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ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – DNS Women: WSIS+ 20 Next Steps - Views from different regions  
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YEŞİM SAGLAM

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Thank you all for joining. I will now hand the floor over to Amrita Choudhury.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Yeşim. Welcome, everyone, to the last session of the day, last but not the least, to the DNS Women's session. We don't have Vanda and Cheryl with us in the room today, but we will have Vanda give a brief overview, for those who are new in the room, what DNS Women is all about. Then we'll have our invited guests, honorary members, Steve, Maarten, Leon, and Catherine,

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sharing their remarks on this discussion, which we have at every ICANN meeting.

We will also have an interactive discussion where we have Fiona, Ihita, Renata, who is online, Sandra and Judith, who will give their remarks on WSIS+20, how the community should engage or what their aspirations are from it. We would like to have your views after that, and we'll have a final wrap up. In case you have any questions, comments, you can always raise it at that point of time. We want it as interactive as possible. Those who are sitting behind, you can come to the main table also, wherever there are vacant seats. We are not harmful. We don't bite, so you can come and sit here. We'd like to have a conversation.

With that, perhaps I will hand it over to Vanda, who unfortunately is not here, but she would like to share some thoughts of hers. We do have Cheryl also online in case in two minutes Cheryl wants to add something, we will also accommodate it.

VANDA SCARTEZINI

Thank you, Amrita. Good afternoon to you all in Mumbai, and good day, night to all like myself who are attending online. First of all, I would like to thank Amrita who take the leading this session. Thanking my friends, panelists, who joined us today and share their knowledge with us. Let me take the opportunity to congratulate Amrita to her Excellence Community Award.

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Our focus for this session will be with WSIS+20 Next Steps: Different Perspectives. It is important, however, to recognize the reality of geopolitical interference in Internet governance, particularly in infrastructure that affect us all. But I believe in the resilience of our technical and governance model.

Here in Mumbai, the DNS Women is celebrating 50 meetings, including breakfast at the beginning, then cocktails and more technical sections since we had to go online during the pandemic time.

When we start in Sydney 2009, we were just few women in the community, even fewer in leadership position. And five of us, just Cheryl and myself, is still in ICANN nowadays, decide we need to make a move to attract more women and build some space where they can feel comfortable and encourage them to have their voice heard and take the lead in different constituencies and groups around this community.

I believe we succeed. We can really celebrate. Because we not only have 60 women sitting in the Board, the record since the beginning of ICANN, with Tripti as chair, and ALAC just elected Justine to Seat 15, but during the last years, we have had many women chairing ACs and SOs as other relevant groups as PTI, for instance.

Since we have asked the staff for the data about gender participation some years ago, they started to collect such data, and based on ICANN Gender Diversity Survey trends, often shows between 48% to 60% men, 34% to 49% women, and 3% of people

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that prefer not to say, we can state that we are not far from the usual percentage of rules for 40% men, 40% women, 20% of others, that business and organizations around the world are using to state their gender equity commitment. ICANN also has a report, Gender Diversity and Participation Survey. I recommend everybody to read it.

To finalize, DNS Women now has 10 chapters around the world, from California to Cook Islands. About 400 members from 71 countries, three honorary members that we appreciate, Mr. Steve Crocker, Mr. Maarten Botterman, and Mr. Goran Marby, for their constant support and participation, even as Board chairs and CEO. We also have three special affiliated, Avri Doria, Becky Burr, and Sally Costerton for their constant support to our group.

If you have not joined us yet or are interested in chairing a chapter in your country or city, please contact me. I will post my contact in the event chat for you to get it. Feel free to get in touch. Thank you very much for your attention and participation. Thanks to Gisella and all the staff for the constant help. And I give back the floor to Amrita. Amrita, the floor is yours.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Vanda. Cheryl, in case you want to add something to begin with.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Extremely briefly, Amrita. Like Vanda, attending with you remotely, but my heart is in the room with you all, believe me. Look, 50 meetings on. It is a fabulous landmark, and a landmark that I'd like to think is suitably recognized with our fabulous Amrita being recognized with the ICANN Excellence Award. An additional recognition from me on that.

Just one thing I just want you to note, we're getting up to that gender equity point within ICANN. But regardless of the gender equity of involvement, ladies and supportive gentlemen, we are punching well above our weight when it comes to influence and when it comes to leadership. So, well done to you all, and I look forward to hearing about the WSIS aspects of all of our fabulous thinking and contributions. Thanks. Back to you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Cheryl. With this, I would like to request our honorary member, Steve Crocker, to share some pearls of wisdom.

