

2010 Asia Declaration on Internet Governance

“[The IGF is] multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic, and transparent.”
- 2005 Tunis Agenda

“We declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society... the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development [and...] that democracy, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as good governance at all levels are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.”
- 2003 Declaration of Principles of World Summit on Information Society.

On the occasion of the first [Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum \(APrIGF\) Roundtable](#) in Hong Kong on June 15-16, 2010, we, civil society representatives from eight Southeast Asian countries, call on the [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#) and its Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) to fully uphold these aforementioned commitments and principles, as mandated by the United Nations Secretary-General.

We applaud the work of the first APrIGF towards building multi-stakeholder discussion on internet governance. In this vein of inclusive dialogue, we offer the following perspectives and recommendations to the MAG meeting in Geneva at the Palais des Nations on June 28-29, as well as for the fifth annual IGF meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania on September 14-17, 2010.

Key Observations of the APrIGF

In response to the first Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (APrIGF) Roundtable in Hong Kong on June 15-16, 2010, we, netizens, journalists, bloggers, IT practitioners and non-governmental representatives from across Southeast Asia, offer the following observations from the Roundtable:

1. Critical issues of internet governance in Asia should guide future discussions on internet governance policy:

Openness

Open access to information is the right of every individual, a right that is fundamental to knowledge- and capacity-building. Access to information ultimately helps foster creativity and innovation, thus promoting sustainable human and economic development. Openness is key to a democratic and open society. Restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression online, such as state censorship that blocks Internet intermediaries, is one of the threats to open societies. Intimidation and state censorship facilitate self-censorship, a hazardous social phenomenon that further undermines democracy and openness.

Access

The internet is for everyone; it is a public good. Yet a Digital Divide between those countries and communities with internet access and those without persists, and has not been sufficiently addressed in discussions on internet governance. Proceedings at the APrIGF indicated a higher priority must be placed on addressing not only the global digital divide, but also regional and national ones. While Singapore enjoys high Internet access rates (70% penetration), countries like Burma and Cambodia are at the other end of the spectrum (0.22% and 0.51% penetration, respectively), ranking among the lowest of 200 countries surveyed by the [World Bank](#).

Internet access is fundamental for progress. Various factors, such as political, economic and social

development, poverty levels, and technological infrastructure affect whether and how often people can access the internet. Internationally coordinated efforts must be made to address domestic policies that contribute to the digital divide in Southeast Asia and find solutions to bridge the gap.

Cyber Security

Definition of cyber security must include elements that address right to privacy and civil and political freedom.

An individual's right over his/her own privacy, including personal data and information, must not be sacrificed in the name of security. Information technology, such as IPv6, ZigBee, RFID, when used without transparent and accountable oversight, could pose threats to individual rights.

Today's information society connects personal IT devices directly to the outside world, no longer storing personal data on a single server. Given the involvement of the government and businesses (especially state-owned enterprises) in running such technologies, surveillance and identity theft remain a constant threat against Internet users.

In this regard, any national security policy must not deviate from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all international human rights covenants to which states are parties.

2. Opportunities exist to continue to improve the IGF Process:

Awareness of the IGF in Southeast Asia and at the ASEAN level is presently lacking. Furthermore, Asia-Pacific-wide representation of civil society at the APrIGF Roundtable was incomplete. There exists a need not only to develop awareness about the IGF, but also to provide learning materials to make the IGF accessible to all. Greater access to the IGF would help make it more inclusive with various stakeholders, including those from the least developed nations and marginalized and vulnerable groups in Asia-Pacific.

During the APrIGF Roundtable, an open dialogue and two-way exchange of information and ideas was not fully facilitated. Open space to discuss and articulate criticism and suggest solutions must be guaranteed in all IGF events. Such an effort provides practical benefit to Internet users, both present and future, when the outcome of the APrIGF Roundtable is developed into a roadmap. Clarifying and planning the roles of local, national, regional and international multi-stakeholders, will help promote and protect transparent and democratic Internet governance and hence information societies in the region.

