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IMPROVING INTERNET GOVERNANCE: SUPPORT TO THE GLOBAL COMMISSION ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE

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Final Technical Report:

Improving Internet Governance: Support to the Global Commission on Internet Governance

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Executive Summary

The Global Commission on Internet Governance (GCIG) was launched in January 2014 by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) and the British think-tank Chatham House. Chaired by Sweden's former prime minister, Carl Bildt, the Commission provided the multistakeholder Internet community with high-level strategic recommendations regarding the future of the Internet governance.

The GCIG included 29 Commissioners from every corner of the world, representing diverse viewpoints and perspectives. Many of the Commissioners were from developing-world countries, including Anriette Esterhuysen, Dian Triansyah Djani, Dorothy Gordon, Hartmut Glaser, Latha Reddy, Moez Chakchouk, Nii Quaynor and Tobby Simon.

The GCIG's work was supported by an extensive Research Advisory Network, which again had research nodes in both developed and developing countries. All told, the GCIG commissioned around 50 research papers on far-ranging topics, including Internet fragmentation, cybersecurity, human rights, the IANA transition and more. Many of these papers were written by developing-world authors. Even more dealt with subjects that are of special import to developing nations, such as expanding Internet access while maintaining cybersecurity or the use of mesh networks.

The Commission's deliberations were supported by two massive cross-national surveys, entitled the CIGI/Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust. Each iteration of the survey polled respondents in 23 countries and Hong Kong. Nearly half of the countries in the survey were from the developing-world, including Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Tunisia, Pakistan, Brazil, Turkey, India, Indonesia and both mainland China and Hong Kong. Many of these countries are usually not surveyed on topics to do with Internet governance. A third survey was conducted after the conclusion of the GCIG to build on the first two and compile more longitudinal data.

This Final Technical Report unpacks the work undertaken by CIGI and the Global Commission on Internet Governance, pointing specifically to areas where IDRC funding contributed greatly to the success and rollout of the GCIG project.

The Research Problem

The Centre for International Governance Innovation established the Global Commission on Internet Governance and the associated Research Advisory Network (RAN) to address a significant and growing research and policy deficit. While global reliance on digital technologies and the Internet continues to grow at an ever-accelerating rate, public policy – locally, nationally, regionally and internationally – has lagged significantly behind. These gaps between the technology and the state of public policy are prevalent across a number of areas, ranging from cybersecurity to diplomacy, net neutrality, data governance, privacy and free expression issues, Internet fragmentation, Internet regulation, Internet infrastructure development and transitions, and cybercrime, among numerous others.

Overlaid atop these specific Internet governance issue areas is the problem of developing the right governance processes, norms and infrastructure for the Internet. These efforts should include multiple perspectives. Governments, private companies, civil society, technologists and

ordinary Internet users all need to participate in efforts to advance and develop new norms, institutions, regulations and policy for a better governed Internet. Likewise, the Internet as a global technology requires that stakeholders from around the world be a genuine part of the governance conversation, lest the resulting governance processes, norms and structures be perceived as dominated by Western interests and exclusionary to developing countries.

The GCIG was designed to fit into this policy space, by bringing together experts from all stakeholder groups and geographical regions to discuss and develop the best way forward for Internet governance.

Methodology, Progress Towards Milestones and Project Outputs

The IDRC's funding for the GCIG was allocated to three mutually reinforcing endeavors: 1) the Commission meetings; 2) the Research Advisory Network publications; and 3) the Global Surveys on Internet Security and Trust. This section discusses each in turn.

A portion of the IDRC funds was used to support two of the GCIG's nine global meetings and stakeholder-engagement sessions. In February 2016, the GCIG met in California to discuss the final report of the Commission. The discussion was wide-ranging, speaking to issues such as cyberwar, Internet access, algorithmic governance and more.

In March 2016, the GCIG met for a final time in Amman, Jordan. The session was focused on both finalizing the final report of the Commission and stakeholder outreach to local Internet startups within Jordan and the broader region.

In June 2016, the GCIG unveiled its final report at the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, Mexico. The report was presented by GCIG Chair Carl Bildt and OECD Secretary General (and GCIG Commissioner) Angel Gurría. The launch was livestreamed and subsequently hosted on online.

Over the two years of its work, the GCIG and its associated research outputs were featured in at least 1,825 media stories from major domestic and international outlets. The stories appeared in at least 68 countries, including approximately 20 developing countries. The media coverage included 104 media stories focusing on the final report of the GCIG, including favorable coverage in *The Economist, National Times, Times of India*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Reuters*. Within weeks of its release, the final report itself secured more than 2,000 reads. As of the week of March 26, 2017, it had been viewed more than 11,000 times, with nearly 1 in 4 page views coming from the developing world.

