

# **An overview of internet governance**

African School of Internet  
Governance

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# What I will try to cover...

A bit of history

Definitions and scope of IG

Key concepts associated with IG

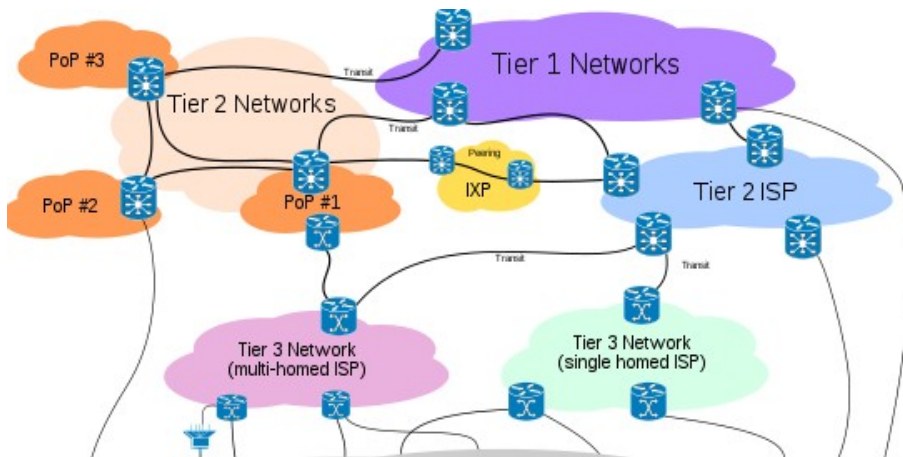
Current debates and processes

The Internet Governance Forum

Digital governance vs. internet governance

# What is the internet?

IS IT ... ?



OR IS IT ... ?



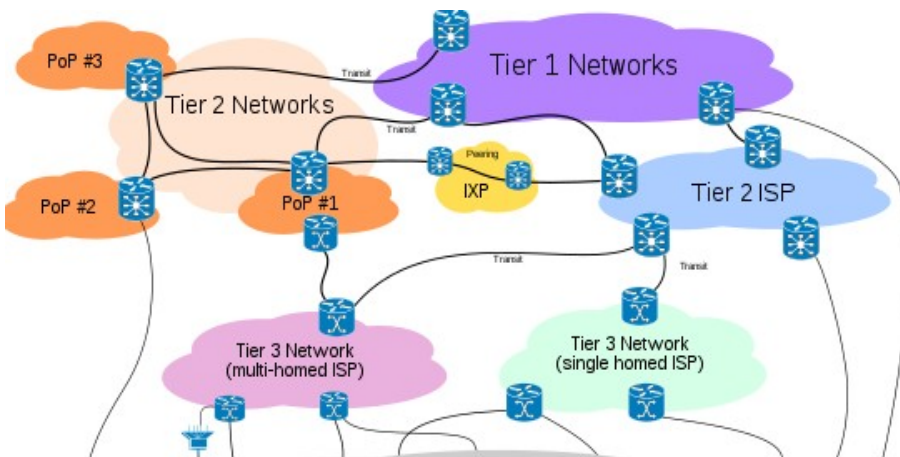
A network of autonomous networks of computing devices, which share the same core protocols enabling them to interoperate regardless of the endpoint applications and devices.

**What is the internet?**

# What is internet governance?

GOVERNANCE OF THE INTERNET  
ITSELF

GOVERNANCE THAT CONCERNS  
THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNET





## **IG narrow definition**

The handling of technical coordination required for, and policy issues related to, the interoperability and smooth functioning of the different components of internet infrastructure and the exchange of information/contents over the Internet.

## **Narrow definition - institutions**

**Internet Engineering Task Force:** architecture and hundreds of protocols including: TCP, IP, UDP

**W3C:** World Wide Web Consortium - application-layer standards for the Web

**ITU:** International Telecommunications Union - Spectrum & digital migration


**IEEE:** Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - Ethernet LAN & Wi-Fi standards

ICANN, Internet Society (ISOC) and in Africa...

AfTLD – African Top Level Domain Association

ccTLDs – country code top level domain associations

AfriNIC – African Network Information Centre



## **Narrow definition - issues**

Internet logical resources

Globally unique identifiers such as  
IP addresses

Domain name system

Autonomous system numbers

IPV4 numbers running out and  
IPV6 adoption

# WSIS UN approach

## **World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005) outcomes**

Broad definition of IG and multistakeholder approach and annual IGF

Human rights oriented and people-centered

Stakeholders to be included and have respective roles and responsibilities (not very clearly defined).

