

GISWatch  
10th anniversary

# GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH

*National and Regional Internet  
Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs)*



ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESSIVE COMMUNICATIONS (APC)

# Global Information Society Watch

**2017**



Global Information Society Watch 2017  
National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs)

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A special edition of GISWatch, "Internet governance from the edges: NRIs in their own words", is being published as a companion edition to the 2017 GISWatch annual report. It looks at the history, challenges and achievements of NRIs, as recounted by their organisers. It is available at <https://www.giswatch.org>

# BRAZIL

THE BRAZILIAN INTERNET FORUM, 2011-2017



## Instituto Nupef

Oona Castro and Carlos A. Afonso<sup>1</sup>  
<https://nupef.org.br>

## Introduction

This report provides an overview of the historical development of the Brazilian Internet Governance Forum (IGF)<sup>2</sup> – referred to as the “Brazilian Internet Forum” (*Forum da Internet no Brasil*), or FIB. It comprises four sections: (a) a general overview of the project sponsored by the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br)<sup>3</sup> since 2011; (b) a detailed report on the different forums from 2011 to 2016 (with a focus on facts, figures and key milestones), as well as a description of what is expected regarding the upcoming Forum in 2017; (c) an assessment of the intersections and synergies of the FIB and other processes within the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region – especially the LACIGF – as well as globally;<sup>4</sup> and (d) a concluding section with a description of some prospective challenges and opportunities not only for the Forum itself but also for multistakeholder participation in internet governance affairs in Brazil and elsewhere.

## An overview of the Brazilian IGF

Brazil played a pioneering role in establishing multistakeholder structures for internet governance with the creation of CGI.br in 1995. According to its official description, CGI.br is currently comprised of members from the government, the corporate sector, the “third sector”<sup>5</sup> and the “scientific and technological”<sup>6</sup> community. In total there are eight representatives from the federal government, one representative of the state secretariats of science

and technology, four representatives from the corporate for-profit sector, four representatives from non-profit civil society organisations, three representatives from the academic community, and one internet expert.<sup>7</sup> All the decisions made by CGI.br are implemented by the Brazilian Network Information Centre (NIC.br),<sup>8</sup> a non-profit private civil society organisation serving as the executive arm of CGI.br.

In the LAC region, organised activities that were the result of the global United Nations (UN) IGF started to take shape in 2008, with the first regional IGF in Montevideo. Despite the fact that Brazil hosted the second global IGF in 2007, and that the committee supported the first regional IGF in 2008, CGI.br organised the first FIB only in 2011. Since then, six national forums have been held – and the seventh is being prepared – by CGI.br in partnership with local organisations interested or involved in aspects of internet governance. The overall objective is to bring together “participants from the government, business, academia, civil society organisations, technicians, students, and all those interested and those involved in the discussions and issues regarding the internet in Brazil and worldwide.”<sup>9</sup> The Forum is promoted, sponsored and organised by CGI.br.

## Seven years of history: Facts, figures and key milestones

CGI.br, LACNIC, APC and other organisations in the region have supported LACIGF since its first edition in 2008, in Montevideo. The first Brazilian IGF was held in 2011, in the same year as the 4th LACIGF (Trinidad and Tobago), and two years after the launch of CGI.br’s “Principles for the Governance and Use of the Internet”.<sup>10</sup> The Principles served as

1 The authors thank Diego Canabarro, Carlos Cecconi and Vinicius Santos, members of CGI.br’s advisory team, for their help in providing crucial analytical information for this report. The responsibility for the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report rests solely with the authors.

2 [forumdalinternet.cgi.br/en](http://forumdalinternet.cgi.br/en)

3 <https://www.cgi.br/about>

4 <https://lacigf.org>

5 The members are elected by an electoral college composed of individual non-commercial non-profit civil society organisations; the college does not include associations of non-profits.

6 The members are elected by an electoral college of academic associations.

7 Since September 2003, non-governmental CGI.br members are elected for three-year mandates by their own constituencies.

8 <https://www.nic.br/about-nic-br>

9 [forumdalinternet.cgi.br/en](http://forumdalinternet.cgi.br/en)

10 This charter of principles was the result of a two-year process of discussions in CGI.br which was finally concluded in 2009, with full consensus of the committee. It became a strategic reference of action for the committee and was the seed for the building of the *Marco Civil*. <https://www.cgi.br/principles>

the pillars for the thematic structure of the first Brazilian IGF, and have remained a thematic reference for the event since then.

