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One of the important problems faced by activists or volunteers is the quest for funding which will allow participation in main conferences and events. This is more critical for people from developing countries.

I was very lucky that the Canadian government offered me a rare opportunity to participate again in the IGF and so to be more involved in the process. It is important not just to be there, but also to actively participate in order to benefit the community and to be effective.

Even though I am of outside Tunisia now, I remain involved locally in my country and participation in the IGF 2008 allowed me to meet with Tunisian officials. I was also able to consolidate my collaboration with the newly-established "Arab World Internet Institute", which is a non-governmental regional organization committed to independent research about the Internet in the Arab World. I was able to reactivate the Creative Commons Tunisia license which will help in achieving regional progress in the Commons and in joining the Arab Commons initiative.

First, even if I am participating in the process during the whole year and interacting with many people, meeting them face-to-face at an event like the IGF remains essential. Moreover, it is the most effective way to network, which means enhancing and promoting my current projects, contacting people and starting new projects and establishing partnerships, especially for supporting youth participation and involving the ICANN process within the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) and the Noncommercial Users Constituency (NCUC).

As I am currently living in Japan and was wondering how to involve the local community in IG, my participation at the IGF in Hyderabad provided me with the opportunity to get to know the Japanese people involved in the process and to start discussions with them in order to engage with the Japanese community.

After the IGF, I have continued these discussions, especially with my work to promote the IGF and help the Japanese people become aware of the process. I also met the director of ICVolunteer who proposed that I stay in contact with its Japan office and introduced me to people there.

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As member of Internet Bill of Rights (IBR) steering committee, it was possible for me to follow an important change in this dynamic coalition with the ongoing merge of the IBR and Freedom of Expression coalitions and to start debate about issues and opportunities with other members, many of whom I met for the first time at the Hyderabad IGF.

This IGF was also the beginning of preparations for the IGF Egypt. It was a great opportunity to meet people from Africa and the MENA region to figure out how we can participate in the next edition and how we can work to become more and more effective. It was a time to start planning for projects related to the next event, with a focus on local participation and involvement. India is a good example of effective and deep local wide spectrum participation and it was good to learn how India succeeded in achieving this.

I am the technical coordinator of the IGF Remote Participation Working Group, which added a very successful element for inclusion at the IGF 2008, so I was in contact with a local Indian company (Dimdim) that provided the platform needed for remote participation. It was important to consolidate our year-long preparation process with this physical presence, to carry out our theoretical strategies as a foundation for future projects. Remote participation offers us a practical, economical, effective solution to foster greater inclusion of marginalized communities in all international processes, not just the IGF. This working experience was an important part of the RP construction process for me.





Many sessions left me afraid for the future of the Internet that we know now. Two issues were debated intensely: online child protection and cyber-crime. There are dangers hidden in these issues, as they can be used or mis-used to regulate the Internet and to threaten many rights. This realization helped make me aware that we need to prepare efficiently and in advance for the next edition of the IGF, and to continue follow-up for discussions started this year as well.

I hope that Internet which we know now can be preserved, and that we manage to avert any threats that can damage it. Of course we need to improve it, to encourage multistakeholderism, to develop new ways to govern it, but this cannot be done by losing elements such as openness or access. As long as countries like Canada and India are present in the process and providing resources for participation to people from developing countries, and organizing and hosting the IGF, our hope remains viable. ■



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A row of white classical columns with a red 'EXTRACT' sign. The sign is a red-bordered rectangle with the word 'EXTRACT' in red, italicized, sans-serif capital letters. The background is a grayscale image of the columns, with a semi-transparent dark gray area at the bottom containing the main title and subtitle.

EXTRACT

*This extract was originally published as part of the report:
Capacity Development: How the Internet Governance
Forum empowered people from developing countries*

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

**How the Internet Governance Forum
empowered people from developing countries**