Technical coordination to continue to be lead by technical organisations.

Governments: to be involved on an “equal footing” with one another and “enhanced cooperation” to be addressed.

## **WSIS ten year review 2015 outcomes**

IGF renewal, focus on women, affirmed broad definition and multistakeholder approach. Requested more work on enhanced cooperation.

**Next review in 2025**

**Also relevant, the Global Digital Compact of 2024**



**WGIG: broad  
definition  
accepted and  
used by UN –  
Tunis Agenda**

“Internet governance is the development and application by governments, private sector and civil society in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.”

WGIG report and Tunis Agenda, 2005



# **Broad approach institutions / processes**

## **National**

Telecoms regulators (e.g. NTRA in Egypt) - Law enforcement agencies -

Ministries of information and communication, finance, foreign affairs, security, science and technology, education

Civil society organisations/movements - Trade unions

Research institutions - Courts

## **Global**

United Nations agencies: UNESCO, UNDP, ITU, WIPO, HRC - Industry bodies (e.g. Facebook Oversight Board and Internet Service Providers Associations - ISPA)

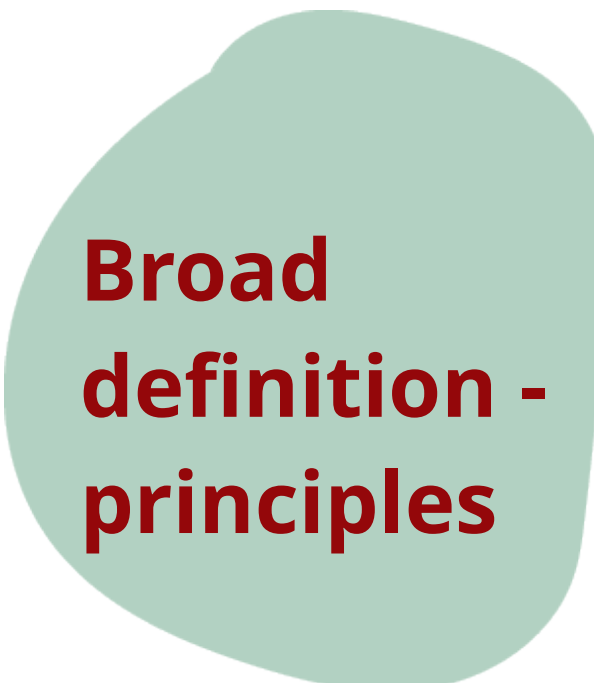
Cybercrime Treaty

## **Regional**

African Union Commission - African Commission on Human and People's Rights – Regional Economic Commissions

African IGF - North African IGF

Malabo Convention – African Continental Free Trade Area



## **Broad definition - principles**

**WSIS principles** of participation, people-centred development and human rights

**netMundial.br** IG principles - statement of 2014 - captures the consensus but has no formal status

### **International human rights standards**

Treaties and Human Rights Council Resolutions

African Commission's "Declaration on Freedom of Expression"

### **Cybersecurity norms**

Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace

UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE)

