

The Future is Digital

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1. *The IGF and its role in the global digital diplomacy*

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is a global venue for dialogue on a wide variety of issues related to digital space and its actors. Organised annually under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General, it brings together various stakeholders on an equal footing to exchange information and share good practices in order to foster the sustainability, security, and development of the Internet. Its participants are governments, intergovernmental organisations, as well as broadly defined communities: businesses, industry organisations, academia, and civil society.

Over the years, the IGF has identified a wide range of issues to be addressed by the international community. Through its annual meetings and intersessional activities, the IGF promotes the debate on regulatory frameworks, potential risks, and global trends, identifying practices or schemes that need to be adopted, modified or abandoned.

The Internet Governance Forum does not adopt resolutions or create any binding treaties. Its strength lies in facilitating discourse and forging common ground among all the agents involved or interested in Internet governance issues. As French President Emmanuel Macron once put it, ‘The wide range of issues covered by digital transformation requires a coordinated and coherent representation between state actors and non-state stakeholders at global and regional levels, as well as strong coordination on the national level^{1,2}. Despite not having a decision-making power, the IGF informs and inspires those who do. In fact, its mission is to share policy expertise, discuss emerging technology issues, reach agreement as far as possible, and escalate these ideas to executive bodies.

The IGF traces its origins back to the 1st World Summit of the Information Society, which was held in Geneva in 2003. Internet governance was

1 Co-written by: Grażyna Śleszyńska.

2 Excerpt from the speech by Emmanuel Macron at the Internet Governance Forum 2018 in Paris