STEVE CROCKER

Well, thank you. It's a continuing pleasure and even more so an honor to be welcomed into this group. As you know from my past appearances, I feel very strongly that this is a very important activity and I'm pleased to see that it's grown and becomes more successful.

I didn't think that I had anything of substance to add, and then I realized earlier today, I was introduced to a man whose name I

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better get right here, who's the head of and founder of the CyberPeace Foundation, Veneet Kumar. And they're focused on a collection of issues about all related around peace and so forth. But as he was going through it, he mentioned attention to women's issues, and I thought, "We ought to be here. We ought to be interacting. He was making the rounds and talking to people." I'm sure this is fairly easy to arrange. But the more general thought is that, in addition to levels of participation, perhaps this group could function as an unofficial but nonetheless effective kind of advisory group or comparable constituency whenever women's issues come up in the policy-making process, that this ought to be one of the stops that people who are involved in that should interact with. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Steve. Maarten, would you like to share something? And then I'll go to Leon. I know you all have to run.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN

Thank you, Amrita. Thank you very much for welcoming me again. It's been a great honor to receive this honorary membership and be an honorary woman. Big congratulations for a well-deserved award. I've seen you in ICANN circles but I've also seen you as a very active member here in the Indian community, a central pivoting point. Please bear that to heart. I know you don't like praise but you get it anyway.

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This week started on the 8th with World Women's Day. I still remember when I had the honor of opening one of the ICANN meetings, I don't remember which one, it was Women's Day on that day, and it was an excellent contribution to also highlight that this Internet that originally may have been made mostly by men with few women coming in has reached the maturity where that balance is clear, and the multistakeholder model supports that and asks for that because it's users from all levels and all kind of them.

Very good to see you all here. First time in my recollection that Cheryl and Vanda are not in the room. Thank you for showing up and showing your face to us. This morning in the Fellows, the NextGen presentations, I saw Cheryl's chat. Cheryl, you're still very much with us, and yes, you are a special category.

Thank you all very much for joining. Thank you also for seeing all those new faces that I've seen presenting with excellent fresh perspectives also here and someone who's been already earlier with the Next Gen. It's not only women, it's also the generations, you see them coming up here and that contribution is golden for ICANN, so let's keep it going.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Maarten. Then I'll go to Leon and then Catherine.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Amrita. Of course, a special hug and kiss to Vanda and to Cheryl. I really wish you both were here. I really miss

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you here. Thanking you again for this opportunity and this privilege to be here with you. Maarten beat me to mentioning International Women's Day, but I think that this group of women, the work that you do are the perfect testimony of why International Women's Day exists. This is proof that we are lucky to have very capable, committed, hardworking women within the ICANN Community. And as far as what Cheryl was mentioning, that influence is still adept in our community. I can assure you that we are changing that.

In a moment, Catherine will speak after me, and I can tell you that many of us stand behind their leadership in the Board. She's a great leader and we are lucky to have her in the Board, so her influence is definitely felt and definitely followed by many of us within the Board. We continue to make those changes and the influence of women is growing certainly at the Board level and I'm sure in every other corner of the ICANN Community. So, thank you for that. And now I'll give the floor to my colleague, Catherine.

CATHERINE ADEYA

You've just flattered me. But thank you very much. Of course, it's an honor working with all of you. And it's so funny that we had an Audit Committee meeting at lunch time, and I always have to address them as gentlemen because I'm the only woman there.

But on another note, I won't talk so much just about why I'm here, but I should actually, but also just to emphasize the topic you're going to be discussing today. It's so topical even in the Board as we



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look at, of course, what's next for 2026 about the WSIS framework. But I think for us what's even more important was the outcomes. ICANN was able to achieve three of ICANN's co-objectives: preservation of the multistakeholder model, the recognition of the technical community, and the permanence of the IGF. But I was so curious, I mean, Leon is saying the Board calendar is always clashing. And I just looked and I said WSIS+20 Next Steps. I see this everywhere. But in front here has DNS Women, views from different regions. I mean, that's a huge addition that I would like to be here and with such an esteemed panel. Thank you for inviting us.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Catherine, for this. I think without much ado, I'd like to go to our panelists and they would be sharing. Thank you, Leon. I know you have to leave. And they would be giving their introductory remarks, following which, we would also like to hear from you all. Those who are sitting behind, you can come in front if there are seats. Feel free to join in when you want to speak later.

