

Latin American and Caribbean Report for the Interregional Dialogue Session

The fourth Latin American and Caribbean Preparatory Meeting for the IGF was jointly organized by LACNIC (Latin American and the Caribbean Internet Address Registry), the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the NUPEF Institute, the Internet Society (ISOC), Google and, as local partner, the Caribbean Telecommunications Union (CTU), the local partner. It was also supported by IDRC and CGI-NIC.br. The meeting was held in Port Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from August 9th to 11th.

The event was held together with 7th Caribbean Internet Governance Forum, as the I Latin American and Caribbean Convention of Internet Governance, with more than 100 participants from 25 countries representing all the stakeholders of the regional Internet community. The meeting was focused on the topics surrounding the Internet Governance Forum, identifying the characteristics and regional challenges for each of these issues.

Our Regional event followed the thematic structure of the IGF. The particularity of the 2011 edition was a open consultation process to develop the specific issues of the Agenda, based on a public survey. The questionnaire had diverse questions oriented to identify visions, approaches, subtopics and priorities from the LAC internet community. Inputs provided by the community were extremely useful for defining and structuring the program of the convention. A copy of the survey is available in Addendum 1.

The regional meeting in LAC followed the 5 main topics of the regional event but it is important to stand out that “Freedom of expression on the internet” was adopted as a crosscutting issue.

Another particular aspect of this edition was the revitalization of the regional process, mainly due to the location, (Port Spain, at the English Speaking Caribbean sub-region), the strengthening of the intra regional dialogue, and the importance of high level governmental officers participating at the meeting, among other aspects. No doubt that this is a positive aspect, because we could identify several voices claiming for the importance of multi-stakeholder participation, especially from developing countries.

At the same time, there was greater recognition that public interest principles and human rights approaches should prevail in internet governance discussions

Access matters and infrastructural aspects were identified as crucial, taking in account that 2011 has been a key year for the development of Internet Exchange Points in the region (this is the year where a new regional organization LAC – IX is about to be created). The need of establishing and promoting IXPs at the Caribbean was also mentioned.

One of the challenges that is recurrently identified is the low number of participants from the LAC region in the global event. To contribute to address this challenge, the sponsors of the IGF LAC meeting are supporting the participation for 3 delegates, from a universe of people (mainly civil society) that have never been at Internet Governance Forum, to attend to this meeting in Nairobi. We see this as an important step towards strengthening the capacity and increase the participation of LAC stakeholders in the global internet governance debate.

Regarding another important matter, that is interaction between regional stages, the analysis made shows that each event has particular notes, different organizations promoting it, and their own types of structures. The global IGF has the potential to congregate stakeholders from different regions who can promote information sharing and identify common challenges around internet governance issues.