abbreviations and understand what is behind them. The glossary contains explanations of over 130 such acronyms and initialisms. In addition to the complete term, most entries include a concise explanation and a link for further information.

In this issue, these are some of the abbreviations we used:

**CSTD** – Commission on Science and Technology for Development of the United Nations ECOSOC
- A body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which gives advice to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on science and technology issues. Mandated to review the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) process and to initiate discussions about Enhanced Cooperation in Internet governance.

**ECOSOC** – Economic and Social Council
- The United Nations (UN) platform to address economic and social issues.

**EuroDIG** – European Dialogue on Internet Governance
- A regional European discussion forum on Internet governance.

**IANA** – Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
- Originally the global coordinator of the domain name system (DNS) root, Internet protocol (IP) addressing, and other IP resources, IANA allocated IP addresses to the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) and implemented the changes in the root zone file. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has been mandated by the US Department of Commerce (DoC) to perform IANA functions through a contract with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA); this contract is expected to expire by the end of 2016.

**ICANN** – Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
- Corporation registered in the state of California, USA, which coordinates key technical services for the Internet domain name system (DNS), generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs) and country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs), as well as Internet numbering resources.

**ICT** – Information and Communication Technology
- A synonym for information technology (IT), describing the use of all media communications and computer technologies. Its strategies and access are important for development and the economy, and are documented globally by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

**IGF** – Internet Governance Forum
- A forum for multistakeholder dialogue to discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance (IG), as established in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

**ITU** – International Telecommunication Union
- Geneva-based United Nations (UN) specialised agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs).

**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Paris-based organisation established in 1961 to provide a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems.

**SDGs** – Sustainable Development Goals
- A set of goals agreed upon by all members of the United Nations (UN), covering a broad range of development issues.

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
- A specialised agency of the United Nations (UN), with five major programmes: education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information.

**WSIS** – World Summit on the Information Society
- Held in two phases. The first phase took place in Geneva, hosted by the government of Switzerland, from 10 to 12 December 2003; the second phase took place in Tunis, hosted by the government of Tunisia, from 16 to 18 November 2005.

Subscribe to GIP Digital Watch updates at www.giplatform.org/digitalwatch