My question to all of you would be from your perspective. You come from diverse backgrounds and you work in different spheres so when you're speaking, perhaps, you could just elucidate where you're coming from. From your perspective, how can the multistakeholder community and, in particular, the women in the DNS engage meaningfully in the implementation of the WSIS+20 outcome? What could be a wish list or what is it you would want more? And I can start with Judith at the end.

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JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Hi. This is Judith Hellerstein. Thanks so much, Amrita, for including me on this panel. Amrita said she asked us to speak on the subject of how can multistakeholder community and, in particular, women in the DNS engage meaningfully in the implementation of the WSIS+20 outcome. I thought I would talk about my experience in engaging in the WSIS+20 outcome process.

I was driven to participate to ensure that persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, could ensure that the WSIS vision of universal, meaningful, and affordable access be realized. I was driven to participate to ensure that disability inclusion would move from just being a footnote to the main agenda. The WSIS+20 Review presented a historic opportunity to move beyond tokenism and to enshrine digital accessibility at the heart of a truly inclusive information society. Without explicit commitments and concrete access for persons with disabilities and without the active leadership of people with lived experience of disabilities, this vision of universal, meaningful, and affordable access cannot be realized.

Based on the issues encountered during the discussions from the GDC and other ones, it was really feared that there would be limited opportunities for engagement in the multistakeholder process. However, the efforts of UN DESA, the IGF secretariat, the leadership panel, and also the creation of the IMSB, the Multistakeholder Sounding Board, and the wonderful two co-facilitators that were appointed, the process was indeed very open. The two co-

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facilitators were very open to engaging with the multistakeholder community. They went out of their way to create an open and inclusive process, they came to many Internet governance meetings to gain a real understanding of the issues and try their best to incorporate all these ideas into the resolution.

In reading the past resolutions and the many changes, the updates, it was clear that the text was filled with many ambitious languages. Talks about a people-centered, inclusive Internet, addressing issues from AI, governance, digital finance, financial inclusion, yet there was very little reference to persons with disabilities and no meaningful mention of the leadership or participation of people with lived experience disabilities.

Through numerous contributions to both with the WSIS+20 mailing list that ICANN set up, the efforts of the development of draft resolution and statements, the co-facilitators were always willing to listen, and they posted statements and they had forums, they had them in different time zones, so we could have many different online stakeholder consultations. I was able to have some more inclusive language inserted into the resolution.

The WSIS+20 document itself in paragraph 66 reaffirms the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities as an individual part of International Human Rights Law. The legal obligation could not be more clear. When public digital infrastructure is inaccessible, this is not simply a design failure, it is

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a human rights issue. In the end, it came down to these questions that these knowledge producers need to ask themselves.

The questions are, are we imparting knowledge to members which are accessible for persons with disabilities? If the knowledge is not accessible, then why not? What can be done to change it? What are we doing to ensure that the efforts are being made to co-design and co-deliver digital capacity building and leadership development programs for persons with disabilities?

Why am I speaking in this area? One of my other hats that I wear besides ICANN is as a coordinator of the IGF Dynamic Coalition on Accessibility and Disability. And in that role, I urge the two co-facilitators and all the stakeholders to ensure that accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities are not treated as afterthoughts, but as core priorities reflected throughout the WSIS+20 outcome documents and in the future mandate of the IGF. Only by doing so can we really build a truly multistakeholder inclusive governance model that serves the needs of all people and sets the precedent for equitable global digital policymaking.

That is sort of what the thoughts I had here. And as people know, in ICANN, I'm always arguing for increased accessibility, building awareness of people of how they can increase accessibility. Many people are doing and that's not aware that, "I'll just do something quick and easy by copying and pasting an image, making documents inaccessible." The web is littered with so many inaccessible documents. What I hope to have gained on the WSIS

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process and the outcomes is efforts to work more on awareness, to make people aware of using standards, using the W3C accessibility guidelines, and then making the place a more open and inclusive society. Thanks.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Judith. I think you give an important message that things should be accessible, the standards should be accessible, and that is what you wish to pursue. With that, I move to Sandra. After Sandra, we'll move online to Renata.

SANDRA HOFERICHTER

Thank you very much, Amrita, for giving me that opportunity. And thanks to those who organized that session for inviting me. I'm from Europe. Many of you will know me as the coordinator of the European IGF. That is one of my hats. I think I will focus on what can be done from this perspective today.