### **Global Digital Compact**

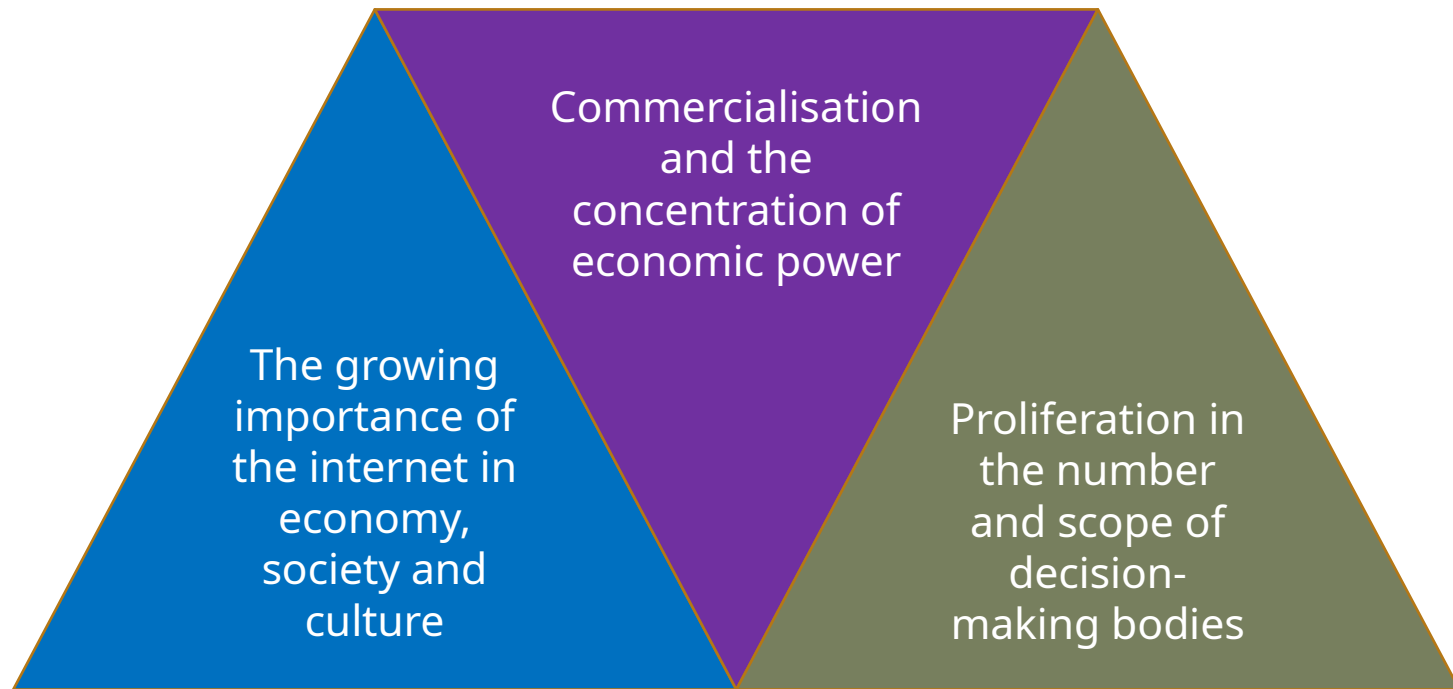
Part of the Summit of the Future in September 2024