On social media, the GCIG project demonstrated a significant global reach. As of six weeks after the launch of the final report, the Commission hashtag, #OneInternet, had been posted 500 times on Twitter, generating more than three million impressions. The Commission's Twitter handle, @OurInternetGCIG, had almost 4,000 profile visits and its posts secured almost 130,000 impressions.

The work of the GCIG was also highlighted at the 2016 Internet Governance Forum in Guadalajara, Mexico, which was attended by more than 2,000 participants from 123 countries.

CIGI organized a panel to discuss the final GCIG report, particularly its call for a new social compact for Internet governance. The panel was moderated by Laura DeNardis, the Commission's director of research, and included high-profile panelists such as former Indian ambassador Latha Reddy and former U.S. ambassador Eileen Donahoe, both Commissioners. The panel report can be found here: http://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/index.php?q=filedepot_download/4098/259.

The large global reach of the GCIG's work was made possible by the generous funding of the IDRC, which allowed CIGI to host meetings in California and Jordan and to support the travel and engagement of the Commission's eight developing-world Commissioners. These developing-world voices kept issues such as Internet access prominently on the agenda.

The IDRC's generous funding also supported the RAN and its efforts to research and publish world-class scholarship on pressing Internet governance challenges. In particular, the funds were used to support research on developing-world issues, often by developing-world scholars and practitioners. During the two-year tenure of the GCIG, the accompanying research effort also advanced apace.

Each paper was made available at no charge on the Commission website (ourinternet.org). They have also been packaged into six research volumes focusing on the themes of: Fragmentation; Multistakeholder Governance; Trade and IP; Human Rights; Security; and Access. All six volumes are available online here: https://www.cigionline.org/series/gcig-research-volumes. In total, CIGI released nearly 50 research papers.

One paper by two Commissioners, Tobby Simon of India and Michael Chertoff of the United States, was named best policy paper of 2015 by the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. This honour speaks to the quality of the research, but there was also a significant quantitative impact as well. Cumulatively, the research papers have been viewed more than 81,000 times and downloaded more than 12,000 times. A significant portion of the page views, nearly 38,000, were driven by advertising traffic through Google AdWords search result placement for one research paper, secured with the assistance of Google Ad Grants. The pattern of downloads also shows that a considerable portion of the traffic came from developing world countries: more than 58 percent, or 23 percent excluding the ad-supported paper. This shows the potential of the research that supported the Commission to have a larger second-order effect on research being undertaken around the world.

Lastly, beyond the research papers produced by the RAN in support of the GCIG deliberation, a significant portion of the IDRC's generous funding went toward the 2016 and the 2017 CIGI/Ipsos Global Survey on Internet Security and Trust. The 2016 iteration of the survey was the second in an annual exercise.

The survey is unique in that it provides a truly global glimpse at Internet users' perspectives towards various security, economic and rights-based concerns. In total, 23 countries and Hong Kong were surveyed. Specific countries include: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico,

Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey and the United States.

Many of the countries included in the survey, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Tunisia, are rarely included in public opinion polling on Internet issues. One reason for this omission is that these countries have lower Internet penetration rates than more highly developed, early-adopting countries. Some might find polling in relatively unconnected nations a waste of resources. CIGI disagrees. Moreover, the realities of Internet connectivity are changing fast, with most new users hailing from the developing world. Additionally, in absolute terms, countries such as Nigeria are set to become some of the largest Internet-using countries globally. The shifting demographic basis of the Internet-using population makes it doubly important that public opinion surveys aimed at informing public policy include traditionally marginalized voices.

The other reason that these developing-world nations are often excluded is logistical and financial. It is expensive to poll in relatively unconnected nations. Ipsos, a global polling firm with worldwide infrastructure, does not have Internet survey panels in these four countries. This infrastructural limitation means that traditional phone-based or in-person survey methods are needed. Costs go up as these survey methods are far more expensive, but the end product is a global survey that genuinely represents global public opinion on trust and security issues. At the same time, polling methods in developing countries provide opportunities for capacity building in local populations. For example, in Pakistan, Ipsos provided training to university students who were selected to deliver the survey interviews.

