# Arab Regional Dialogue and Experts Meeting

on

## Internet Governance and Cybersecurity Nexus

*Promoting Trust in Cyberspace*

UN-House, Beirut, 4-7 December 2018

الحوار العربي الإقليمي واجتماع الخبراء حول ترابط حوكمة الإنترنت والأمن السيبراني - تعزيز الثقة في الفضاء السيبراني

*Remote Participation will be made available to all who cannot participate in person.*

**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION NOTE**

## 1    BACKGROUND

The "Internet of Trust" is the theme of the 2018 Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which highlights the importance of cybersecurity and trust in the global efforts towards sustainable development; and the overall topic of security has been a key theme in the IGF process since the initial IGF in 2006. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are at the core of the global digital development and transformation, and the differences in access to ICTs lies behind the growing digital divide that the sustainable development goals (SDGs) seek to overcome, through increasing access to ICT and providing universal and affordable access to Internet in least developed countries by 2020.[1]

As an open public platform, the Internet encompasses massive amounts of data and is a core driver for development in the digital age and is essential for the efforts of leaving no one behind in development.   These characteristics make the theme of cybersecurity a significant challenge and area of risk that requires the world to collaborate for having a certain level of protection, security and trust for all stakeholders and across all disciplines. While global efforts strive towards attaining the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030, the development efforts to reduce the digital divide should not be at the expense of cybersecurity; and the need lies in having in place a rules-based regulation system, and work methodologies and policies that devised to foster stability and trust in the open public digital platform.   Furthermore, it is essential that the global and open nature of the Internet is not sacrificed as part of the efforts for national legal and regulatory systems.

International collaboration towards having stability in the cyberspace should engage all stakeholders, including private sector and software companies, and strengthen national capabilities and regulatory systems that serve in maintaining public law and order.  With time, the risks and costs associated with the challenge of cybersecurity are expected to significantly increase, which makes international cooperation a necessity and designates the responsibility for cybersecurity in all stakeholders who are required to have readiness to take actions that are in line with self-regulation initiatives to ensure cybersecurity, safety and stability.  In addition to economic costs, cybersecurity is essential for the people to build trust in the digital ecosystem.

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[1] Goal 9 target 9.c https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/infrastructure-industrialization/

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly renewed the mandate of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) until 2025,[2] and called for its close alignment with the sustainable development processes[3] as the information and communications technology (ICTs) are cross-cutting and are means of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and alleviation of poverty.   As one of the United Nations Regional Commissions, the mandate and role of ESCWA within the WSIS process has received a similar extension. Therefore, ESCWA continues to play a leading role in the WSIS process and the linkages with the SDGs processes; and there were various activities from the inception of WSIS in 2003, including: Activities within the ESCWA and League of Arab States joint initiative "Arab Dialogue on Internet Governance" (ArabDIG),[4] including the 2012 launched Arab Internet Governance Forum and its 2020 initiative for the development of its process, and the updated 2017 Second Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance.

In this context, the Meeting on Internet Governance and Cybersecurity Nexus: Promoting Trust in Cyberspace, is planned to be held in Beirut, from 4 to 7 December 2018, in preparation for the fifth Arab IGF, and it follows a series of preparation activities, which include, among others: Open Consultations and Arab Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group Meetings (Beirut, 2018); Meeting on the Second Arab Roadmap on Internet Governance - Next Decade (Beirut, 2017); and the workshop on Promoting a Safer Cyberspace in the Arab Region (Muscat, 2014).

This Expert Group Meeting will mainly present, examine and discuss Internet trust, safety and security issues as well as their linkages with the other strategic priorities of the aforementioned Roadmap. In their presentations, speakers will cover most important and emerging topics at the global, regional and national levels, in line with specificities and priorities of the Arab region.

During the whole event, members of the Arab IGF Programme Advisory Committee will also have a chance to work together on their preparations for the fifth Arab IGF. On the other hand, the last day of the event will include specific time-slots for main stakeholders, from governments, business sector, and technical community, to explore and discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnership, with ESCWA and LAS, on different activities and/or functions of the Arab IGF process.

## 2    OBJECTIVES

The meeting seeks to address the theme of Cybersecurity and Trust in line with Internet governance priority areas for the Arab region, as stipulated in the Second Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance.  It also aims at exploring opportunities for partnerships with all stakeholders towards strengthening collaboration and cooperation on the Arab IGF process.

## 3    TOPICS AND OUTCOME

The meeting will cover the main topics related to Internet governance and cybersecurity in the Arab region and address the cybersecurity frameworks for the region.  It will also cover the areas of cybersecurity and trust in the Arab region and would try to overview the legal and regulatory cybersecurity structures and frameworks in selected member countries, cybersecurity and Internet economy, and cybersecurity of financial technologies for inclusion. Linkages between cybersecurity and the other pillars of the Roadmap for Internet Governance would be examined.  The meeting is expected to support Internet governance stakeholders to operationalize the 2017 second Arab Roadmap for Internet Governance, in relation to one of its main strategic themes, the "Cybersecurity and Trust" related policy issues; and it is expected to advance regional partnerships needed for the convening of the fifth Arab IGF in 2019.

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[2] Outcome of the 2015 WSIS high-level meeting, para 77: http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95707.pdf
[3] The alignment of WSIS and sustainable development entails that the review of its implementation in 2025 would feed into the process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
[4] For more information: https://www.unescwa.org/sub-site/arabDIG

**4       ORGANIZATION**

The meeting is organized by ESCWA, in partnership with the League of Arab States, from 4 to 7 December 2018, at the UN-House in Beirut, Lebanon (MZ Hall, B1 level).  The ICT Policies Section of the Technology for Development Division is leading the efforts of ESCWA in the area of Internet governance and is managing the convening of this meeting.

**5       PARTICIPATION**

Participation would mainly include experts in the area of cybersecurity and Internet governance, together with members of the Arab IGF programme committee and AIGF2020 working groups for the Roadmap; and participation would also include invited experts from the various stakeholders, Governments, business sector, civil Society, academic and technical community, international and regional organizations, and experts in their individual capacities.  Participants include policy- and decision-makers who are interested and involved in the Internet governance process and its related thematic areas, as well as experts working on linkages between Internet governance and sustainable development in the Arab region.

**6       LANGUAGES**

Arabic and English are the working languages of the meeting, and participants are expected to either know both languages or rely on the translation that is planned for the meeting between both languages.

**7       ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND CORRESPONDENCES**

The web page below provides additional information on the meeting.  For correspondences, please do sent an email to ESCWA-ArabIGF@un.org.

https://www.unescwa.org/ArabIGF-Internet-security-trust