

AfriSIG 2019 m17m (multistakeholderism)¹ Practicum: An architecture for global digital cooperation²

Practicum: **noun:** (noun): a period of practical experience undertaken as part of an academic course.

Purpose:

To give fellows a chance to experience multistakeholder decision making in a realistic simulated environment using available methods and processes, while discussing a current issue of importance to internet governance.

At AfriSIG 2019, the fellows will focus on the implementation of some of the aspects of the report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation: The Age of Digital Interdependence.

Issue

In July 2018, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres [established the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation](#) (HLPDC) to advance proposals on strengthening cooperation in the digital space among governments, the private sector, civil society, international organisations, academia, the technical community and other relevant stakeholders. The panel consisted of 20 members that were intended to represent a cross-section of expertise from various stakeholder groups.

On 10 June 2019, the High-level Panel (HLP) submitted their report, [The Age of Digital Interdependence](#), to the Secretary-General. The report, among other findings, focuses on the architecture for global digital cooperation (Chapter 4) and the role of the UN in the proposed models of architecture.

The plot

In each of the UN regions, a panel has been convened by the UN Secretary-General to identify the next steps in the implementation of the proposals of the HLP report. The participants in AfriSIG 2019 practicum are invited to play the roles of the members of the African Implementation Panel of the HLP report. The main task of the African Implementation Panel is to find ways to implement the Architecture for Global Digital Cooperation based on the findings of the report. The outcome requested is a document with recommendations from the African Implementation Panel of the HLP Report that shall include the following elements:

- General reflections on the report and the report's recommendations (chapter 5).
- Recommendation on which model (or a combination thereof) from section 4.2 of chapter 4 of the report is the most feasible for implementation from an African perspective. The decision has to briefly outline the reason(s) for choosing the model.
- Recommendations on the role for the UN in the chosen model.
- Recommendation on the sources for sustainable funding for the functioning of the chosen model.
- Recommendation on how to ensure effective participation of African stakeholders in the future of digital cooperation.

Stakeholders

Fellows role assignment

In the practicum, participants have been named to the African Implementation Panel of the HLP report. Each participant will be a specialist and have a specific role to play.

¹ This is a numeronym. There are 17 letters between the first and last m. Another numeronym is m14r where there are 14 letters between the "m" and the "r" in "multistakeholder".

² This document can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xcwbydrhj0nGGGTj7urG9F5_8Uf59cNIBpbP9qsbrK8/edit?usp=sharing). It may be updated during the course of the programme with additional information. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xcwbydrhj0nGGGTj7urG9F5_8Uf59cNIBpbP9qsbrK8/edit?usp=sharing

A sign-up sheet will be available for fellows to choose a specific role, such as the representative of a country, a business or a civil society organisation. There will also be a few media roles. In signing up for a role, please do not just pick the role you currently have in real life, but pick something aspirational or something you would just like to try for a week. After picking the role, it is your responsibility to do some research, from the readings, online and in consultation with available faculty, to determine the positions that someone in that role might take in these discussions.

Whatever role the fellows choose, the main requirement is that they do their best to represent the interests of their perceived stakeholder types as they understand them. Any “backstory” a fellow wishes to create for their character is up to them. Just find a probable narrative for your life story and make it reasonable. You do not need to reveal this to your fellow participants, though you may. The main purpose of the personal backstory is to give you the ability to play the role you have signed up for.

Each individual participant is free to negotiate positions and create “alliances” concerning negotiating positions. Participants are free to form groups, dissolve groups, or avoid grouping. While some of the practicum sessions will be stakeholder group oriented, participants are not limited to only working within their assigned stakeholder groups. This is an exercise, so both fellows and faculty should stretch, and have fun with it.

Faculty role assignment

Several of the faculty will have been asked to co-chair the practicum. Their roles will include chairing plenary sessions and working with the fellows to achieve consensus on an outcome. One of the co-chairs will be asked to coordinate the efforts of the chairs with the secretariat.

Chair: Anriette Esterhuysen

Co-chair (business): Lawrence Olewale Roberts

Co-chair (civil society): Koliwe Majama

Co-chair (government and IGO) : Palesa Legoze

Co-chair (technical community): Bob Ochieng

The co-chairs will also act as advisors on the project and can help facilitate the self-organisation of participants. Other faculty will be available for consultation as needed. Some faculty may be asked to take on key stakeholder roles.