The 2016 survey included a number of questions that are relevant for developing countries, such as support for the Dark Web and hacktivists, and more general privacy and security concerns. As with the 2014 iteration, the 2016 survey has received significant media coverage in both mainstream and specialty tech publications. From March 2-June 17, 2016, the survey received approximately 221 media citations, including 10 exclusive interviews in mainstream news outlets. Top media mentions include stories in: Reuters, WIRED, Forbes, The Globe and Mail, Washington Post, The Hill, Jakarta Globe, Sydney Morning Herald and CFR Blog. One survey item about the Dark Web was also trending in the top spot on Reddit's politics sub-Reddit.

The 2016 survey has been viewed nearly 18,000 times and downloaded more than 3,600 times. Additionally, nearly 70 percent of those views and 44 percent of those downloads were from the developing world. Large numbers of views came from the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

In addition, the 2017 survey received approximately 38 media citations in the two weeks following its release, including coverage in several tech and business news outlets, such as Yahoo! Finance, PYMNTS.com, 24/7 Wall St. and Connected World. Further coverage and survey views came in the following months as we issued releases focusing on the survey's findings about the shared economy and public perceptions of rapid technological change. Highlights from all of the surveys can be found on CIGI's website: https://www.cigionline.org/internet-survey

The broad reach of the survey demonstrates it impact. The survey provides a much needed empirical foundation that will continue to help policymakers make better decisions on key Internet governance issues. Conducting the poll annually will also provide cumulative benefits, such as providing longitudinal data that indicates trends over time.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was a partner in the 2017 poll, along with the 85,000-member Internet Society (ISOC), a not-for-profit professional association. The results of the poll have been reported by UNCTAD in a number of its publications and featured prominently in its e-Commerce week event, eliciting considerable interest from many developing countries not included in the poll.

Synthesis of research results and development outcomes

Within the broader space of Internet governance, development issues abound. The economic and social development potential of interconnection, for example, is huge. However, historically and currently, access has spread very unevenly globally, with the world's poorest being the last to connect and least represented in debates about Internet governance.

The final report of the GCIG, One Internet, proposes a number of Internet-related policies that would help bring the last three billion users online, while also interfacing with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These recommendations range from regulation to questions of infrastructure development, inclusive access and how to measure interconnectivity in the first place. These recommendations, 15 in all, present a comprehensive web of policies that could help bring those who still lack Internet access online.

Beyond the final One Internet report, the wider GCIG research endeavour was divided into six thematic areas: Internet access; cybersecurity; human rights; trade and intellectual property; fragmentation and interoperability; and governance.

Each research theme necessarily intertwined with development objectives and outcomes. For instance, one research paper by Caroline Baylon and Albert Antwi-Boasiako looked at the interconnected issues of Internet access and cybersecurity. The paper discussed the challenges of expanding Internet access in West Africa, while also baking in needed cybersecurity steps in order to prevent the security vulnerabilities that come with the Internet from undermining social and development goals that digital technology can enable.

Similarly, a series of papers under the theme of Internet access delved directing into thorny questions of who can access the Internet and why, and how access might be increased more generally. These questions are especially relevant in developing countries in Latin America and Africa. Hernán Galperin, for example, used household survey data from Latin America to investigate empirical trends in interconnection and Internet use. Within the African context, Alison Gillwald took aim in her research contribution at the problem of digital inequality, while Steve Song explored using mesh networks to unconventionally expand Internet access in Africa.

More broadly, major Western companies such as Google and Facebook have proposed the idea of Internet access as a right. To provide this right, these companies have offered zero-rating services to provide essentially free Internet access to individuals in developing countries. This

noble-sounding policy has faced extensive criticism from Internet activists and development practitioners. The proposed policies were aimed at providing access to individuals in developing countries via their own platforms, which transforms the boundless Internet into a walled-off garden. Helani Galpaya explores the ethical, business and development challenges associated with these sorts of "free Internet" policies in her article, "Zero-rating in Emerging Economies."

Across multiple levels, the research, survey work and the deliberations of the GCIG were interfaced with and contributed to the advancement of development objectives.

Problems and Challenges

Despite the numerous successes for the GCIG project, there were still challenges. These limitations could be broadly lumped into the following categories: 1) dissemination; 2) demonstrable policy impact; and 3) longevity.

The first challenge faced by the GCIG project was an issue of dissemination. While the Commission filled a clear void in the Internet governance policy space, the ecosystem is a large and dynamic one. The GCIG was set up, by design, to develop comprehensive policy recommendations across the Internet governance ecosystem. At the same time, discrete actors within each space were working on their own projects, which meant that the GCIG and its associated work needed to compete with domain specialists at every turn. Beyond this competition, there was a constant problem of obtaining media traction. The media follows sensational, short-run stories almost by design. The GCIG's work was deliberately aimed at a more foundational and long-run target. This mismatch between the media's frequent motivation and the GCIG's primary goal means that the Commission's work was less well covered in the media both nationally and internationally than would be ideal.

