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## IGF 2021 IGF Best Practice Forums Template

- Proposals for the BPF should be submitted or seconded by at least one MAG member.
- MAG members submitting or seconding a proposal are expected to take on the role of MAG Facilitator should the MAG select the topic for a BPF.
- Proposals can be for new topics or topics that build on previous BPF work.
  
- Proposals are requested to provide answers to the six questions in the template.
- Please address elements noted on the last page of this document throughout your proposal.
- Proposals should be submitted to [reporting@intgovforum.org](mailto:reporting@intgovforum.org)
- Deadline **18 January 2021**

### IGF Best Practice Forums - definition and purpose

Best Practice Forums were introduced in 2014 as part of the intersessional program to complement the IGF community's activities and develop more tangible outputs to 'enhance the impact of the IGF on global Internet governance and policy'.<sup>1</sup>

**BPFs offer unique platforms for multistakeholder discussion on topics relevant to the future of the Internet, with the aim of facilitating dialogue and collecting emerging and existing practices to address specific issues or themes. BPFs foster a common understanding of the concrete policy challenges stakeholders may address in order to contribute to achieving the Internet policy goal the BPF is focussing on. The objective is not to develop new policies or practices, but rather to collect existing good practices, share positive and negative experiences, and flag challenges that require additional multistakeholder dialogue and/or require the attention of policymakers, including in specified decision-making bodies.**

BPFs typically work on less controversial topics for which the debate has sufficiently matured to make way for some general consensus in the community and the focus of discussions has shifted to implementation. Like other intersessional activities, BPF outcomes are designed to become robust resources, to serve as inputs into other pertinent forums, and to grow and evolve over time.

BPFs are in nature open, bottom-up, and collective processes. Their open and transparent working approaches aim at encouraging and gathering broad stakeholder input and their outcomes are intended to be community-driven, bottom-up, and a true reflection of the multistakeholder nature of the IGF's intersessional activities. Within these general principles BPFs have the freedom to define and delineate the parameters of their work in consultation with their respective multistakeholder communities; to define their own methodologies; and to tailor their work to the requirements of their theme's specific needs and requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> This intersessional programme was designed in accordance with the recommendations of a [2012 report](#) by the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)'s Working Group on IGF Improvements.

# Proposal for a 2021 Best Practice Forum

## 1. Title

Gender and Digital Rights (former Gender and Access)

## 2. Names of at least two Facilitators *(at least one of which is a MAG member).*

Chenai Chair (MAG Member)

Amrita Choudhury (MAG Member)

Bruna Martins dos Santos

Debora Albu

Marwa Azelmat

## 3. Background

*Indicate the relevance and suitability of the topic for a Best Practice Forum, and the relevance of this BPF for the wider multistakeholder Internet governance discussion, different stakeholder groups and/or decision-making bodies.*

Since its beginning in 2015, the Best Practice Forum (BPF) on Gender and Access has focused on different aspects of women's meaningful access to the Internet: online abuse and gender-based violence (2015); barriers for accessing the Internet (2016); identification of the needs and challenges of diverse women's groups with respect to Internet access (2017); the impact of supplementary models of connectivity on women's Internet access (2018); and opportunities and challenges that women face to gain skills to benefit from the the digital economy (2019) were the topics addressed by the community. The 2020 edition of the Best Practice Forum on Gender and Access focused on an assessment of the gender discussions at the Internet Governance Forum and how the forum has been addressing issues such as violence, harm, pleasure and/or consent. During these years, the BPF Gender has worked in a bottom-up process that allowed it to collect, from diverse stakeholders, valuable data and anecdotal evidence of the challenges that formed the digital gender gap. In this process something that has naturally emerged has been the evidence of lack of sufficient and meaningful participation of women and gender diverse people in the decision making process that at public and private level shape the governance of the Internet. We aim to connect the work done in the past years by the Gender and Access BPF through this fundamental piece looking transversally at the opportunities for strengthened participation of women and gender diverse people in internet-related policy processes and spaces.

## 4. Description:

*Topics covered, proposed objectives and focus of the BPF.*

As the phenomenon of disinformation advances, it gains nuances and levels of complexity that are worth exploring. Having this in mind, we propose to explore the concept of gendered disinformation, understanding its relation with online gender-based violence (GBV) and hate speech as well as its immediate effects on women and gender-diverse groups' existence online and their freedom of expression.

By acknowledging that some forms of expressions online are constantly controlled, surveilled and restricted online, one primal goal for this year's work of the BPF Gender is to understand how gendered disinformation has also been deployed as a strategy against women and gender diverse groups. In light of that, we intend to investigate possible perspectives and how it has been weaponized against these groups, as well as its correlation with other silencing tools.