### Agenda setting and structure

As the organiser of the FIB, CGI.br has the support of an advisory team and the infrastructure made available by NIC.br. Each Forum starts with setting up a “mobilisation commission”, formed after a discussion and nomination process carried out by the four stakeholder groups that are part of the board of CGI.br. The commission is comprised of at least four members, each member from a different stakeholder group (government, business, technical community and academia, and the “third sector”).

The commission, supported by CGI.br’s advisory team, is responsible for defining the general structure of the Forum, within the scope of the collective decisions previously made by the CGI.br board. It develops the programme for the Forum, deciding on themes and agendas, selecting workshop proposals submitted by the community, and deciding on panellists and speakers, among other activities. It is also responsible for ensuring that key principles are adhered to, for example, that there is multistakeholder participation on the panels during the event. In many respects its role at the national level is similar to the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) of the global IGF itself.

The main activity streams that have structured the FIB from 2011 to 2016 are:

- “Tracks”: These are generic thematic tracks that make up a big part of the schedule. They deal with umbrella subjects such as network neutrality, the digital divide, internet legal frameworks and regulation, and privacy and data protection, among others. Within a track there are also sub-groups formed to deepen the discussions.
- “Panels” and plenary sessions: These are specific sessions dealing with hot topics on the internet agenda. In general the panels have tried to answer the demands of public debate, delving into important themes being discussed in the country (e.g. internet shutdowns and net neutrality violations). There are also plenary sessions at the end of each event, where the final session reports are presented and the audience is given an opportunity to respond and share their perspectives.
- “Workshops” and short courses: Up until 2016, these sessions have dealt with subjects aimed chiefly at the technical audience. For the 2017 Forum, the term “workshop” will mean a workshop as conceived by the global IGF, as the FIB as a whole is changing its structure to be more

similar to the global IGF while maintaining its approach of documenting the overall event, identifying consensus topics to be further discussed and disagreements among participants.

The following list details the main topics discussed in each edition of the FIB – several of the topics are extracted from CGI.br’s charter of principles:

- 2011: Freedom, privacy and human rights; Democratic and collaborative governance; Universal access and digital inclusion; Diversity and content; “Principles for the Governance and Use of the Internet” by CGI.br; Legal and regulatory environment; and Security and non-liability of network intermediaries.
- 2012: Enforcement of internet rights and the *Marco Civil*;<sup>11</sup> Intellectual property on the internet; Fast bandwidth and digital inclusion: what should we do?; How to support national content and platforms on the World Wide Web; and Global internet, global governance.
- 2013: Universality, accessibility and diversity; Technological innovation and business models for the internet; Privacy, non-liability of network intermediaries and freedom of expression; and Net neutrality.
- 2014: Innovation and entrepreneurship; Security and privacy; and Internet and legislation.
- 2015: Challenges for digital inclusion; Internet economy; Cybersecurity and trust; and Internet and human rights.
- 2016: Universalisation and digital inclusion; Security and rights on the internet; Cultural content and production; and Innovation and technological capacity building.

### Methodology

The FIB may go beyond the IGF themes, seeking to promote a dialogue on key internet issues in Brazil, but also looks beyond the country’s borders, and produces thematic reports as a result of the discussions. These documents have served as an information and knowledge base for Brazil’s participation in the LACIGF and in the global IGF.

<sup>11</sup> *Marco Civil da Internet* (Brazilian Internet Civil Rights Framework) is the name of the most important internet regulatory framework in Brazil. It stemmed from a popular mobilisation, was discussed in an open digital platform from 2009 to 2011, and after going through legislative proceedings between 2011 and 2014, it was enacted as Law 12.965 in April 2014, sanctioned by President Dilma Rousseff during the NETmundial meeting in São Paulo. The *Marco Civil* deals with fundamental rights and obligations related to the internet in the country, involving diversity, access, network neutrality, privacy and so on. It is worth mentioning that the FIB was one of the relevant spaces in which the *Marco Civil* was discussed by multiple stakeholders.

**TABLE 1.**

**Cities where the FIB has been held**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (upcoming)
City	São Paulo (SP) - Southeast	Recife (PE) - Northeast	Belém (PA) - North	São Paulo (SP) - Southeast	Salvador (BA) - Northeast	Porto Alegre (RS) - South	Rio de Janeiro (RJ) - Southeast

The multistakeholder approach is taken into account throughout the processes of holding the event, starting, as mentioned, with the mobilisation commission, which is comprised of representatives from each stakeholder group. In the overall process, the choices made always consider parameters such as equal footing among stakeholders, the power relationship between the different sectors, the region of the country represented, and gender. Therefore, all the panels and main tracks of discussion have been composed with the need for balance in mind.

During the event there is a professional team of rapporteurs documenting all the discussions in a structured way, and consolidating them in reports that reflect what happened in each session, and at the FIB as a whole. The reports reflect consensus achieved, topics to be further discussed, and disagreements among participants. A summary version of these reports is read to the audience in a plenary session at the end of the event, making it possible for the participants to complement or to correct information.

**Locations**

The FIB is carried out in different regions of Brazil to amplify its presence across the country and to stimulate local participation. The location for each

year must be discussed and approved by the CGI.br board. Table 1 lists the cities in which the Forum has been held in the past as well as its prospective location for 2017.

Cost considerations for each year influence the location choices. Brazil is geographically divided into five regions, and the Southeastern and Southern regions are the best connected. The FIB has not yet been held in the Central-West region (where the federal capital, Brasília, is located), which will probably be the choice for the 2018 meeting.

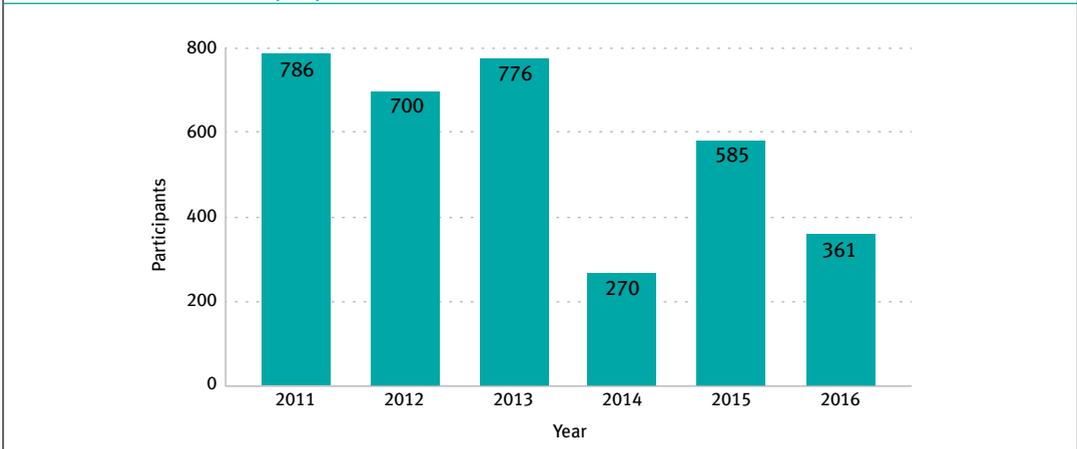
**Number of participants in each Forum**

Figure 1 details the number of attendees at each FIB event (web-enabled remote participation is excluded).

While the level of participation was high and stable for the first three years of the Forum, the numbers dropped from 2014 onwards. In 2014, specifically, the FIB was held immediately after (and in the same venue as) the NETmundial<sup>12</sup> meeting, when the *Marco Civil* was officially sanctioned. Those two back-to-back events were lengthy and time-consuming processes for the Brazilian stakeholders, which might explain the lowest turnout in the series. In 2015, the level of participation

**FIGURE 1.**

**Number of FIB attendees per year**



<sup>12</sup> Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance. [netmundial.br](http://netmundial.br)

TABLE 2.	
Milestones that influenced the FIB agenda	
2011	Marco Civil submitted to Congress.
2012	Reading of the first draft of Marco Civil by the event's rapporteur, Congress member Alessandro Molon; SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect IP Act) <sup>a</sup> were having an impact internationally.
2013	Reactions to Snowden's revelations.
2014	Follow-up to NETmundial event that had just been held.
2015	Special track on cultural diversity in celebration of 20 years of CGI.br; 10th global IGF in João Pessoa; Salvador Letter <sup>b</sup> about the future of the internet in Brazil.
2016	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and internet governance alignment; meeting of consulting commissions of CGI.br as part of FIB agenda; screening of documentaries <i>The Computers</i> <sup>c</sup> and <i>Freenet</i> , <sup>d</sup> which have been helpful in outreach activities to raise awareness about the important role women have for the development of ICTs as well as on the challenges to keep the internet free; panel on "Women in Computing"; launch of the Network Rights Coalition <sup>e</sup> and the Internet Declaration by young Brazilians. <sup>f</sup>
<p>a) Both SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Act) and PIPA (Protect IP Act) were controversial legislative proposals in the United States Congress in 2012, which faced heavy opposition from civil society and academic sectors. Protesters argued that there were no safeguards against these laws being used for censorship by the US government. b) The Salvador Letter was a manifesto written by civil society representatives at the 5th FIB. It demanded that drafts of legislation should be opened for inputs by civil society and that laws regarding the internet should aim at keeping it free, open and a global resource available to everyone. The letter also reinforced the importance of net neutrality principles, as well as the protection of users' personal data. <a href="http://forumdalinternet.cgi.br/library/CartaSalvador.html">forumdalinternet.cgi.br/library/CartaSalvador.html</a>. c) Available at: <a href="http://eniacprogrammers.org/documentary-info">eniacprogrammers.org/documentary-info</a>. d) Available at: <a href="https://www.freenetfilm.org.br">https://www.freenetfilm.org.br</a>. e) The Coalition is a group of civil society organisations, movements and individuals formed to coordinate actions protecting civil rights on the internet. <a href="https://direitosnarede.org.br">https://direitosnarede.org.br</a>. f) <a href="https://igf2015.br/pt-BR/declaration">igf2015.br/pt-BR/declaration</a>.</p>	

increased, but in 2016 the number of participants dropped again – last year's event took place amidst the widespread political and economic crisis in Brazil. As a consequence, the CGI.br board had decided to reduce the amount of funding available for supporting public participation in the event. Additionally, the place chosen for the event (in order to cope with the need for geographic rotation of the venue) was far from the city, in a rainy season. These factors helped discourage more participation (nearly half of the people registered did not attend).

The relatively strong participation in 2011-2013 can be attributed in part to the intense national debates on the *Marco Civil*.

### Milestones

Table 2 summarises events and processes which had an influence on the FIB's agenda in each year.

### FIB and other internet governance processes

CGI.br has taken on a key role in supporting the global IGF by agreeing in 2016 to lead the coordination of the Friends of the IGF (FoIGF),<sup>13</sup> which aims to make content from the IGF more accessible. It will do this by providing in-house support for the maintenance of the current website and working to develop a process for the streamlined importation of IGF 2016 videos and transcripts into the FoIGF database; identifying supporters and raising resources for the development and implementation of a new website for the FoIGF; and conducting

outreach and engagement activities to build an ecosystem of support for FoIGF.<sup>14</sup>

The project involves the maintenance of a structured database of documents, videos and transcripts produced during every single global IGF event. The web portal is currently being adapted to serve as a redundant space for the National and Regional IGF Initiatives (NRIs) to publicise the content they produce.

At the same time, the FIB is actively engaged in discussions that have been carried on by the IGF Support Association, which aims to raise "additional funding from individuals, companies and foundations to keep the IGF the go-to event for everyone who is interested in the Internet and its governance."<sup>15</sup>

Parallel discussions on internet governance have also contributed to the identification of intersections and the development of synergies between the national IGF in Brazil and elsewhere. In 2016, for example, the FIB hosted a session on the future of the internet and its role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A similar session was held during the LACIGF, and Brazilian stakeholders involved with the FIB presented the Brazilian experience in detail. Both tracks culminated in several discussions taking place during the global IGF in Guadalajara.

Another example of such alignment is the Youth@IGF programme which was run at the 2015

<sup>13</sup> [friendsoftheigf.org](http://friendsoftheigf.org)

<sup>14</sup> [friendsoftheigf.org/about](http://friendsoftheigf.org/about)

<sup>15</sup> [www.igf.org](http://www.igf.org)

global IGF in João Pessoa in Brazil. This was a partnership between CGI.br and the Internet Society (ISOC). The programme – which aims to enable the participation of young people in the internet governance arena – resonated in the 2016 FIB and in the 2016 and 2017 LACIGFs. The LAC Youth Group is now thriving, and has become one of the most active stakeholders in the global internet governance policy arena. Other issues – such as community networks, the use of spectrum frequencies for internet access provision, efforts to reduce the gender gap, and multilingualism – are areas in which there is likely to be cooperation between the Brazilian IGF and other internet governance processes.

The extent to which the outputs from the regional IGFs are relevant to Brazil cannot be easily measured. The first regional event in 2008 produced a useful document of conclusions and recommendations; the second regional event published an interesting outcomes document with several general recommendations. In 2010 a good summary of the debates also presented general recommendations. The LACIGF in Trinidad and Tobago (2011) was held together with the 7th Caribbean IGF, and the final document emphasised the importance of enhanced regional dialogue. There is scant available documentation on the outputs for the 2012-2015 regional IGFs. The 2016 event in Costa Rica produced a strong consensus document in defence of internet freedom. This shows there is no consistent methodology on outputs and documentation, an issue which should be taken into account for the next regional events.

## Conclusions

The 7th FIB will take place in Rio de Janeiro between 14 and 17 November 2017. The overall theme for the event is the same as the theme for the 2017 global IGF, “Shape Your Digital Future”, and the FIB will also mirror the format of the global IGF in order to contribute to formal and substantial interoperability between the two processes. It will include a “Day Zero” with open-ended events in the same venue as the event, just ahead of the official start of the FIB.

A collaborative and open process similar to the one carried out by the global IGF’s MAG was developed in order to define the list of workshops (panels, debates, roundtables, etc.) that will form the 2017 agenda. An external multistakeholder evaluation commission was assembled by CGI.br in order to assess and rank workshop proposals, providing a rationale for CGI.br’s final decision on the full agenda. Besides workshops, CGI.br will hold three main sessions that will focus on still-to-be defined topics (but most likely issues that are high on the internet policy agenda in the country).

Besides representing an effort to increase the level of participation in the organisation and execution of the FIB, the decision to refashion the whole FIB structure was taken by CGI.br with the aim of fostering a positive feedback loop between the national and international processes, and developing a common policy agenda influenced both by international realities and realities in Brazil. Such a bridge would facilitate a permanent inward-outward flow of ideas, best practices and solutions between Brazilian stakeholders and stakeholders from the larger internet governance community. At this point we are not in a position to assert whether such an enterprise will correctly serve the purposes presented above. Continued monitoring of that development is advisable.

## Action steps

The following steps are suggested for Brazil:

- Strengthen the networking activities of local stakeholders which may contribute to a more proactive role in internet governance processes and policy development in Brazil.
- Work to ensure more effective engagement and participation in FIB by people and organisations from other countries that are part of international networks and involved in topics which are key to Brazil.
- In line with the above action step, build capacity among and active partnerships with interested stakeholders from other countries.
- Raise awareness on international best practices which may be relevant to the national context.

# National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs)

National and Regional Internet Governance Forum Initiatives (NRIs) are now widely recognised as a vital element of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) process. In fact, they are seen to be the key to the sustainability and ongoing evolution of collaborative, inclusive and multistakeholder approaches to internet policy development and implementation.

A total of 54 reports on NRIs are gathered in this year's Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch). These include 40 country reports from contexts as diverse as the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Colombia.

The country reports are rich in approach and style and highlight several challenges faced by activists organising and participating in national IGFs, including broadening stakeholder participation, capacity building, the unsettled role of governments, and impact.

Seven regional reports analyse the impact of regional IGFs, their evolution and challenges, and the risks they still need to take to shift governance to the next level, while seven thematic reports offer critical perspectives on NRIs as well as mapping initiatives globally.

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