

Nilmini Rubin
IGFSA Executive Committee Statement
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My name is Nilmini Rubin. I work for an engineering and consulting company called Tetra Tech where I lead a team of 170 people that implement international development projects to improve lives around the world – especially focused on Internet and energy access. We implement projects for clients such as USAID, the World Bank, the African Development and other leading donors and developing countries.

My passion lies in connecting all people, regardless of their age, gender or location, to benefits of modernity through the internet and electricity. I am standing for election to the IGF Support Association Executive committee because I believe in the goals of IGFSAs, and as a mother of three young girls, especially its focus on the national and regional and youth IGF Initiatives.

Many of you will remember meeting me at the last IGFSAs AGM, when I "sat in" for Manu Bhardwaj, whose plane was delayed. As a friend a colleague of Manu, I read out his statement of interest in joining your Executive Committee on his behalf. Manu was elected but he sadly passed away only a few months later - at the young age of 39. His unexpected death was a profound loss. Like many of you, I miss him and his passion for Internet access around the world.

At first, considered filling out the rest of 2018 as a temporary replacement to honor Manu's memory. But on reflection, I've realized that want to truly honor Manu's mission and seek election as a full member of the IGFSAs Executive Committee and making a lasting contribution to its mission.

I have been involved in the IGF now for several years and spoken at our previous meetings in Geneva, Mexico and Brazil. I serve on the Steering Committee of the IGF-USA and have spoken at many of our previous events. One achievement and contribution that I am proud of is that, along with Manu and Marilyn Cade, we pushed the IGF-USA to submit comments to the IGF's initial "Connecting the Next Billion." There are others from that community that also contributed and continue to do and who are active in the IGFSAs.

My background is perhaps unique. As a senior U.S. congressional advisor, I served on the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs where I wrote the Digital Global Access Policy Act (Digital GAP Act) for Chairman Royce. The bill has passed the House of Representatives and now awaits passage by the U.S. Senate. It would create U.S. policy for promoting internet access globally. The bill built on many of the lessons Manu learned through his efforts to champion Global Connect with Under Secretary of State Cathy Novelli and Ambassador Daniel Sepulveda in the last U.S. Administration. Currently, I'm encouraging the new U.S. Administration to promote Internet access as part of its international development priorities through direct engagement with USAID and through my role on the Millennium Challenge Corporation Advisory Council.

I believe that the IGFSA can benefit from having the experience and expertise that I bring -- vigor; commitment; fundraising; business experience; and ability to get things done. I hope to be elected and to contribute to the IGFSA team. One immediate goal that I see is the importance of diversifying and increasing funds raised. It is wonderful to see the increasing number of national and sub-regional and youth initiatives (NRIs). We need to raise funds for these NRIs, especially those in developing countries.

I know how hard it is to create more visibility for the great work that is done at the national level and I am also interested in how the IGFSA can support the IGF Focal Point's development of materials that tell the NRI's stories.

As a former member of Congressional staff and a corporate employee, I also understand that senior participation --both from government and business as well as other stakeholders--can help a national IGF to achieve policy change locally.

Impressively, the NRIs are collaborating and organizing a Main Session at the IGF --now for the third year, and also have five collaborative sessions. I am pleased to be invited by three of the NRIs as a main session speaker--on the topic that we all care so deeply about: access and accessibility.

Realizing that you may have questions for candidates, I would be pleased to respond over the next few days to questions and am happy to do so over email if that is easiest. I believe that IGFSA can do more to make a real difference through our support to the IGF Secretariat and to the NRIs. I hope to contribute to that, as a member of the IGFSA Executive Committee.

I look forward to seeing you at the IGF and at the IGFSA Annual General Assembly. I ask that you vote for me to serve on the IGFSA Executive Committee.