Recently, I saw it on some social media, a saying that said, "A society that takes women's needs into account is a good society." I couldn't agree more with that. And I feel it's up to us, because we were asked what can we do as women in DNS, we need to define what the women needs in ICT are, and we have to stand up for it.

Judith already referred to the WSIS Outcome document, and if you go to paragraph 112 from the WSIS document, we would have all legitimacy to enforce women rights in the digital world. That paragraph—and I quote—here says, "Integrate human rights across

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all action lines and address gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a core theme in action line work with the full involvement of UN women and relevant stakeholders.”

However, the world is different. And we all witness, at the moment, actually a global trend that goes backwards. And just today, I read in a newspaper that at the United Nations, the United States failed in its attempt to block a joint declaration on women’s rights. Ultimately, 37 and 44 voting states in the UN Commission on the status of women’s voted in favor of a compromise text. Only the United States voted against it with six states abstaining. I think this is a worrisome outcome.

The declaration itself is about securing women rights through the justice system and dismantling of discriminatory laws. The U.S. representative raised objections because the draft contains ambiguous language promoting gender ideology. In addition, it contained vague commitments on sexual and reproductive health as well as passages in the U.S. views, and so on and so forth. I think we have to be aware of these developments and stand up against such behavior.

Now, speaking from one of the NRIs and for Europe as a region, we do have quite a good gender equality in Europe but also there still can be done. And the call for issues for our regional IGF ended in December, and one workshop that came out of this call for issues is a workshop on advancing gender equality in the digital to public sphere by tackling online violence and AI discrimination. Because

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AI discrimination, we all see it coming and new threat basically comes that is many times targeted against women's rights.

If you are interested, please go to our website, [eurodig.org](http://eurodig.org) and you will find the program, you will find the session teaser. I call upon you to participate in the session because we have a very open process. Everyone that is interested in participating in our regional IGF just have to subscribe to the mailing list. Even if you would just like to subscribe as an observer, that is also fine. No one is forced. Everyone can engage. This is really something I would like to call upon you.

I have the feeling that sometimes we just have to connect the dots of several initiatives and support each other. I mean, everyone is busy with its own little and big things but sometimes we are really not looking what is our neighbor doing and how could we engage and how we could create synergy. I think we could do better here and I also think that now coming back to what women in DNS should do, I really think that sometimes women in DNS should support each other much better. The men, they have a good ability to do this, they fight in the sessions, they go to the bar, drink a beer and everything is fine. I think we have to establish a similar procedure, maybe not late in the bar but something else, that after a strong argument, we can go back to a place of peace and safety and continue supporting us each other. Thank you very much.

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AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Sandra. I think two pieces of message is the freedom, the rights we had to fight for, the battles are not over, the battles are starting again even in the online space. Two is we need to support each other, be more compassionate. We need that support if we really want to do it well. Renata, I go to you if you could share your views.

RENATA MIELLI

Thanks, Amrita. Thanks, everybody. Good afternoon. For me, good morning. It's a pleasure to be part of this DNS Women meeting alongside such wonderful women who have paved the way and inspired so many other women to engage with issues related to the Internet and its governance.

First of all, I believe it's essential that women working in the technical community as well as the entire ICANN community, we may actively involve in the WSIS+20 outcome implementation processes. Filling the gaps and the ambiguities in the document from a human rights perspective, particularly women rights. I'm not going to analyze the document but make some highlights on how we can engage. There are many ways to make this engagement effective but I would like to highlight three points here very briefly for the sake of our time and discussion.

First of all, we need to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to implement the outcome at the local level. Women in their countries and cities must play a leading role in building multistakeholder perspectives. And for us from Brazil, particularly from cgi.br, we are



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very pleased to see that WSIS+20 outcome makes reference to the Sao Paulo multistakeholder guidelines. That we built together with a large community on NETmundial+10 in 2024. That in our perspective is a very important document which provides tools for strengthening multistakeholder processes.

Another important point is the implementation of topics related to the protection of women in the digital environment. This is a very sensitive issue, given the growing wave of violence of which we have been victims. How can the technical community effectively contribute to identifying ways to confront the growing rise of hate movements against women in the digital environment. Movements that have dramatically increased the number of feminists worldwide, while at this end, we have to underline this, in Brazil we are facing this problem very strongly, but not only in Brazil. And I think technical community has the opportunity to address this issue at the same time, give ways to address this issue, preserving the Internet's technical integrity and the global character of the Internet, avoid the fragmentation, how to address this with this perspective.