# Broad definition issues

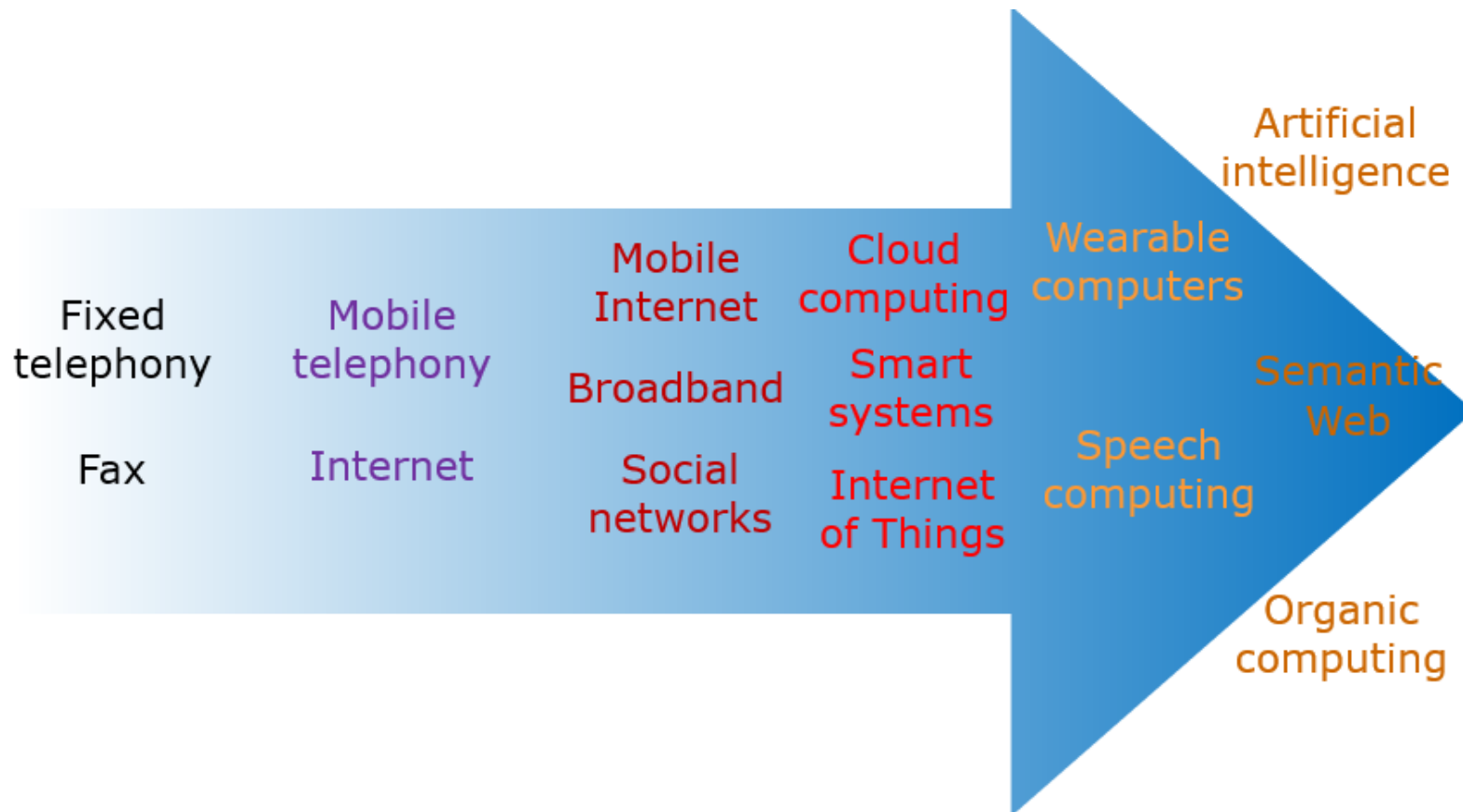
Human rights – Freedom expression  
and association AND economic and  
cultural rights - Access - Data  
transfers, trade - Competition  
regulation - Security and stability of  
infrastructure - Privacy and data  
protection - Liability of intermediaries -  
Surveillance by states and by  
companies - Misinformation and  
abuse – Elections – Trade - Internet  
shutdowns – Gender equality

... and more

# Three critical changes in the ecosystem of the internet



# The internet as part of digitilisaion



# The concentration of digital power



**NETFLIX**



**Microsoft**

# Current IG concerns

The pace of change and changing nature of the internet: scale and technology

The internet as part of digitalisation

The concentration of digital power and digital geopolitics CHINA vs US

Multilateralism and multistakeholderism and participation in decision-making – NETmundial +10 Sao Paulo Guidelines

Environmental sustainability

Cybersecurity... peace.. war... conflict between countries – the challenge of attribution... destruction of infrastructure e.g. in Gaza

The future of regulation (permissionless innovation and the precautionary principle) **CONTENT and Artificial Intelligence**

**WHAT IS MISSING?**

# The Internet Governance Forum

## [intgovforum.org](http://intgovforum.org)

An outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society 2005

A forum for dialogue, debate and information exchange among all stakeholder groups from around the world – linked to the UN but not overseen by UN member states

Organised by a Multistakeholder Advisory Group together with a UN Secretariat and a host country

“Bottom-up” approach

Evolved into more than an event with intersessional work + national and regional and youth events

Includes more than 135 NRIs, 20 Dynamic Coalitions and policy networks and Best Practice Forums

Renewal of mandate in 2025

# The Internet Governance Forum going forward...

Growth and diversification of the internet governance space

MAG Working Group on IGF Strategy and Strengthening

Global Digital Compact

WSIS review and IGF renewal? 2025

The IGF as a process and an “institution:

- Why is it so important?
- What is needed for it to survive and thrive?



**Next steps on  
your journey  
to being part  
of internet  
governance  
processes**

**Understand how the internet works**

IG is about policy, but you HAVE TO understand how the internet works and is managed and developed

**Know your local environment - people, processes, institutions, issues**

Legislation and regulation

Institutions from all stakeholder groups (gov, business, civil society, technical community)

Individuals

What are the main internet policy issues in North Africa? And in your country, specifically?

**Get involved**

IGF, ICANN, ISOC, national policy processes, in your sector or stakeholder group

**Thank you!**

**Now it is your turn to talk :)**