Requests to the IGF

The first APrIGF presented a valuable opportunity to analyze both the issues upon which the IGF focuses and the process by which it is governed. With respect to these priority issues and opportunities for improved processes, we therefore recommend the following:

1. Immediately address as an urgent global internet governance issue the increasing implementation of laws that suppress and restrict freedom of expression and access to information, especially within developing countries;
2. Fully integrate the universal human rights agenda into IGF programs and engage systematically and regularly with the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression and the UN Human Rights Council;
3. Ensure that the IGF policy proposals and recommendations are in line with international human rights principles and standards;
4. Strengthen the IGF's multilateralism and openness in the upcoming fifth annual IGF meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania in September and future IGFs
5. Extend the mandate of the IGF for another five years;
6. Conduct wider outreach to civil society actors in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific and allocate financial resources to encourage and support their participation in the fifth annual meeting and subsequent global IGFs, and organize national and sub-regional level IGFs;
7. Ensure active remote participation in the annual meeting and subsequent IGFs, utilizing digital technologies such as live-streaming webcast, video conference, twitter and other social media tools;
8. Guarantee that technical discussions during IGFs fully accommodates new constituents and stakeholders and incorporate an assessment of policy implications on the rights of Internet users and society;
9. Develop a plan of action in order to facilitate follow-up and monitoring of IGF outcomes; and
10. Authorize an independent organization to conduct an impact study to assess the effectiveness of IGF, in accordance with the principles set out in the 2005 Tunis Agenda and the 2003 Declaration of Principles of the WSIS.

Hereby signed by:

Yap Swee Seng

Executive Director, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

E-mail: yap@forum-asia.org

Mobile (Bangkok): +66.81.868.9178

Web: www.forum-asia.org

Chiranuch Premchaiporn

Executive Director, Prachatai Online Newspaper

E-mail: chiranuch@prachatai.com

Mobile (Bangkok): +66.81.6207707

Web: www.prachatai.com;

www.prachatai.org/english

Ernesto G. Sonido Jr.

Blogger TechTanod, the Blog and Soul Movement, the Philippine Blog Awards

E-mail: lfishtank@gmail.com

Phone: +63.917829.8090

Web: <http://baratillo.net>; <http://techtanod.com>

Ndaru

Blogger (Indonesia)

Web: <http://politikana.com>

Ou Virak

President, Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)

E-mail: ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org

Mobile (Phnom Penh): +855.12.404.051

Web: www.cchrcambodia.org

Phouthasinh Phimmachanh

Senior Knowledge Management Officer, Swiss Association for International Development (Helvetas-Laos)

Email:

phouthasinh.phimmachanh@helvetas.org

Phone (Laos): +856.21.740.253

Sean Ang

Executive Director, Southeast Asian Center for e-Media (SEACeM)

E-mail: sean@seacem.com

Mobile (Kuala Lumpur): +60.166.533.533

Web: www.seacem.com

Chuah Siew Eng

Publicity Officer, Centre for Independent Journalism

Email: sieweng.cij@gmail.com

Phone (Kuala Lumpur): +60.340.230.772

Web: cijmalaysia.org

Leang Delux

Active member, Club of Cambodian Journalist

E-mail: deluxnews@gmail.com

Mobile (Cambodia): +855.15.523.623

Web: www.ccj.com.kh

Oliver Robillo

Founder, Mindanao Bloggers Community

E-mail: blogie@dabawenyo.com

Mobile (Davao): +63.918.540.0878

Web: www.mindanaobloggers.com

Phisit Siprasatthong

Coordinator, Thai Netizen Network

E-mail: freethainetizen@gmail.com

Phone (Bangkok): +66.2691.0574

Web: thainetizen.org

Civil Society Representatives from Burma and Vietnam