Also, the third point I would like to put here, it would also be very available for the women working in this community to come together. Perhaps ICANN could be a space for that as DNS Women has already show to periodically assess the progress in implementing the outcome from a women's perspective, including, if possible, through indicators. How can we build indicators to see how the outcomes are involving and impacting

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positive the women in the process? And even to propose initiatives to ensure that each element of the WSIS outcome contributes positively of women's inclusion in the Internet community and Internet governance in a very active way.

I think we have a lot of challenges from now on. The WSIS+20 processes was the beginning—not the beginning because the beginning was in Tunis. But I think what I'm trying to say is that it's the beginning of a new process in a world that are facing a lot of challenges. We have to have this strengthening to move forward with empathy and solidarity and women perspective in this process. Thank you very much, Amrita, Vanda, Cheryl, and everybody to invite me for this session.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Renata. The emphasis on building the multistakeholder perspective at the grassroots level or the local level is essential. And building indicators to assess how women are involved or impacted based upon the parameters of the outcome document, I think that is also pretty pertinent. And with this, I move to Fiona for her comments.

FIONA ASONGA

Good evening, everyone. Thank you, Amrita. Fiona Asonga, chief executive officer of the Technology Service Providers Association of Kenya. Mine is to just add to what the other speakers have said.

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When we look at the statistics and the facts of how connectivity, technology, STEM is working for the women, we have to be cognizant. And I'm glad that WSIS was cognizant of these, that they recognize that 78% of women and girls aged 10 and over worldwide are reported by the ITU to use mobile phones compared to 87% of men. Only 71% of women are reported to be using the Internet compared to 77% men. When it comes to education, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and employment, we find that the numbers also change, even entrepreneurship.

I look at my ecosystem and look at what is really happening within that space, one of the things that is very evident, and we go through even without technology, is access to financing. Very few women have access to funding compared to men, at least for Africa. The challenge is that even when we go to the financial institutions for that funding, you're asked to make sure your spouse also signs the loan form. You cannot take a loan on your own. Your spouse must sign it for you. While on the reverse, when a man is taking a loan, we are not asked as wives to sign. You'll only realize he mortgaged the house a second time when it's been auctioned or the car's been picked, when it's already gone. And because of that, there is a need for us to have a total cultural shift.

Looking even deeper, when I look at some of our African languages and dialects, we do not have a name for a woman. A woman and a child have the same name, which means that it becomes very difficult to separate a woman as an adult, responsible and able of handling certain decisions because she's considered a child. A man

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is greeted and is asked, “How are your children?” Your first child is your wife and then the other children follow.

We need to begin to have conscious and intentional cultural shifts which have to begin even with... first of all, recognize the woman. We cannot be talking about gender divide when the gender is not even being recognized. We first want to be recognized as women and called as women and not called child. Our traditional languages have to have a way—they have to introduce a new terminology, so to say, so that we are able to identify the woman. Once we have identified the woman, then she begins to have rights, and she begins to take her position to be responsible.

While we look at the global change and the global dispensation, I think for us in Africa, we have an uphill task to think global but intentionally act locally so that we can locally make that change. We still have situations where in countries like Kenya, where I come from, Tanzania within the East African region, and I’m sure a few other countries on the continent, those present can confirm, where even girls and women are not allowed to have a phone. If you cannot have access to the phone, you cannot have access to mobile money, you cannot have access to all the technology that has been developed that can be used on the technology device. Because the phone is the first easiest technology device that anyone can get hold of. Before you get a laptop, before you get a computer, before you get an iPad, you just need a basic phone for phone calls. And when that is a challenge, then the challenges to empowering the

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woman become more difficult and more challenging, and need conscious intentional effort to make sure that they happen.

When we are here as African women, we are extremely privileged. And we thank ICANN for that privilege. Why? Because ICANN has enabled us to come in through fellowships, through travel support, through different mechanisms to be able to participate in the conversations. And that's not something we take lightly and for granted. Looking at it means that we need to have also very clear mentorship programs that enable us to get more women into the ecosystem. Especially from disadvantaged regions, which are not disadvantaged by choice, but by circumstances of historical, cultural issues that they have carried along the way. We see a change within our generations in Africa where the young people are paying a lot of attention to take and how they use it.

Anyone who has followed the case of Kenya, for example, the demonstrations that have happened since 2024, they've all been in very innovative use of technology and using the X and social media spaces to be able to pass the message across. The girl child is becoming more empowered. But the girl child should not just be empowered to make noise, but to have relevant activity and actions that lead to social change.