It has been documented how disinformation has negative effects on digital rights of such groups, spilling over to other sets of rights such as political participation - as part of the larger political project of moral policing, censorship, and hierarchisation of citizenship and rights.

The main goal of the work is to map the strategies and actions adopted by governments and the private sector to halt the spread of gendered disinformation and build a less toxic online environment for female and gender diverse groups online. Additionally, this proposed assessment will also showcase positive initiatives deployed by stakeholders and set the beginning of what can be a long term multistakeholder dialogue on gendered disinformation. The output includes a final report which will address these issues, highlighting the best practices emerging from the mapping and draft policy recommendations for the consideration of multiple stakeholders.

## **5. Engagement and outreach plan**

*This should mention the anticipated engagement from different parts of the multistakeholder community, including the names of organisations which have signalled a desire to participate, and intended outreach to attract further involvement in the work of the BPF. Clearly indicate confirmed commitments.*

As in previous years, the BPF Gender will continue to focus on expanding its work beyond the BPF community to stimulate and expand collaboration with more stakeholders. We aim to:

- Improve engagement with relevant DCs - with special attention to the Dynamic Coalition on Gender and the Dynamic Coalition on Platform Responsibility -, foster a dialogue with the NRIs network and other inter-sessional activities;
- Outreach and engagement through various online platforms as identified as strategic (e.g., survey, twitter conversations, as well as sector-oriented webinars)
- Present the preliminary findings and outcomes on a verification workshop with identified actors working on the subject of gendered disinformation - e.g., Intermediaries such as social media companies, NGOs, research centers, Feminist and LGBTQ activists and Governments;
- Further collaboration with others (at the global, regional and national level) working in policy with a gender perspective from a feminist approach, to avoid duplicate work, to join efforts, to build a global network and to amplify messages.

## **6. Furthering the implementation of the IGF Mandate and UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation**

*Please provide some ideas on how you intend to respond to the calls for supporting a collaborative work environment (IGF Project Document) and to better integrate programme and intersessional policy development work (UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation art 93(e)), and the suggestions 'to build on and strengthen the existing Dynamic Coalitions and Best Practice Fora (...)' (Options Paper for the Future of Global Digital Cooperation).*

We believe the work of the Best Practice Forum on Gender and access has been fundamental to the incorporation of broader gender discussions at the Internet Governance Forum, as well as fostered the participation of women and gender-diverse groups in this arena. Despite of that, the 2020 intersessional report highlights in its key findings that the gender discussions conducted at the IGF are still largely focused on topics such as access and inclusion and that this community should encourage more discussions on pleasure and consent as well, as women's and gender-diverse people's experiences online are not and should not be limited.

To the extent that the Gendered Disinformation proposed debates are very connected with the UN Roadmap for Digital Cooperation's recommendations 3A/B (Digital Human Rights), we believe it can be an interesting improvement towards achieving the goal of better integrating the IGFs programme and intersessional policy development work to support other priority areas.



### *Criteria for the assessment of BPF Proposals*

To allow a swift selection process, it is recommended that proposals fully address the following elements. Please address them in your proposal where applicable (a more detailed description of the metrics can be found in the [BPF on BPFs report](#), chapter D, section c ).

#### *Relevance and suitability of the topic*

- Is the topic mature and does it allow for the collection of best practices?
- In what ways, is it still relevant and useful to collect best practices on this topic?
- Which are -in the global agenda- ongoing negotiations or debates or problems going on , which is their timeframe, and how could an IGF contribution be useful and appropriate.

#### *Community of interest*

- Will there be sufficient community interest and stakeholder involvement?
- Description of the community of interest and relevant stakeholder groups
- List of organisations, institutions, and networks they intend to invite or which have already committed to participate

#### *Metrics to evaluate the functioning of completed BPFs*

- minimum of 3 open virtual meetings;
- an active BPF mailing list (a minimum number of subscribers, a minimum amount of traffic);
- the BPF process is documented on the IGF website;
- a draft BPF output was published ahead of the IGF annual meeting, with the possibility for the community to provide feedback;
- a BPF session was organised at the annual IGF meeting;
- the BPF has published a final BPF output report

#### *Expected output and contribution to IG discussions and decision-making processes*

- BPF objective(s)
- Involvement of relevant organisations (topic leads or institutions)
- Involvement of experts and expert networks
- Enlarging the IGF footprint across sectors and regions
- Immediate relevance of BPF work for ongoing discussions elsewhere
- Building common ground
- Longer term contribution to IG(F) / BPF's ripple effect
- Planned Interaction and synergies with other IGF activities (including DCs, NRIs, Main sessions)