

Statement of interest election to serve a second term on the IGFSA Executive Committee

It has been an honour to serve on the IGFSA EC for the past three years (2022, 23 and 24) and should members re-elect me I look forward to serving for a second term.

I believe deeply in the value of the Internet Governance Forum and that it, and that the national and regional and youth IGFs it has given rise to make a positive difference to how the internet is developed and governed. This is why I believe that the IGFSA is important.

There are 1000s of people around the world who have gained knowledge, confidence, and partnerships through their participation in the global and national, regional and youth IGFs. This in turn has enriched their work - individually but also in the institutions or networks they are part of - to extend access to the internet and to ensure that multiple voices can be heard, and hopefully also be influential, in local, national and global internet governance.

The IGFSA has been able to mobilise resources that have made possible financial contributions to many NRIs and youth IGF events all over the world since its inception, as well as providing support to the IGF Secretariat. The IGFSA has made an immense contribution. It has a small dedicated membership base but growing this is essential and I believe the EC should prioritise this.

If elected I will continue to to my best to be a productive member of the executive committee. As the we move towards the decision by the UN General Assembly in 2025 on whether to renew the IGF's mandate or not, supporting it and the network of NRIs it has given rise to, is going to be particularly important. I believe the IGFSA will continue to be an important part of this process.

A bit more about me. I live in Johannesburg, South Africa but spend as much time as I can in a rural part of the country towards its Eastern border with Mozambique. I have had the privilege of serving the IGF in different ways, as a MAG member for the global IGF and the African IGF, as an organiser of sessions at the IGF, and as chair of the global IGF MAG from 2019 to 2021. This service continued for the last three years, as a member of the IGFSA Executive Committee. Currently I work as Senior Advisor on Internet Governance with the Association for Progressive Communications - where I previously worked as executive director - on a part time basis. In that capacity I convene the African School on Internet Governance. I also work as a consultant, doing research on digitalisation, development, democracy and human rights. I am a member of the Aspen Institute's Global Cyber Group and sit on the boards of Connect Humanity, a US-based fund for connectivity, and TENET, the Tertiary Education Network of South Africa (which facilitates connectivity for universities and tertiary educational institutions in the country). I am a member of the advisory council of the Digital Empowerment Foundation (based in India). I had the honour of being inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame in 2013 for my work, made possible by colleagues in the Association for Progressive Communications, in establishing early email and internet connectivity in Africa.

My priorities for this second term for the IGFSA will be to contribute to:

- Increasing the IGFSA's membership base

- Increasing the size of the pool of funds that the IGFSAs can draw on to support NRIs and youth IGF initiatives particularly those in the global South and those in other parts of the world, including the global North, who have the need for support but few channels for securing it
- Strengthen the existing collaboration between the IGFSAs and the IGF Secretariat which remains the recipient of the IGFSAs' large annual financial contribution. This would also include clarifying the complimentary relationship between the IGF Trust Fund and the IGFSAs to streamline how support is made available to NRIs and Youth IGF initiatives
- Collaborate with IGFSAs members and supporters to contribute to the best of our capacity to the renewal by the UN General Assembly of the IGF's mandate

My priorities for Internet Governance are:

- Address digital inequality in all its forms. I believe this is THE most important challenge for the internet governance community.
- Achieving internet development, governance and policy that centres human rights (social and economic as well as civil and political) and people-centred development

Anriette Esterhuysen, November 2024