So while we are advocating for participation to address the digital divide, there is a need for us to be very intentional in the quality of output that we want to see and how we intentionally work towards it to make sure that we see what it is that we need to achieve. I

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believe that the outcomes of WSIS, while some of them may be a bit far for us, they are not impossible. Having hope and having a clear agenda on how we intentionally achieve some of these WSIS outcomes is what is going to work, not just for Africa, but for the rest of the world. And that is what I have to add. Thank you, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Fiona. I think you raised a very important point that when we are talking about digital society, people centric digital society, we really need to see if all the people are there on board. The basic fundamentals need to be there. With that, we go to Ihita and from the youth perspective also, what is it you are looking at.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Thank you, Amrita. I think you've raised incredible points and I'm glad that you also raised the point around young people and the opportunities for young women and girls. I come from a technical background. I work in the cybersecurity space, but I've had the privilege of working with young people for the last eight to nine years across various global and regional initiatives including Youth IGF India, local APIGA India, among others.

The conversation here around WSIS+20 document and the developments that were made in the key priority areas, I'm going to bring in a more technical perspective to it and also the angle of young people, particularly from the APAC region. Within WSIS+20, there have been multiple areas of priorities, one of which I think has

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been on closing digital divides, on capacity development and predominantly the one that I'm working within is strengthening the trust and security in ICTs. Additionally, of course, being the coordinator of youth IGF India, I'm really happy and multiple NRIs I'm sure are also happy with the permanent status of the IGF.

I think the real challenge that comes now with these priorities is how do we implement them and what avenues and what are the different efforts that we want to put together combined to come up with the implementation. If I were to look from an Internet infrastructure perspective, the DNS, of course, it's the foundational layer. It underpins the entire stability and resilience of the Internet and the interoperability.

Within WSIS+20, there are mentions, although not multiple explicit mentions, but mentions of multilingual access through IDNs, Universal Acceptance trust, industrial infrastructure. I'm just going to map and I have a couple of points here to map what WSIS priorities linked to the efforts that we can put together in the DNS ecosystem and what are the different gaps that we can collectively address to get more women and young girls to participate and contribute.

The very first is, of course, capacity building mentioned in the document. For the DNS ecosystem, it means we have to bring a very strong pipeline of experts in the DNS operations, in the infrastructure security, in threat intelligence, abuse mitigation. And a critical part of it, and I think already rightly mentioned, is the

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technical discussions and training and mentorship programs that have to be put together.

The second I wanted to highlight is the multistakeholder concept and inclusive participation. Within WSIS, it does strongly emphasize the requirement for multistakeholder engagement. And within the DNS community also, it does not limit to only technical expertise, but we have all newcomers, like many of you in the room, youth and women from developing regions. What are the different pathways that we are creating for them?

Then the third becomes how do we close any regional capacity gaps? Coming from APAC, there are also cultural limitations. Since we spoke about one of the examples, I'd like to highlight one example of, at Youth IGF India, we run a fellowship program for youth between 18 to 30. And we had a very concerned father of a young girl who was 18, who had called up saying, "I don't want my child to use the phone. How is the work even relevant for her to get into?" All of these calls are something that we get, and then we do convince and we also reach out to our advisors on understanding how to support such conversations. I'm sure, depending on the exposure that women have, the families have, or maybe different cultural barriers, that gets even more prominent.

How do we break these barriers and what are the different implementation models that we have to work towards with WSIS? One way forward is that we currently, across the globe, have existing capacity building initiatives. Do we have the right amount



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of resources and mentorship to scale these and leverage these platforms and initiatives to get the implementation started?

This could be effective partnership with academia, technical community, business, private sector, even the government. And what are the different opportunities that we can collectively bring for women and youth? And of course, rightly mentioned support resources, funding. I'm grateful to ICANN that I've had the chance to attend four ICANN meetings. But is this something that I can also extend to my fellow young people and young women in my country or globally? That's something that I wanted to bring to the attention. Thank you so much, Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Ihita. With this, we can open the floor for some comments. Ten minutes. I can see one hand. Anyone else who wants to speak to? I go with you, [inaudible], first and then second and third. Anyone behind, if you want to speak, you will have to come up.

