
WOMEN IGF: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE DIGITAL SPHERE

A Catalyst for Inclusive Internet
Governance

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A GLOBAL MOVEMENT: THE GENESIS OF WOMEN IGF

- 2006: The inaugural IGF in Athens saw approximately 1,000 participants. Early estimates indicate that women's participation was around 22%.
- 2007-2010: Attendance grew, with the 2010 IGF in Vilnius hosting close to 2,000 participants. During these years, women's representation gradually increased but remained below parity.
- Early Initiatives (2011) Workshop organized by APC WNSP before IGF.20 women from diverse backgrounds convened to integrate gender perspectives into internet governance.
- IGF's Gender Inclusion Efforts (2015) Best Practice Forum (BPF) on Gender & Access launched. Focused on women's digital inclusion, online abuse, and gender-based violence.
- First Women IGF (2017) Sri Lanka hosted the inaugural Women IGF in May 2017. Built on earlier efforts to empower women in internet governance

WOMEN IGF SRI LANKA: EMPOWERING LOCAL VOICES

- The Women IGF in Sri Lanka was initiated and organized by Sagarika Wickramasekera, President of the Internet Society Sri Lanka Chapter (2016-2017), along with female members of the chapter, with support from other society members.
- Focus on raising awareness about integrating gender perspectives into internet governance.
- Encourage women's active involvement in the digital sphere.
- Provide a platform for women to engage, share experiences, and influence the future of the internet in Sri Lanka.



A LANDMARK EVENT: FIRST WOMEN IGF SRI LANKA

- The establishment of the Women IGF in Sri Lanka marked a significant step towards fostering gender inclusivity in internet governance.
- Discussions focused on the unique challenges faced by women in accessing and utilizing the internet.
- Emphasized the need for inclusive policies and practices.
- Highlighted the importance of addressing the gender digital divide.
- Underscored the need for women's voices to be heard in policy-making processes related to the internet.



ADAPTING TO CHANGE: VIRTUAL WOMEN IGF 2020

- In 2020, the Women IGF successfully adapted to the virtual format by leveraging online platforms to ensure inclusive participation, facilitating global discussions on gender and internet governance despite pandemic-related challenges.
- Discussions focused on cyberbullying and related threats in the virtual world, emphasizing the need to combat these issues, as women remain one of the most vulnerable groups on the internet.
- Key Outcomes and Discussions from the 2020 Virtual Event
 - Cyberbullying and Online Threats: Addressed the increasing risks women face in digital spaces and strategies to combat cyber harassment.
 - Digital Inclusion: Emphasized the need for policies ensuring safe and equitable internet access for women.
 - Capacity Building: Highlighted the importance of digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness to empower women in the virtual world.



CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION: WOMEN IGF 2024

Date & Venue: 12th December 2024, Hotel Mandarin,
Colombo

Organized by: Lanka School of Internet Governance (LkSIG)

Theme: "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Women in
Internet Governance"

• Key Highlights

- ✓ Diverse Participation: Policymakers, industry leaders, academia, civil society, person with disabilities and youth.
 - ✓ Preliminary Virtual Session (10th August 2024): "Role of Women in Social Media Platforms" with 35+ participants.
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The poster features a blue and white color scheme. At the top, it reads "Preliminary Session for Women IGF SRI LANKA 2024" with the tagline "The Role of Women in Shaping & Leading Social Media". Below this are four circular portraits of the speakers: Prishantha Welathanthry, Prof. Dilrukshi Gamage, Umali Thilakarathna, and Samantha de Soysa. A QR code and Zoom link are provided for the virtual event on Saturday, August 10th at 3:00 PM. The event is organized by LkSIG and IGF Sri Lanka.

Internet Governance Forum
SRI LANKA 2024
Empowering Internet
Through Multistakeholderism

Preliminary Session
for
Women IGF
SRI LANKA 2024

The Role of Women in Shaping & Leading Social Media

PRISHANTHA
Welathanthry

Prof. DILRUKSHI
Gamage

UMALI
Thilakarathna

SAMANTHA
de Soysa
Attorney-at-Law

Join the Virtual Event on

AUG 10 Saturday
At 3.00 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/99524621722>
Meeting ID: 995 2462 1722

Organized By

LkSIG IGF SRI LANKA

<https://igfsrilanka.org/>
<https://lksig.org/>



CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION: WOMEN IGF 2024

• Objectives

- ◆ Promote gender-inclusive policies in internet governance.
- ◆ Address challenges faced by women in digital spaces.
- ◆ Foster networking & collaboration opportunities.
- ◆ Encourage women's participation in decision-making.

