**APrIGF Delhi 2014**

**Workshop Summary Report**

**Date:** August 6, 2014

**Time:** 10.30am

**Workshop Title:** *Multi-stakeholder Governance: The Way Ahead (Workshop No. 18)*

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**Moderators:** Prof. Ang Peng Hwa (Nanyang Technical University) & Geetha Hariharan (CIS)

**Panelists:** Dr. Govind (NIXI), Dr. Arvind Gupta (National Technology Head, BJP), Dr. Anja Kovacs (Internet Democracy Project), Mr. Parminder Jit Singh (IT for Change) & Mr. Rajnesh Singh (ISOC)

**A brief summary of presentations (If any)**

e.g. Title & summary

No presentations were given.

**A substantive summary and the main issues that were raised:**

The discussion began with Prof. Ang Peng Hwa providing a brief background to multi-stakeholderism in Internet governance discussions. Dr. Govind highlighted the need for different multi-stakeholder approaches for different issues in Internet governance. He raised issues of cyber-security and the need to create an environment of trust in cyberspace, emphasizing goals of free flow of access to information, innovation and inbound investment. Multi-stakeholderism is not, he noted, a one-stop-shop solution in Internet governance. Adding to Dr. Govind’s call for greater involvement by India, Dr. Arvind Gupta spoke of the need for inter-ministerial consensus on positions, and the imperative for a focus on the user-base when constructing multi-stakeholder models of governance for the Internet. He noted that the thin line between censorship and governance, to ensure information-sharing and free flow of information, ought to be carefully monitored.

Mr. Parminder Jit Singh cut across this discussion by clarifying that proponents speak of very different models when advocating multi-stakeholder models of Internet governance. This definitional confusion and cross-talk needs to be directly addressed. It is necessary, he said, to consider the importance of Internet governance from a global, regional as well as national standpoint, and the question of corporate equal footing ought to be vigorously contested and clarified. Dr. Rajnesh Singh picked up the issue of corporate capture of policy-making, and traced history of civil society participation in global forums – from restricted privileges in the United Nations to equal footing at NETmundial (but some were more equal than others), the manner in which stakeholders speak to each other has altered over the years. There is now a need to promoted greater stakeholder-engagement in matters of Internet governance.

Dr. Anja Kovacs stated that notwithstanding concerns of legitimacy and representativeness, it is undeniable that the multi-stakeholder model is the first such model where civil society is guaranteed a seat at the table, in Internet governance. Whether we like it or not, businesses usually have a seat, formally or informally (through corporate lobbies). But there is actually no deeper truth to Internet governance models and definitions – we are in the process of building a governance model. A glace at ¶34 of the Tunis Agenda (working definition of Internet governance) indicates this – we are trying to construct a normative framework together. But the Tunis Agenda creates a hierarchy among stakeholders, which is problematic for civil society as sometimes, we are experts, while at others, we represent users or other disempowered groups. The important thing is to create a working, representative model, and not to get caught up in definitions.

Following a highly interactive audience discussion, panelists noted that transparency and accountability were imperative in multi-stakeholder models, but at the same time recognized that the debate about multi-stakeholder models is evolving and will continue for a foreseeable future.

**Conclusion & Further Comments:**

The discussion on multi-stakeholderism was extremely engaging, open and informative. We believe, however, that prescribing specific questions (perhaps crowd-sourced, as feedback from Mr. Rajnesh Singh later indicated) to be discussed may have lent greater focus and depth to the discussion.