TARUNA KAUR BAMRAH

Taruna Kaur Bamrah for the record, NextGen. Thank you, Ihita, for covering crucial insights and a wonderful discussion you've had. I was wondering through DNS Women's Regional Expertise, how might I can elevate youth-led storytelling repositories as piloted in the Delhi on Jan 14 during the Community Interaction Meeting, as well during the IGF Forum. I wanted to know that how can we

advance on to the WSIS+20 Action C2 for non-technical rural women that they could be understood in layman's term and be included into the digital futures. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you. We'll look at it that how can we demystify it with storytelling. And you want to make a comment?

MILLENIUM ANTHONY

Hello. Thank you. My name is Millenium Anthony. I am an ICANN85 Fellow. I wanted to ask a question. I currently work back home on an initiative that supports young women between 18 to 30 on STEM. Recently, our focus has been mostly making sure that these young women know ongoing initiatives and activities that are going on in the Internet ecosystem, including making sure that they know of the activities like the IGF and ICANN, of course.

And of course, in Tanzania, we have a lot of ongoing initiatives that aims to empower young women or women in terms of digital skills and all that. But the issue has been that most of these initiatives are always time-limited or just project-based. But I'm thinking now when we are moving to the next phase of the implementation of the WSIS+20 outcomes, what could we do better in this next phase that we don't just have these programs that end somewhere between like three months and then there's no follow-up after that. Of course, this next phase will actually require us to have a very strategic structure for us to implement the outcomes or anything

related that was stated in the WSIS+20 document that relates to women and all. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much, Millenium. And we had your hand and you. And then we'll take some responses.

JOYSA KAUSHIK

Good evening, everyone. My name is Joysa Kaushik for the record. And thank you for the insights by all the speakers here. I would like to appreciate the insights and the concerns raised by Fiona. Especially the financial one that if a woman needs a loan, then she requires the signature of her partner as well. For that, I would like to add that we can introduce in the education system more financial knowledge for women. Because according to my observations, I've noted down that women on their own don't take very much interest in the finance aspect because of lack of knowledge or inclusion in the courseware. And that's why they rely on the male relatives, be it father or husband. I think that's the point where we can start from, by introducing the finances and how to handle it at a very young stage. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much for your suggestion.

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[SANVI]

This is [Sanvi.] Studies show that around 97% of the teens use the Internet, yet I do not see any teens represented here today. In the ICANN Community or the Youth IGF, teen participation remains extremely negligible. The document presented today as a part of the WSIS+20 Review highlights the importance of youth inclusion. But in practice, many teenagers are not even aware of organizations like ICANN or even the WSIS process. My question is that how can we implement these mechanisms to spread awareness about these organizations to teens as well and include their voices? Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much for this. Can we have from our panelists or honorary members any show of hands who wants to take what... Judith, I see you're going first. Fiona, you have your hand. Ihita.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Sure. Addressing the teen question, within the IGF, there is a dynamic coalition on teens. You might be interested in looking at possibly joining that coalition. There're also teens in other ones. There was a gaming group of teens. For teens, we're talking about gaming on the Internet. There is a variety of different ones looking after us. I can share the other stuff offline. But there's a lot of different organizations that would like to have teens. Probably even in APRALO, you could have a teen ALS.

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AMRITA CHOUDHURY

So we have young people, but we take about 18, I think.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Addressing your issue about the storytelling, one of the things of the IGF, there's a policy network on meaningful access, and what that network is also looking at is not just connectivity, it's exactly what you were saying. How could we capture people's stories and other through storytelling or through other aspects of how do we capture different cultural or other experiences and translate them into the digital environment so we don't lose those important stories? You could look up on that and try to get interested in the policy network on meaningful access.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you. I do see we have five minutes, so I would ask everyone to be brief. I would not be able to take any comments, and Cheryl has her hand up. Cheryl, first you. I know you can be super brief. And then I'll go to Fiona, Ihita and—

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Thank you very much, Amrita. Look, just on the matter of the younger aspect of youth. Much of the issues of where certain ages block in or block out of involvement in different parts of this whole ecosystem is based on risk management. For example, ICANN, it's taken a position that sub-18s is an age that they will not take a risk for. But that doesn't mean that things that are complementary to policy, and particularly WSIS processes, may not be open and

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indeed more than welcoming for not just the teens, but even, dare I say, younger than teens. I've got a 10-year-old granddaughter who's a digital native and has been quite literally operating equipment since she was able to touch a keyboard. It's a matter of finding the right space for the right ages. But I think we need to strengthen or amplify the voices coming from those spaces into some of these policy areas. Thanks.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Cheryl. Could I request the interpreters for another seven minutes, if possible? Because we do have some interesting conversations. I know Fiona wants to speak, Ihita, and I want Catherine also to react.