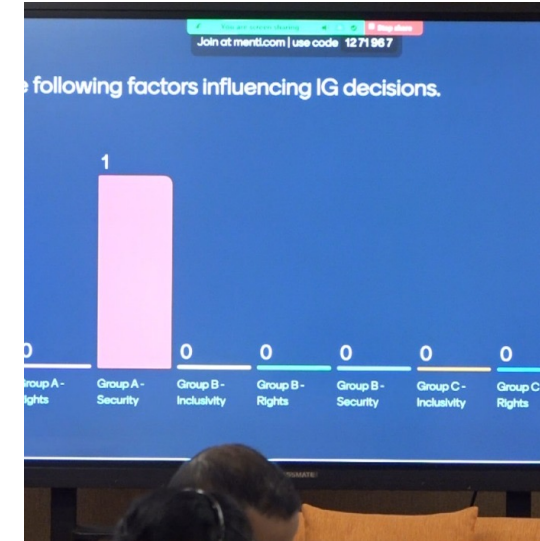
• Key takeaways from the discussions included:

Strengthening policies that ensure online safety and security for women.

Encouraging digital literacy programs targeting women and marginalized communities.

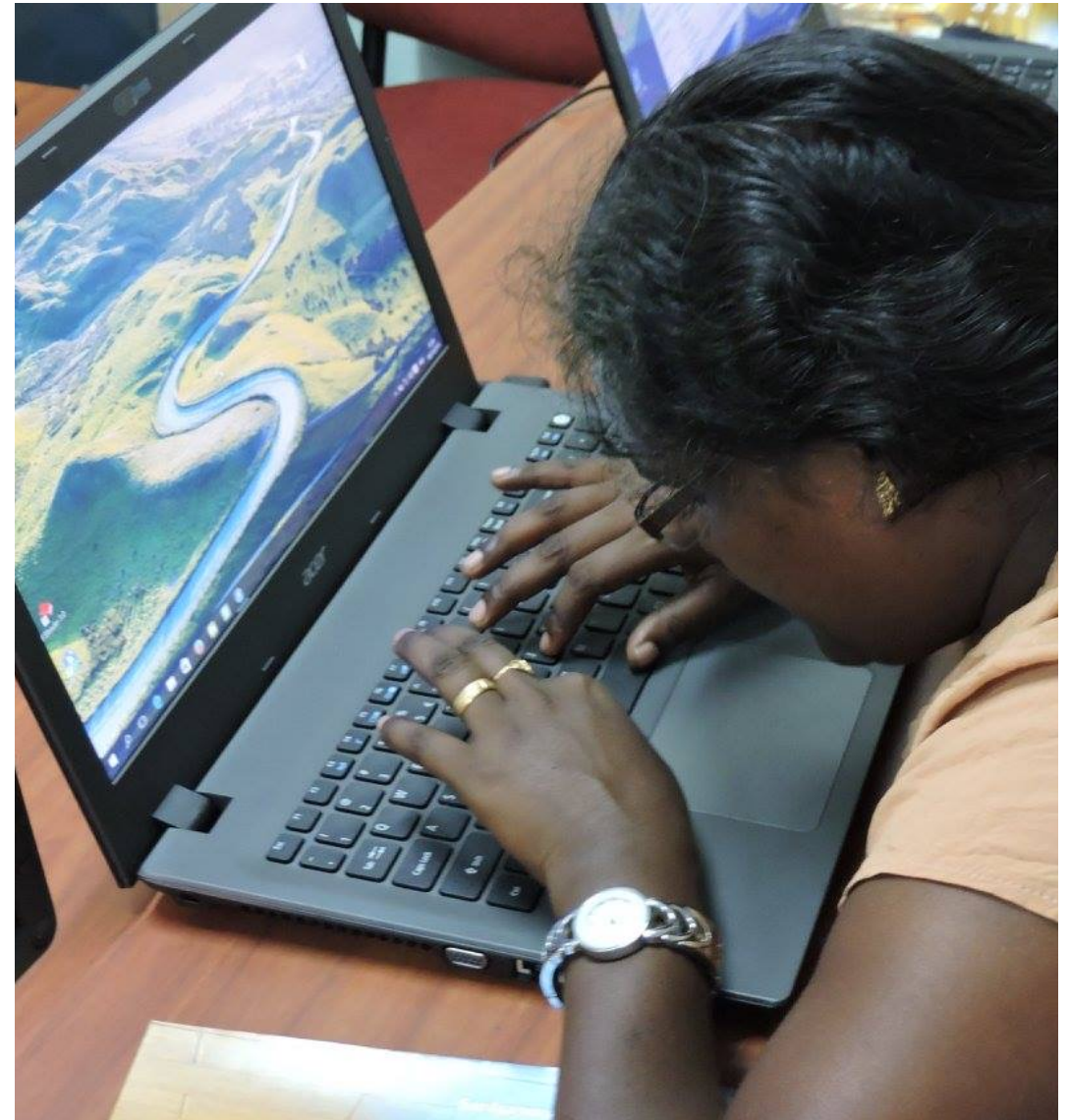
Promoting women's representation in internet governance bodies and policy-making platforms.

Establishing mentorship programs for women in technology and governance sectors.



THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IGF

- Address the gender digital divide.
- Ensure women's voices are heard in internet governance.
- Promote inclusive internet policies and practices.
- Empower women in the digital space.
- Foster collaboration and networking among women in technology.



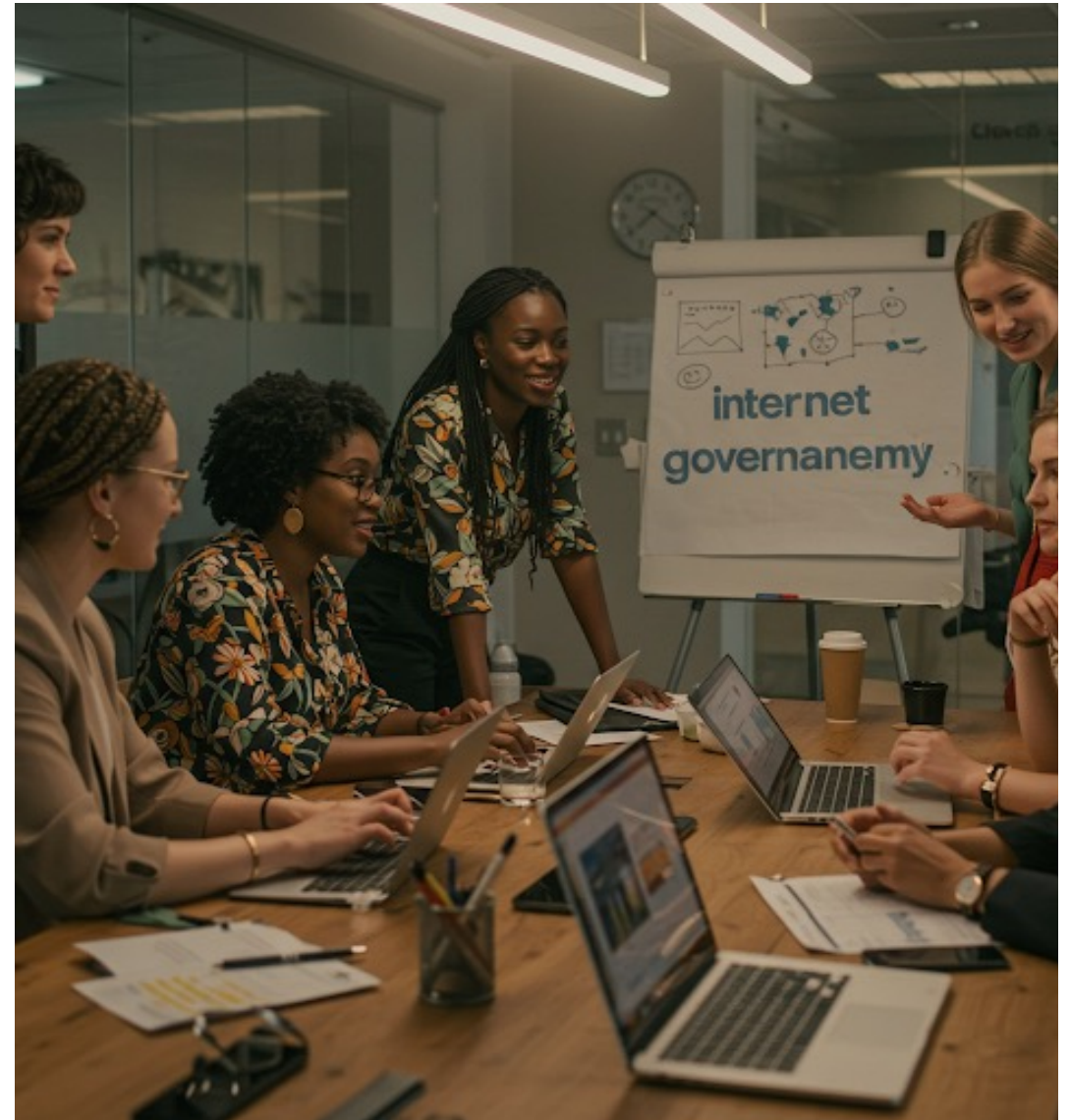
EXPANDING OUR REACH: A REGIONAL VISION



- Planning to have a Women IGF for the Asia Pacific region to address the issues faced by women in general in the cyber arena.
- Advancing Gender-Inclusive Internet Governance
 - Platform to discuss gender-related challenges in digital policy
 - Ensuring women's voices are represented in internet governance forums
 - Amplifying gender-focused discussions in broader governance dialogues
 - Developing annual action plans, research initiatives, and policy recommendations
 - Driving real change beyond discussions through measurable outcomes

NEXT STEPS

- Establish Women IGF Task Force for Asia-Pacific
- Build partnerships with key stakeholders
- Organize inaugural Women IGF session with APrIGF or national IGFs
- Launch fellowships and capacity-building programs for women in IG



FINALLY



- Help us to build the women Internet Platform in Aisa Pacific.



THANK YOU

Any Question

Do you have any questions or comments for me before we conclude?