In The Name of God

Event report

Internet Governance Forum (IGF);

Critical Reflections on the Global Internet Governance

August 2023

About D4G lab

The government is crucial in promoting digital economy development, particularly in creating a favorable environment for ICT infrastructure development and digital innovation. And this is exactly the missing point regarding the interventions adopted by the European and U.S. governance regimes with development issues, especially within the technology field. The orchestration among national regulators, the private sector, SMEs, and academia is vital to producing workable governance arrangements.

“In the current political order of the digital world, which has automatically turned all people into digital citizens of American platforms by default, we must establish a third way for the new generation of young people in the EU beyond the borders of US technology giants to bring about its navigation.” said the President of France – Emmanuel Macron – at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2018.

An essential feature of emerging and evolving communication and information technologies is that they transcend the boundaries of national sovereignty and change the common areas of authority of public, private, and social institutions. In this way, creating a sense of insecurity and trying to empower modes of governance institutions and the concern of making a profit and increasing economic productivity in entrepreneurs and private sector activists creates a dichotomy; This conflict is global today, and all countries and national and international businesses are involved in it in some way.

The Data for Governance Lab (D4G-Lab) seeks to establish a link between national entrepreneurs and public institutions to foster technological innovation without the need for direct state funding, aiming for competitive and scalable markets. As a missionary watchword, “Let our national sovereignty map its own territory.”

D4G-Lab is a specialized think tank in the cyber policy and digital economy field, focusing on policy solutions to systematically and effectively reduce the digital gap and inequality and develop inclusive and grassroots digital literacy, in the era of disruptive technologies and the transition to web 2.0 and web 3.0, as its devoted mission.

Event Report

IGF; Critical Reflections on the Global Internet Governance

Regional and international organizations and summits in the field of cyberspace governance have a unique opportunity to present new ideas of Internet governance in this field and provide maximum participation capacity and create bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other countries. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is one of the international forums under the United Nations, which is held every year in one of the member countries, about the emerging challenges and issues of Internet and cyberspace governance, with an emphasis on a multi-stakeholder approach.

The expert and scholars have different opinions and analyses about Internet Governance Forum. Some experts consider this forum an ineffective show of global participation in the field of Internet governance and consider as a pointless thing that isn't worth the effort. While some other experts see this forum as an opportunity to design and present new ideas and activate real cooperation capacities and create new and effective coalitions about global Internet governance.

For this purpose, Data for Governance Laboratory (D4G Lab) with the participation of a group of related elite think tanks in Iran, including Sharif Governance and Policy Think Tank (GPTT), Faculty of Culture and Communication of Imam Sadiq University (ISU), Borhan company, Zavieh Research Group and Hatef Think Tank, organized an event with Title "Internet Governance Forum IGF; Critical Reflections on the Global Internet Governance" on August 29, 2023. A group of officials, experts and researchers in the field of cyber diplomacy, internet governance and digital economy attended this event, which was held with the aim of analyzing the historical dimensions and evaluating the opportunities and challenges of this forum.

This event was held in two panels, including one panel with the presence of researchers, experts and representatives of the elite think tanks and a specialized panel with the presence of experts, officials and professors of this field. Dr. Hossein Mirzapour (Adviser for Strategic and International Affairs to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology), Dr. Seyed Mohammad Sadeq Emamian (Advisor for Cyberspace Regulatory Affairs to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology), Dr. Mojtaba Tavangar (Representative of the Islamic Parliament), Dr. Hatef Rasouli (CEO of Borhan Company), Dr. Mohammad Baqer Asghari (information technology law expert and legal technology entrepreneur), Dr. Mousavi (Advisor to the Minister of Communications and

Information Technology on Women's Affairs), Dr. Jalili (researcher in the field of Internet governance), Dr. Mohammad Keshvari (expert in the field of cyberspace) , Mohammad Mahdi Habibi (Member of the Board of Directors of Pak Cyberspace Developers Association), Amin Zadeh Hossein (Director of Zavieh Research Group), Amir Mohammadi Doost (Researcher in Cyberspace Governance), Mohammad Amin Ghasemi (PhD Student of Culture and Communication) and Ehsan Amini (Scientific Secretary of Event and Cyber Diplomacy Project Manager in Data for Governance Lab) were among the guests and speakers of this event.

The main topics discussed in this event included the following:

- The importance and necessity of cyber diplomacy for Iran;
- Investigation of regional and international organizations and summits in the field of cyberspace;
- The history and position of the Internet Governance Forum in the global governance of internet;
- Future prospects of the Internet Governance Forum; let it keep going of the current process or structural reform;
- Exploring the experience of Iranian participants in the Internet Governance Forum;
- Addressing different critics and viewpoints on Iran's participation in the Internet Governance Forum;
- The recommendations of Iran's active role in the Internet Governance Forum;
- Activating the parliamentary track of the Internet Governance Forum;
- Facilitating the participation of academics, private sector and non-governmental organizations of Iran in regional and international organizations and summits.

At the beginning of the first panel, Ehsan Amini, the secretary of the event, spoke about the importance of cyber diplomacy and its place for the future of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The review of documents such as the “General Policies of Computer Information Networks” was announced in 1998 and also the “Strategic Document of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Cyberspace” approved by the Supreme Council of Cyberspace in 2022 was among the issues raised by him. He further listed the Internet Governance Forum as one of the capacities in which Iran can play a role in starting its cyber diplomacy.

The experts in the first panel discussed the urgent to promote Iran's cyber diplomacy, the activities of other countries in this field, the capacity of international and regional organizations and summits such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ECO, BRICS, etc. In the following, the history of the Internet Governance Forum and its formation in 2003 to 2005 were explained by experts. They stated that cyberspace is not just a technical issue and has various social, legal and political dimensions that we need to comprehensively examine in national and international cyberspace agenda.

مجمع حکمرانی اینترنت (IGF)
نمایشی بی حاصل یا بستری فرصت‌آفرین
IGF

At the end of the first panel, the experts highlighted the necessity of active participation in international and regional organizations and forums by listing the benefits of participation in the coalitions such as promoting soft power, improving the image of Iran's cyberspace governance in the world, and an opportunity to present alternative models for IG. They also suggested the empowering of university, non-governmental and private sector capacities and the creation of effective coalitions as suggested strategies for Iran's active role in the Internet Governance Forum.

Dr. Hossein Mirzapour, the secretary of the second panel, pointed out the different minimal and maximal views that exist in Iran towards international forums and explained the advantages and disadvantages of multi-stakeholder views in international forums.

In addition, Dr. Mohammad Emamian emphasized that Iran should not be absent in international forums due to the “wise men’s silences,” since nevertheless, it has no choice but to live and act within the existing global order and also there are visible fragmentations in the US-led world order.

In the second panel, experts discussed various aspects of Iran's interactions with international organizations. These aspects encompassed Iran's limited involvement in the Internet Governance Forum, the importance of the nation's autonomous decision-making concerning its role in the Forum, and the development of a strategic, enduring perspective on cyber diplomacy in Iran.

The experts continued to provide recommendations and solutions in order to make maximum use of international forums and organizations in the field of cyberspace, including the Internet Governance Forum, and help address these challenges and even nudge major players toward a greater consensus. Maximizing the use of academic and research collections to express and promote international cyberspace issues and dialogue between organizations and institutions in this field was one of the suggestions made in the second panel.

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