The secretariat is there to help the participants with the work of the practicum. They will lead one working session in the drafting of the practicum report. They are:

Leila Nachawati

Valeria Betancourt

Veronica Ferarri

Methods

- Breakfast/lunch: Tables will be set aside for project work. Fellows can use these tables either for general discussion on the project issues or they can self-organise them along with groups or alliances as they wish.
- Fellows to meet as necessary during off-meeting times.
- Co-chairs will work to help bring the participants to a satisfactory consensus, if possible.
- Advisors and other faculty will be available to assist and advise but will not direct the participants.

- Any group that is formed can self-organise to do its own work as it sees fit.
- The secretariat will provide a template for the draft outcome document.

Schedule

Wednesday

19:30: Introduction: Setting the scene, presenting the case and sign-up for roles.

Thursday

- **SESSION 2:** Introduction to practicum
- After dinner, participants, organised along stakeholder groupings, will meet with co-chairs to discuss the issues. Participants can form teams to work on drafting a first position. A template will be available for these position statements.

Friday

- Individual discussions among the fellows continue during the day, whenever possible, such as at lunch and breaks.
- 20:00-20:45: Stakeholder gatherings with the co-chairs to review position statements and prepare for first plenary.
- 21:00-22:00: First plenary:
 - Stakeholder groups share position statements they have developed and briefly discuss initial commonalities and differences.
 - Path to consensus discussed.

Saturday

- 20:00: Working plenary: Work together to come to a single statement.

Sunday:

- Final Plenary: Review, discuss and make final consensus determination.

Session descriptions

Wednesday, 4 September

On the first evening, after a brief introduction (goal of the role play and issue description), participants will be invited to pick from the available roles on the sign-up sheet.

Thursday, 5 September

There will be a 30-minute session giving further details on the practicum and answering any questions the participants may have. The work and plan of the practicum starts in earnest at this point. Participants will have roles that they should start performing.

Any fellows who have not yet signed up for a participant role must choose one of the remaining available roles at this time.

During the day, especially at meals, participants are invited to form groupings according to their interests, to start discussing the HLP report. Meetings in smaller sub-groups on Thursday will provide participants with the possibility to discuss the details of the issues. Participants and participant groups should feel free to consult faculty members and co-chairs about any questions they may have related to the HLP report. They should consult secretariat members about any questions they may have with the process.

During the evening discussion session, the three stakeholder groups will be gathered together by the co-chairs. The purpose of these informal sessions will be to cover the five questions to be explored:

recommendations, the model, the role of the UN, financing, and how to ensure African participation. For those participants who have volunteered for one of the non-stakeholder group roles, such as the media roles, they should feel free to join any of the stakeholder groups, or to wander among the groups, just as members of the press are given to doing.

Friday, 6 September

The participants should continue independent discussions during the day, whenever possible, such as at meals and during breaks.

In the first of the evening sessions, the stakeholders will meet with the co-chairs to review position statements and prepare for the first plenary.

The second session of the evening will be the first plenary chaired by the co-chairs together. This meeting will be run to resemble a UN working group meeting of experts. The secretariat will explain the way the meeting is to be run at the start of the meeting.

Once the co-chairs have given a short introduction to the meeting and its goals, each stakeholder group will be given the chance to present their initial position statement. After the stakeholder groups have presented their positions, any independent groups that may have formed will also be given a chance to present position statements.

The plenary will then begin the discussion of commonalities and differences with the time remaining in the meeting.

One of the outcomes of this meeting is expected to be a plan for combining the various positions into a consensus statement.

Saturday, 7 September

Discussion among participants should continue during the day on creating the common consensus statement. At the evening working session the secretariat and other faculty will work with the participants to complete a draft of a common statement. It is not necessary at this point that there be consensus on everything. Where there are differences of viewpoint, those will be noted in the draft by the secretariat for further discussion. There should be two outcomes from this meeting:

- A basic draft of the common statement
- An understanding of which issues need further discussion during Sunday.

Sunday, 8 September

Discussion among participants should continue during the day to resolve differences.

The participants are expected to work in their various subgroups on the issues, including the outcomes from the Saturday meetings, in preparation for the evening's final session. The chairs and other faculty will be available to help in discussions. This is the day for finding the consensus points and for negotiations and bargaining. Fellows can use the day for bilateral and multilateral discussions.

A final plenary will be held on Sunday. This will be devoted to completing the work on the outcome document with a recommendation on the three issues of the assignment: The four co-chairs will work with the plenary of participants to find consensus.

References

- The Age of Digital Interdependence. Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation: <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf>
- Announcement: United Nations Secretary-General Appoints High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation: https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/HLP-on-Digital-Cooperation_Press-Release.pdf