FIONA ASONGA

Thank you so much. I'll be very brief. Millennium, I think I can help you with the way forward. There are programs on the continent that help and ensure that we don't just create awareness on technology, but we actually work on the groups that are working on getting these girls to use the skills and knowledge that we give them. On the side, let's have a discussion. But I think the bottom line is that we need to be intentional, whether it's the teenagers, whether it's the young girls, whether it's the women. Whatever age group we're looking at, we have to be very intentional in the action we take. And we cannot have everybody in the room.

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We need to be intentional enough to know that as we have conversations, we are also representing the views and opinions of the teenage girls, our daughters, our grandchildren, our younger sisters who cannot be in the room. And we need to also be cognizant and appreciate the support of men who help the she. And these are men who have enabled us to be where we are at. When we intentionally recognize their participation and their input in maybe the next DNS Women session, I suggest we have some men on the panel. Men who support women to talk about what they are doing and how they have done it and how they've gotten us to be where we are at. Being intentional is the end game. Thank you.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Thank you. [Sanvi], just to take your question, this is something that has come up quite recently also within the Youth IGF community. First thing is, I think, Cheryl has put it very rightly, the risk management and risk prioritization for us. Especially if you see all the community fellowships, there is an entry age gap of 18 because of travel and permissions. But if you look at the entire, especially the IGF model, etc., we are open to comments from individuals on the thematic space, the agenda curation. And once your inputs come in and you help us partner with schools and academic institutions, it helps us influence how we structure and curate these agendas. And in that, you also come and participate and structure the conversations that are happening in country and other places. This is a community bottom-up process. And I think,

this is what I wanted to highlight. Not just you, if any teens have any ideas, we're open to having more initiatives. Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you. And I'll go to you, Catherine. You've done a lot of gender related work. I knew you from that of that of yours. If you would like to comment.

CATHERINE ADEYA

Time has gone and so much has been said. To Fiona's point, Millennium, it's so much happening. I think what I find and Amrita knows about it from what I've done in the past is some of them are so siloed and we are not speaking to each other. Talk to Fiona on the side and I can also direct you to where you can go. I would have liked to speak on literally everything. We don't have time so we can continue to talk. But on the teen one, it's funny, I was talking about it today at tea break. I really appreciate you bringing it. Continue to bring such things on the floor. We may not have a structured way to do it, but it doesn't mean we ignore it.

I'm a parent. I'm a mother of two generations, 30 years old and teens. I took this today, the new gTLD, and I promised Bob Ochieng, I'm going to get my daughters to scan this, they're teenagers, and I'm going to pay them to tell me what they understand from this and I'm going to send him the video. Nothing stops us from starting to educate them early. Let's start preparing them. Let's volunteer. Then I'm going to get them to get a few of their friends to tell me



what they understand. And I'm going to pay them. Teenagers like money. Then we start preparing them so they understand what mommy does and all that. Let's just volunteer out there. Let's not wait until the 18, so by the time they're 18, they're already well-versed in what we are doing. Other people can join me on this initiative.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you so much for this. I know we are over time, but I would also like to point out to the people who were behind getting this session done. We have Laura here. We have Denise online. We have Natalia also here who have been working. And Gisella, of course, from staff. Gisella, if you would like to show your face and even Denise, that would be great. You all have been behind this session. I know we've not solved all the earth-shattering problems the world faces today, but we had some conversations which we can take forward and perhaps review what all we have done in some time ahead. Laura, you have some information to share.

LAURA MARGOLIS

Thank you, Amrita. First of all, I want to congratulate you once again for your award. Thank you all to all the speakers who were here today and to all the people who joined remotely. I would like to invite you all for a picture, as we usually do when Vanda is also here. I don't know where the photographer is, but after we end, please join us for the picture. And thank you all.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

What I would request is if we can have everyone online, if you can switch on your cameras and we can get a gallery view. We can stand there and have a photograph taken. So we'll have the online and the offline world together. And if you can have the agenda down. But thank you, everyone, for this session. Thank you, interpreters, for staying three minutes later. Adam, I will share your e-mail ID to Millenium. Thank you, everyone.

FIONA ASONGA

Amrita, thank you very much to you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Online folks, if you can just stay for some time, we will have you on the screen. And then we'll take the photograph. Gisella, would it be possible to have everyone shown on the screen and we take the photo?

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**