

WTPF: ITU Convening Takes Up Internet Governance Questions This Week

by [Emma Llansó](#) [1]
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Tuesday, governments and other stakeholders from around the world will convene in Geneva for the World Telecommunications Policy Forum (WTPF), the International Telecommunication Union's first major convening since the [World Conference on International Telecommunications \(WCIT\) in December](#) [2]. Internet issues are squarely on the table at [WTPF](#) [3] and, while the Forum won't produce binding outcomes à la the treaty that was under negotiation at the WCIT, we're going to be watching the debates around the [Secretary-General's report](#) [4] and the draft consensus [opinions](#) [5] very closely.

These opinions, which focus on broadband connectivity and Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), the IPv6 transition, and the importance of multistakeholder approaches to Internet governance, were developed in a months-long process conducted by an Informal Experts Group that included ITU Member States as well as members of the technical community, industry, and civil society. They will help shape discussions of these issues at the ITU, including at the upcoming Plenipotentiary in 2014. While these draft opinions aren't perfect – see CDT's analysis of the report and opinions [here](#) [6] – it's not clear that they could be improved by opening the text up for re-negotiation. WTPF runs just 3 short days, from the 14-16 of May, meaning time is limited to engage in extensive deliberation over the precise wording of the output documents.

Instead, we hope to see discussions focus on finding concrete solutions to the identified challenges. Fortunately, contributions from [Sector Members ISOC](#) [7] and the [Regional Internet Registries \(RIRs\)](#) [8] bring substantive expertise to the table, laying out the on-going work that these technically-focused multistakeholder NGOs are engaged in to address real-world needs like the deployment of IXPs and allocation of a diminishing supply of IPv4 addresses during the transition to IPv6. These contributions demonstrate the critical need to have more than just government stakeholders actively participating in the conversation over these globally important issues.

Matthew Shears (now officially CDT Director for the [Project on Global Internet Policy and Human Rights](#) [9]) and I will both be attending WTPF – Matthew, as a member of the IEG, and I as an independent member of civil society in “observer” status. Matthew joined three other civil society members of the IEG in offering [comments](#) [10] on the opinions and the Secretary-General's report, and we hope to continue to be able to provide input into the discussions during the Forum.

We'll be reporting from WTPF on CDT's blog and on Twitter (through @cendemtech and @ellanso) throughout the week. The meetings will be live-streamed on the [ITU's website](#) [11], so members of the public can follow the discussions as they happen.

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