Nevertheless, as discussed above, the tensions between the generalist nature of the GCIG and other domain-specific organizations, as well as the difficulty in getting the attention of the media, did not completely undermine the spread of the Commission's work. The final report, One Internet, has been actively read globally and the research outputs of the RAN have been cited hundreds of times. Hosting all of the outputs of the GCIG on CIGI's website has also allowed for the continual dissemination of material over time.

The second challenge faced by the GCIG is the difficulty of demonstrating a clear policy impact of the research and Commission outputs. Finding a so-called "smoking gun" – where a particular output led directly to a policy that would otherwise not have happened, or conversely, a clear warning of the dangers of a policy reversed its course – is difficult to demonstrate. While CIGI has tremendous convening power and many of the meetings of the GCIG, such as the meetings in Ottawa and the UK, were supported by each country's respective national government, it is not clear how much the outputs of the Commission fed into government policy. Similar problems exist with regards to policy developed by the numerous non-state actors in this space, including intergovernmental organizations, civil society groups and technologists.

While a clear and demonstrable policy impact is hard to definitively establish, there are reasons, as presented above, to think that many of the outputs at the very least attracted the attention of

policymakers at various levels. For instance, the GCIG final report was presented at the OECD's annual meeting. Likewise, many of the RAN research papers have been cited in policy documents from governments and civil society organizations, not to mention their longer term and indirect effects on policy outcomes via academic dissemination and citation.

The last problem facing the project is the issue of making a long-term impact in a policy space that moves rapidly by design. Moore's Law suggests that processor capacity of computers doubles every year and a half or so. This domain-specific pace of change is mirrored more widely by an ecosystem where the pace of introduction of new issues is truly staggering. During the tenure of the Commission, issues such as the US and UK encryption debate, the ICANN/IANA transition and zero-rating policy, to name just three items, became salient policy topics. While the Commission commented on these topics both through GCIG public statements and more substantively through research outputs, the pace of change meant that many issues came and went before any real policy impact could be made. The associated challenge is that the Commission at times chased issues rather than leading the pack.

Despite this challenge of making policy-relevant recommendations and outputs in a rapidly changing technology ecosystem, the GCIG's final report made a series of predictions about possible future Internet scenarios that could come to fruition within the next five years. The first scenario outlined a highly desirable case where Internet access approaches 100 percent and the economic benefits of the network are shared by all. The second scenario painted a picture of an Internet where current barriers to access and the inequitable distribution of resources extend into the future, but the system continues to produce gains for a great many, even if many remain excluded from these benefits. The final scenario depicted a realm where trolls, criminal actors and rogue governments effectively capitalize on existing vulnerabilities in the system, leading to an Internet that harms society at large. The Commission report, contextualizing each of these scenarios and pointing to current trends that could result in each, then provided a series of high-level recommendations that would help to increase the probability that the first scenario is our collective future.

Overall Assessment and Recommendations

The GCIG project combined policy-relevant discussion, careful empirical and theoretical Internet governance research, and multi-year survey work developing a better empirical understanding of the perspectives of Internet users. While the project as a whole faced a number of challenges to do with disseminating results, identifying definitive policy impacts and making recommendations in the face of a fast-moving policy space, many of the discrete short- and long-term objectives (such as presenting actionable policy recommendations and developing a foundational body of Internet governance research) were successfully achieved. In net terms, the project was a highly successful, furthering Internet governance debates in a number of areas.

Based on the work we undertook, the challenges we faced and the successes we had, there are a number of recommendations for how projects like the GCIG could proceed going forward.

1) Carefully manage the balance between short-run, highly salient topics and the need to produce long-run impact. Short-run topics can help get attention for the larger project, but

too much time and effort spent on the news of the day can undermine the pursuit of long-run, high-impact objectives.

2) Carefully calibrate the scope of the project. In our highly interconnected world, heavily siloed projects are likely to be both niche and distortive of the interconnections that exist in reality. However, drawing the boundaries of a project too widely (i.e. all of Internet governance) runs the risk of turning an otherwise focused effort into a scattershot affair. Early and continuous scoping efforts are helpful to ensure that the best balance is struck.

3) Manage the policy/research balance. Ideally, policy work should be complemented with new empirical and theoretical research. Conversely, new research should be aimed at influencing policy in some measure. Pairing both policy and research efforts in single project can help to maximize the effect of a project, as well as it potential longevity.