**APrIGF Delhi 2014**

**Workshop Summary Report**

**Date: 5 August 2014**

**Time: 11:00am – 12:30pm**

**Workshop Title: Towards a dynamic and active Asia-Pacific internet governance rights-based space with gender perspective**

**Reported by & Contact Email: Liza Garcia and Nica Dumlao, info@fma.ph**

**Moderators: Liza Garcia, Foundation for Media Alternatives**

**Panelists:**

1. **Dr. Anja Kovacs, Internet Democracy Project (India)**
2. **Maria Nica Dumlao, Foundation for Media Alternatives (Philippines)**
3. **Naomi Fontanos, GANDA Filipinas (Philippines)**
4. **Noelle Francesca de Guzman, Internet Society Asia-Pacific**
5. **Shahzad Ahmad, Bytes for All (Pakistan)**
6. **Salanieta Tamanikaiwamaro, Pasifika Nexus (Fiji)**
7. **Arthit Suriyawongkul, Thai Netizen Network (Thailand)**

**Brief summary of presentations and issues raised**

There are several global and regional spaces where internet governance and policy issues are discussed. But how are these translated and reflected locally, at the national level? In the Asia Pacific region, it would seem that countries experience a ‘disconnect’ between global internet policies and local legislation. Although there has been progress in discussion around human rights in cyberspace globally, local legislations continue to advocate restrictions in cyber freedoms. While there’s a great push globally to have a multi-stakeholder internet governance discourse, civil society still don’t get to play an active role in decision-making processes in regional and domestic internet governance spaces. They are underrepresented or not even present in these spaces. While women leaders are actively participating in global internet governance spaces, they are not really being heard. Gender inclusivity is still an issue that has to be further strengthened. The voices of many marginalized groups have still to be heard.

The workshop aimed to draw the current landscape of the struggle for an internet governance space, or an internet policy space in the region that incorporates a rights-based approach and has gender perspective, and also, to encourage and strengthen further cooperation among stakeholders in the region (for these rights to be realized). To shed light on these, representatives from seven organizations based in different Asia-Pacific regions shared their country experiences in dealing with Internet policy and governance.

Anja Kovacs gave a general description of women’s participation in internet governance spaces. While there are many women participating in these spaces, they remain in the sidelines. There is a limited gender space, as well as social justice space. At the region, there is a need for a stronger reflection on these.

Sala Tamanikaiwaimaro also talked about the need for a gender and rights based approached to internet governance in the region. She cited the existing digital and gender divide in terms of women’s access to ICT, as well as gender indicators in ICT for the Pacific. She highlighted the importance of an equitable ICT in the region that has a gender lens in terms of policies, framework and measures.

Nica Dumlao presented how activists in the Philippines struggled for the repeal of the anti-cybercrime law and succeeded in having the Supreme Court declare a temporary restriction order on it. Recently, that the said law was upheld by the country’s Supreme Court, although there were some provisions that were taken down since they were deemed unconstitutional. Nica concluded that anti-cybercrime laws, as experienced in the Philippines, only focus on criminalization and stifle human rights. She said there is a need to push for and advocate to uphold and promote rights in cyberspace to counter such restrictive laws.

Arthit talked about the changes in the information and communications policy in Thailand after the coup. He talked about censorship of speech, blocking of social media sites and surveillance. The ICT department was even placed under the police. Art concluded that if the national government can’t function, regional and economic cooperation/organizations can play a role in exposing repressive regimes and helping promote freedom.

Shahzad Ahmad talked about the emerging trend of online violence in Pakistan, including hate speech aimed at certain groups. According to him, not much is being done in terms of strategies and redress, with the government not providing enough protection. He cited the efforts of Bytes for All to address these challenges. This include awareness raising, campaigns, and capacity-building efforts.

Naomi Fontanos’ presentation focused on (trans)gender equality in the time of the Internet and how the Internet brings power, pleasure and pain to rights-based work. She said that the development of discourses around sexuality, gender and human rights remain markedly uneven around the world and that the Internet is one arena where this uneven-ness finds expression. As such, it is both a “push” and a “pull” for human rights activism in the region and issues of policy and access definitely impact on it as an extension of advocacy offline.

Noelle de Guzman talked about ISOC’s project on ICT and women empowerment in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. She said it is not enough to make women use the computer, but there is a need to equip women with skills and tools for them to access entrepreneurship trainings and marketing strategies to help them.

**Conclusion & Further Comments:**

**The following are the conclusions reached in the workshop:**

* Human rights should be at the core in internet governance discussions
* The APrIGF should be a genuine and inclusive multi-stakeholder space, a space to push for the human rights agenda
* Public policies governing cyberspace (be it national, regional or global) should reflect the interests of the people, especially the marginalized (including the youth, women, persons with disabilities, migrants, etc.)
* There is a need for a more active participation of women and other marginalized sectors in the different spaces, meaning they should be able to speak in the available spaces and not just remain in the sidelines. One constraint is the availability of funding for these groups to participate. At the local or national level, it may mean organizing similar spaces to reach out to a larger population and encourage more participation.
* Need to raise awareness on the issues emerging in the internet, through campaigns, capacity-building, skills training, etc.