**The Influence of Civil Society in   
Multistakeholder Internet Governance Processes**

The Internet developed over time with stakeholders voluntarily coming together to solve problems. Many of the governing institutions that emerged to establish the norms and standards for the global Internet reflect this culture. Today these bodies operate through open and inclusive multistakeholder processes whose legitimacy is derived from the consent of those who choose to be governed by the decisions ultimately made by that entity. Multistakeholderism is said to ensure that a diversity of economic and social interests can credibly articulate their positions, be heard, and have an impact based upon the strength of their evidence.

Relative to other stakeholder groups, global civil society typically has fewer resources and institutional capacities. Multistakeholderism, however, has empowered civil society to have an equal say in the Internet’s future. As the Internet matures, and Internet governance topics encompass both the running of the technical infrastructure of the Internet and the impact of the Internet on society, there is a legitimate need to ask what degree of participation and influence each stakeholder group has and should have on these issues.

This workshop will assess how multistakeholder models of participation both enable and constrain stakeholder participation in various fora, promote collective learning and mutual understandings, and incentivise actors to negotiate successful outcomes. In theory, multistakeholder models of Internet governance have allowed more voices to come to the policymaking table and to have an equal say in processes of agenda setting and decision making. However, this thematic workshop will explore the reality: we will introduce case studies that examine what civil society has already achieved as a result of multistakeholderism, and stakeholders will comment on what this tells us about the collaboration that has transpired between the various stakeholder groups. The panelists will also explore and debate generalisable patterns, and make projections based on cultural, social, and political trends, taking into consideration the various multilateral and multistakeholder decision-making environments that each operate within.

An array of thought leaders from academia, civil society, government, and the intergovernmental sectors have confirmed their interest in speaking during this workshop, including:

* **Fiona Alexander**, Associate Administrator, Office of International Affairs, National Telecommunication and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce
* **Chinmayi Arun,** Executive Director, the Centre for Communication Governance, National Law University India
* **William J. Drake**, International Fellow & Lecturer, Media Change & Innovation Division, IPMZ, University of Zurich
* **Torbjörn Fredriksson**, Head ICT Analysis Section, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
* **Rachel Pollack**, Project Officer, Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO - TBC
* **Tatiana Tropina**, Senior Researcher, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law

The moderator is Ayden Férdeline.

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* SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals