Curated by: Amrita Choudhury, Bibek Silwal & Pavel Farhan with support of APRALO Members

From APRALO Chair Amrita Choudhury

Dear APRALO community

Greetings!

As the year draws to an end it is time to reflect on what we have achieved this year and plan for the year ahead.

This year we had the opportunity to meet once again at the General Assembly, taking stock and also planning ahead to strengthen our work through our ALSes and Individual members in the region. We worked together to formulate our Outreach and Engagement plan for this year. The APRALO Policy Forum held several Fireside chats, discussions and Readouts.
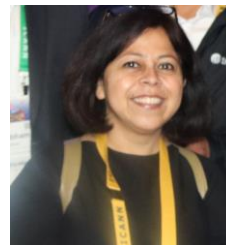
In 2024 we plan to further strengthen our joint initiatives and engagement in the region, work in strengthening the ICANN Policy development process and strengthen the ICANN multistakeholder model.

Do continue to engage and contribute.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous 2024!

Warm Regards,

Amrita

From APRALO Vice Chair Aris Ignacio

Hello and good day to all!

As we bid farewell to a phenomenal year, your steadfast commitment has been the cornerstone of our success in local and global engagements. Your pivotal role in three exceptional ICANN meetings underscores the strength and dedication of our community. Looking ahead, we urge you to sustain your active involvement in all ICANN and APRALO initiatives. Attend our monthly calls, readouts, fireside chats, and the vital policy forum, where your insights are crucial.

In our ongoing efforts to foster collaboration, we are compiling a list of local and national ICANN-related events. Your contributions to this initiative will enhance our shared calendar and deepen our connections.

Your dedication has been integral to APRALO's success, and as we embrace the opportunities of 2023, let us collectively strive for an even more impactful year.

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment!

Happy holidays everyone!

Yours truly,
Aris

From APRALO Vice Chair Ali AlMeshal

Greetings everyone,

In this month's message, I would like to shed light on some of the latest trends in the digital world and their impact on the Domain Name System (DNS).

The domain name industry has undergone a significant transformation by integrating artificial intelligence (AI). AI is changing how businesses manage, acquire, and optimize digital identities. With AI-powered security systems, businesses can quickly identify and mitigate potential threats, safeguarding their online presence from malicious activities. AI algorithms also optimize domain portfolios by analyzing performance metrics, market trends, and user behavior, assisting organizations in making informed decisions about renewing, selling, or acquiring domain names. Furthermore, AI-powered chatbots streamline customer interactions, offering personalized and instantaneous experiences while freeing up human resources for more complex tasks. The future convergence of AI and blockchain technologies will revolutionize how domain ownership is verified, offering enhanced security and transparency. The impact of AI on the domain name industry is multifaceted, ranging from simplifying the naming process to fortifying cybersecurity measures. As technology advances, the synergy between AI and the domain industry will likely redefine the digital landscape, fostering a more secure, efficient, and dynamic online presence for businesses and individuals.

Best regards.

Ali AlMeshal

ICANN Updates

Contractual Changes

ICANN's Contracted Parties House has approved the proposed amendments to the registrar and registry contracts to deal with Domain Name System (DNS) Abuse. This includes definition of DNS Abuse, specific obligations to take action against domains being used for DNS Abuse, recognising that contracted parties should take reasonable care in selecting and implementing mitigation activities, etc.

New Initiatives

- Government Engagement Team has launched a page listing the Community Opportunities for Policy Contribution.
- Introduced Multi-Factor Authentication Options to enhance ICANN Account Security

Announced

- ICANN 81 Annual General Meeting will take place between 9–14 November 2024 at the Istanbul Congress Center.

- The nextGen@79 list and the ICANN79 fellows list. Amina Ramallah from Nigeria was announced as the recipient of the Tarek Kamel Fellowship Recognition Award and James Kunle Olorundare from Nigeria as the recipient of the Paul Muchene Fellow Award.

- Increasing the functionality of Label Generation Rules Toolset

ICANN Updates

Opportunities

- Applications are [invited for the ICANN fellowship for the ICANN80 meeting](#) to be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 10–13 June by 29 December.
- Call for [Expressions of Interest for the ICANN Ombuds position](#) by 8 January
- [Nomination](#) are being accepted for the [ICANN Community Excellence Award](#) till 8 January 2024
- Application are now invited for the [Community Childcare Grants Program](#) for ICANN79 in San Juan, Puerto Rico till 26 January

Published

[ICANN FY24 Q1 management financial statements](#) and the [PTI FY24Q1 management financial statements](#) were published.
Published [Draft Final Report of the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study](#)

Submissions

- To the ICANN [EU Network and Information Systems Cooperation Group Work Stream for art.28 NIS2,](#) increased the [functionality of Label Generation Rules Toolset](#).
- For [the 2023 Annual Report to UNCTAD](#)

ICANN Updates

Webinars

- Draft ICANN Fiscal Year (FY) 25–29 Operating and Financial Plan and the Draft ICANN FY25 Operating Plan and Budget on 13 December 1:00 UTC and 13 December 2023 at 17:00 UTC,
- Webinar on Framework for Public Interest and Registry Voluntary Commitments on 18 December

Comments Invited

Draft ICANN FY25 Plans and PTI FY25 Operating Plans and Budget by 12 February.

Blog

- A Look Back at ICANN78
- ICANN Strengthens Key Partnerships: 2023 Africa Internet Summit in South Africa
- ICANN Debuts Updated Engagement Calendar
- ICANN Board Leaves FY21–FY25 Strategic Plan Unchanged
- Streamlining Resource Requests from the ICANN Community
- ICANN Mobile Network Operator Day 2023: Strengthening the DNS Ecosystem Security
- Laying the Groundwork for the Next Phase of the New gTLD Program
- ICANN Middle East and Africa Region: A Year in Review
- ICANN Publishes Paper on Defense Mechanisms Against Harmful Internet Content
- Reflecting on 2023: ICANN in Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia
- A Look Back on 2023
- ICANN Grant Program: Recapping Progress and Next Steps
- Reflecting on a Year of Change

Contribute to the ICANN & ALAC Policy Proceedings

Visit the [At-Large Policy Advice Development Page](#) or contact At-Large Staff for more information.

To **contribute to ALAC policy activity**, on the At-Large workspace or volunteer as penholder and join the weekly At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) meetings.

APRALO Community can participate in selected policy-related discussions being taken up from a regional perspective through the APRALO Policy Forum. For more information, please visit the [APRALO Policy Forum workspace](#) or contact At-Large Staff.

Important Links to Visit

[At-Large Website on Public Comments and Policy Advice](#)
[Executive Summaries: ALAC Public Comments and Advice](#)
[Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG)](#)
[At-Large Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group (OFB-WG)](#)

APRALO November Call

In the The APRALO Monthly November monthly call was held on 16 November.In this call the newly appointed leaders (Ali Almeshal, Justine Chew, Shah Zahidur Rahman, Maureen Hilyard) from APRALO shared in brief what they would be focussing on. This was followed by an interactive discussion with Sarmad Hussain on the UA Day application process,criteria and expectations from APRALO. The APRALO Outreach and Engagement Plan was discussed. This was followed by ICANN78 fellows, Sarai Faleupolu Tevita, Vesmira Harutyunyan, Naima Awan Edwin Sandys sharing their experience and outlining how they plan to engage in the ICANN community along with the support they are looking for.

Cheryl briefly outlined the work being done by the Rules of Procedure working group and Shah updated the participants on the upcoming capacity building initiatives of APRALO Policy Forum.

Participants shared their feedback on what they would prefer to be discussed in the monthly calls.

Tell us what you would like to be discuss in the APRALO Monthly Calls
36 responses

APRALO December Call

The APRALO Monthly December monthly call was held on 21 December. At the call updates were shared from the different working groups. Shah presented on the Operation & Financial WG; Satish on CPWG; Justine on the APRALO Policy Forum, Cheryl on the Rules Of Procedure WG and Maureen on NomCom.

In the next section, the spotlight was on the work being done by our ALSes and UIMs. Ashirward Tripathy from Nepal, Amin Hacha from Lebanon, Ghayoor Bawary from ISOC Afghanistan and Faheem Soomro an individual member shared their journeys and plans ahead. Further ALS members Bikram Shrestha and Vladimer Svanadze shared their recent activities.

The recording of the event is available here and the agenda here. The next call will be on 18 January 2024 at 6 UTC.
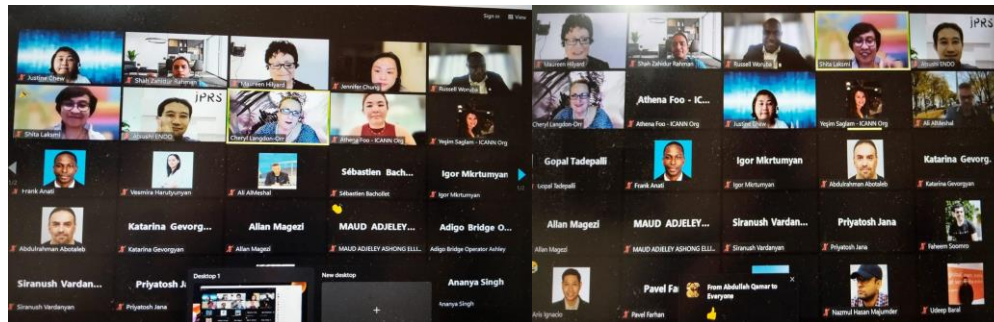
APRALO Policy Forum Update

By Justine Chew & Shah Zahidur Rahman

After a rather hectic September-October schedule of APRALO/ICANN Meetings, the APRALO Policy Forum (APF) returned to its regular scheduling and delivered 3 key events in November and December.

APRALO ICANN78 Readout, 9 November 2023

APF organised an interactive ICANN78 Readout. The speakers were, **Maureen Hilyard** (APRALO), **Shita Laksmi**, ICANN78 Fellow, **Jennifer Chung** (GNSO), **Russell Woruba** (GAC-PNG) and Atsushi ENDO, ccNSO. Moderator **Cheryl Langdon-Orr** (APRALO) invited each panellist to elaborate on their takeaways from ICANN78. They also discussed with the forty-five event participants how individual end-users or APRALO could play a role in actioning some of those takeaways. Panellists clearly shared a sense of camaraderie when speaking about their engagement at ICANN78, encouraging participants to join in meaningful dialogue, as equal stakeholders across the AP Region. Key observations: need to deepen a common understanding & voice for stronger regional representation and engagement in ICANN governance, DNS operating policies and sustainability, support for the next AP-located DNS Forum, and presence of APRALO Members at the ALAC's 20th Anniversary Celebrations.
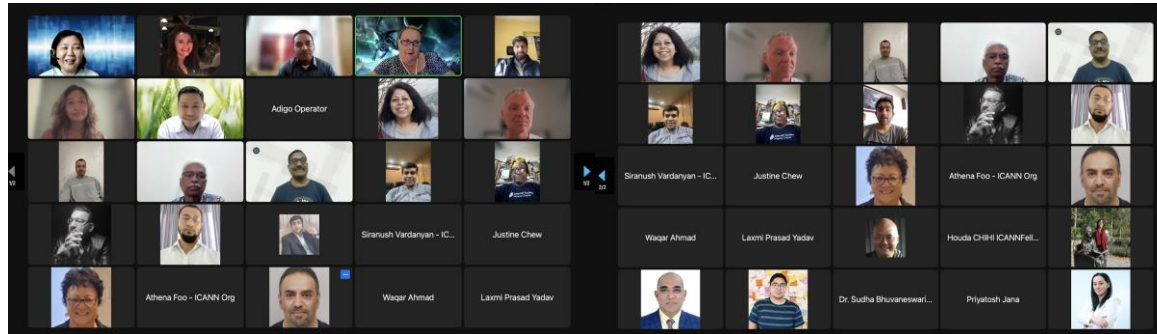

See or comment on the event wiki & takeaways report, or watch the ICANN78 Readout recording.

Webinar #2 on Next Round of New gTLDs: A Primer on Applicant Support, 23 November 2023

In response to feedback received during the 2 APF Town Hall Planning sessions held in August 2023, the APF kicked off a webinar series around the New generic Top-Level Domains (gTLD) Program. Following Webinar #1 which provided an overview of the Program, particularly from the At-Large perspective, we conducted Webinar #2, which focused on the Applicant Support Program (ASP) of the New gTLD Program. Thirty-four Webinar #2 participants got to engage with **Justine Chew**, the former At-Large Liaison for Subsequent Procedures, and now the ALAC-appointed member to the Subsequent Procedures Implementation Review Team (SubPro IRT) as she reviewed the learnings on the ASP implementation in the 2012 round of New gTLD application and spoke to the ICANN Board-approved consensus policy recommendations on ASP expected to be implemented ahead of the next round's target launch date of Apr 2026. We're pleased to note that this webinar series continues to draw some interest from non-APRALO Members.
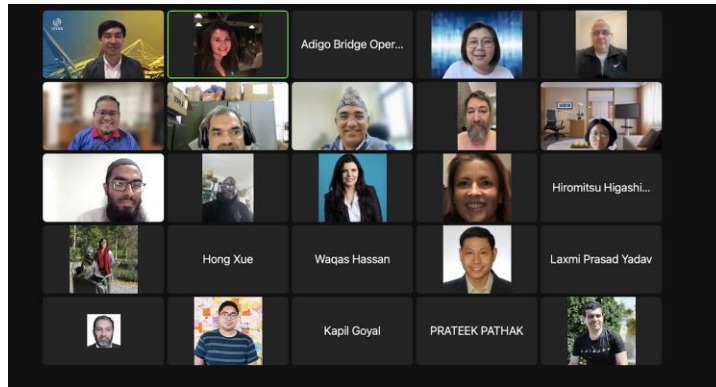

See or comment on the event wiki, or watch the Webinar #2 recording.

APF Fireside Chat #3: Let's Talk About Internet Fragmentation, 7 December 2023

The 4th APRALO Fireside Chat featured a conversation between **Jia-Rong Low**, ICANN Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement and Managing Director - Asia Pacific, and **Justine Chew,** APRALO Policy Forum Chair, about Internet Fragmentation. Thirty six participants joined the conversation in gaining a common understanding of Internet Fragmentation, its potential impact on ICANN and individual end-users, in respect of ICANN's mandate and any wider role in Internet Governance. Jia-Rong deftly explained ICANN's narrow remit in the global Internet infrastructure space and discussed ways in which the end-user community could support the protection of the publicly available, globally interconnected Internet against fragmentation.Participants found this conversation useful and felt that it should be an ongoing one, as challenges in keeping fragmentation at bay continue to arise due to various reasons including geopolitical pressures, and a lack of understanding by key stakeholders, all of which potentially lead to unintended consequences impacting the Internet as a global resource.

"One World, One Internet"!

See or comment on the event wiki, or watch the Fireside Chat #4 recording.

<u>Wrapping up 2023</u>

We're pleased to have listened to our Members' feedback in delivering the range of activities throughout the year (click here to review the mandate and deliverables of the APF). Along the lines of the inaugural APF Town Hall sessions that we hosted back in August, we will continue to consult, plan and deliver desired activities in 2024 as we did for a good part of 2023. Please join us next year!

Look out for announcements!

Click here to get more details on the APRALO Policy Forum's activities, or click here to check and/or comment on the APF Planning Calendar for H2 of 2023

F2F meeting of the members of the Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on IDNs - Satish Babu

The Expedited Policy Development Process (EPDP) on Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) met in Kuala Lumpur from December 6-8, 2023, aiming to refine IDN variant policies for upcoming new generic top-level domains (gTLDs). Divided into two phases, the project addressed top-level issues in Phase 1, with its report submitted in November 2023.

This meeting primarily focused on expediting Phase 2, centered around registry-specific concerns in managing second-level domains. While highly productive, discussions in Kuala Lumpur left one issue unresolved: aligning IDN tables. However, they confirmed implementing four Phase 1 principles at the second level. Additionally, they opted for an Expert Working Group model for IDN Implementation Guidelines v4.1 due to consistent security and stability implications across gTLDs and ccTLDs.

The Phase 2 report's final language is expected by mid-February 2024, followed by a public comment phase, seeking input from the At-Large community in CPWG meetings.

ICANN NomCom Report - Maureen Hilyard

The new ICANN NomCom team met for the first time at an Onboarding session in Hamburg and together we set goals for important NomCom tasks for 2024. At-Large has 5 members on the NomCom. The others are Seun Ojedeji (AF), Alfredo Calderon (NA) Betty Fausta (EU) and Lia Hernandez (LAC). We also have former ALAC member, Naveed Bin Rais, representing RSSAC, and Amir Qayyum who is the Chair of this year's NomCom. For 2024, the positions that are being offered are for the ICANN Board (3), ALAC (2) and one each for the ccNSO and GNSO Councils. We encourage anyone who believes they fit the position descriptions to apply. More information as it comes to hand.

THREE OPEN POSITIONS
THREE-YEAR TERM
ICANN Board of Directors

TWO OPEN POSITIONS
TWO-YEAR TERM
At-Large Advisory Committee
• Europe
• North America

ONE OPEN POSITION
THREE-YEAR TERM
ccNSO Council

ONE OPEN POSITION
TWO-YEAR TERM
GNSO Council
[non-voting]

Final Update on the GNSO Guidance Process (GGP) on the Applicant Support Programme – Maureen Hilyard.

The GGP Working Group held its final meeting on 4 December 2023 and sent its final report, following a call for public comment, to the GNSO Council for their vote of approval at their December meeting. The ALAC was represented on the cross-community GGP Working Group by APRALO members, Maureen Hilyard and Satish Babu. The recommendations in the GGP report cover a range of issues that could impact on what information and resources could be made available for applicants who may seek help or their applications during the next round of new gTLDs.

ALSes could play a significant role in getting important messages about the applications process out into their communities. The key target group for this next round of support will be potential applicants in regions which are currently underserved by ICANN and/or the wider domain name industry. More information about the imminent applicant programme and any related support, will become available, from the Implementation Review Team and the GNSO. You can access a copy of the Final GGP Recommendations Report from here.

ALAC Subcommittee on Outreach & Engagement – Aris Ignacio

Outreach and engagement events across Asia Pacific and APRALO can send their events and its details to ICANN Staff for updating the calendar in the wiki page. To learn more about the O&E Subcommittee and its engagements, visit this link.

Operations Finance and Budget Working Group Update - Shah Zahidur Rahman

The OFB-WG is finalising the process for receiving At-Large funding request and including the same into the ALAC's response to the Draft ICANN FY25 Operating plan and Budget which is open for public comment.

All Funding Requests, should be submitted by 7 January 2024 along with detailed explanation on the purpose and scope of the proposed activity, its alignment with the ICANN mission and strategic plan for fiscal year 2021-2025 and ALAC strategic priorities. In addition there should be clear demonstration on how the proposed activity is related to ongoing or anticipated ICANN and ALAC policy work and will impact the whole At Large community (either in terms of policy position and/or advice development, operations, or engagement such as capacity building activities that are aligned with the ALAC's strategic priorities)

At the WG call an update on the ICANN Grant Program was presented by Shayna Robinson, Grant Program Director, ICANN Org. The grant program will open in the first quarter of 2024. The Grant project details, for the first cycle is USD 10 million, while the Grant awards will range between USD 50,000 up to USD 500,000 with Maximum duration of projects is 24 months etc. For more details visit: https://community.icann.org/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=132940946

8th Edition of Asia Pacific School of Internet Governance 2023
### -Satish Babu, APSIG Chair

The eighth edition of the Asia-Pacific School on Internet Governance (APSIG) was organized in Manila, Philippines, during 27-29 Nov 2023, with a Day 0 on 26 Nov 2023. The local hosts for the event were ISOC Philippines and BluePoint Foundation.

A total of 37 Fellows from 18 economies, including 11 Local Fellows from the Philippines, participated.Apart from the five members of the APSIG Executive Committee, other resource persons who were present onsite included Edmon Chung (ICANN Board/DotAsia), Srinivas Chendi (APNIC), Gunela Astrbrink (ISOC Standing Committee on Disability), Waqas Hasan (APrIGF), Winthrop Yu (ISOC Philippines), Aris Ignacio (ISOC Philippines), Engels Antonio (BluePoint Foundation), Magie Antonio (BluePoint Foundation), and Noelle Francesca de Guzman (Internet Society).

Remote presenters included Yien Chyn Tan (ICANN), Aftab Siddiqui (Internet Society), Edmundo "Toti" Casiño, Michael Caster (Article 19), and Justine Chew (ALAC, ICANN).

Three persons with disabilities were selected as Fellows (Ms Manique Gunaratne from Sri Lanka, Mr Vidhya Yella Reddy from India, and Mr Eshaq Shahin Bhuyan from Bangladesh).
The details of the APSIG program are available here.
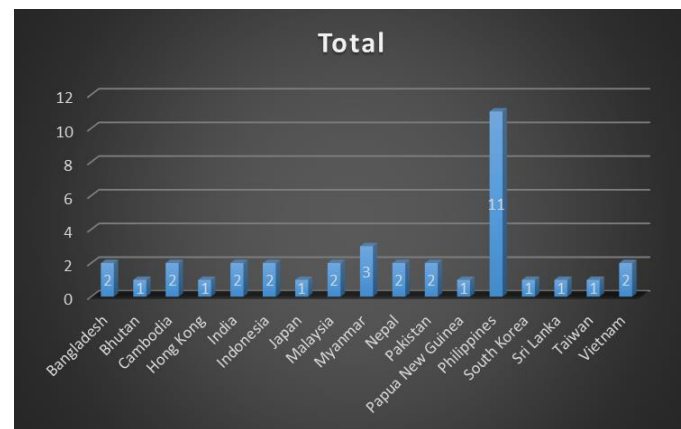
Webinar on What is UA and UA Day?
-Shreedeep Rayamajhi, Rayznews

Rayznews, in association with Learn Internet Governance and ICANN Circle, organized an interaction program with the Universal Acceptance (UA) vice chair Nabil Benamar to discuss the importance and priorities of UA in our communities.

The UA became a crucial topic in developing economies where communities had multiple languages and dialects. Promoting one's language and facilitating dialogue became a major challenge at the local level, particularly in regions where English served as the standard and primary means of communication.

The event, held on December 20, 2023, from 9-10 UTC, marked an opportunity for participants to engage with Nabil Benamar on these vital aspects of Universal Acceptance. The significance of UA in accommodating diverse linguistic landscapes and fostering inclusive communication was explored, addressing the challenges faced in regions with linguistic diversity.

Digital Talk Podcast from Nepal Internet Foundation
- Bikram Shrestha

- Nepal Internet Foundation has initiated a podcast series **Digital Talk** to sensitise the Nepali community on the various government initiatives and also to gather inputs from the far flung communities.

- The podcasts discuss aspects of the Digital Nepal Framework ranging from:
    - Digital Foundation
    - Agriculture
    - Health
    - Education
    - Energy
    - Tourism
    - Finance
    - Urban Infrastructure

- The podcasts also discuss the eighty Digital Initiatives planned by the government to drive socioeconomic growth and achieve sustainable development goals.
- Link to the podcast **https://www.youtube.com/@digitaltalknepal**
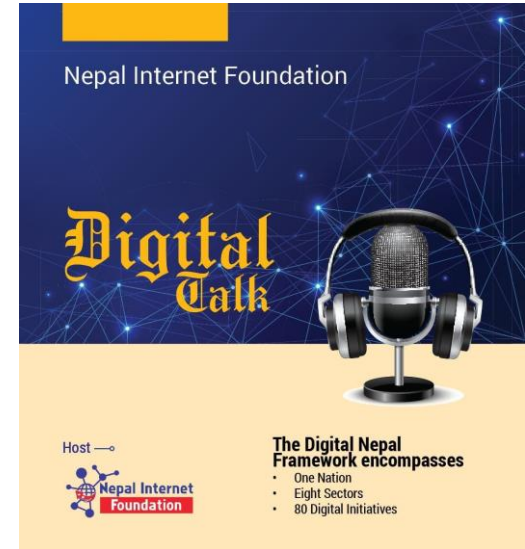
Initiatives from ISOC Georgia
- Dr. Vladimir Svanadze

- ALS representative Dr. Vladimir Svanadze created a training module on Internet Governance and Cyber Diplomacy for a master's program

- ISOC Georgia was one of the organisers of the Georgian Internet Governance Forum (GeoIGF2023), Vladimir spoke and moderated the session on Internet Fragmentation.

- Vladimir spoke at the Georgian Information Technology and Innovation (GITI2023) on the issue of Internet Fragmentation.

Initiatives from Cyber Peace Foundation, India
- Harish Chowdhary

- In the months of November and December, CPF has been involved in conducting activities on issues ranging from cybersecurity, child rights in online gaming (in Goa),capacity building in schools, discussion on responsible use of AI, and workshop to deliberate on challenges of deep fakes.

Other Updates

Other Opportunities

- There is a call for application for the ITU SGs youth Advisory Board till 12 January.

- The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is inviting comments on the 20-year review of WSIS implementation by 15 February 2024. Link for submission: https://forms.office.com/e/U9J073421u

- Submit your comments on the thematic inputs for IGF2024 till 31 January 2024.

Thank You for reading the Newsletter!

Do send you feedback and comments to:

amritachoudhury@ccaoi.in, pavelpft@gmail.com, bsilwal123@gmail.com