<u>**Singapore IGF – June 17, 2011: Session 1**</u>

**The Arabic Revolutions, their Impact on the World, Roles of Social Networks, Lessons for effective but representative Internet  Governance for soon arriving Multilingual Internet  (Live Video)**

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End: 10.30a.m

Chair: Khaled Fattal

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Emcee: So now, without further delay, let us begin our first session for today. That is, the Arabic Revolutions, their impact on the world, roles of social networks and lessons for effective but representative Internet governance for soon arriving multi-lingual Internet .

For today, I would like to invite Sir Khaled Fattal who is the group chairman of The Multi-lingual Internet Group and Ankaboot Social Network, so could you please chair the issues.

## Topic A

Khaled Fattal: Thank you very much. Could we start the video call now with the members who are joining us remotely?

(Dial – LIVE call)

Khaled Fattal: While the Skype is calling, and we're hoping for better connection for some of the members who will be joining us in this debate, let me just let you know how the format is going to be.

This is going to be a bit unconventional, probably befitting the revolutions we've seen in the Arabic world. This is going to be an interactive session.

We are not going to be making lots of speeches. But we are going to be addressing the topics that have been placed in the agendas, which were referred to by our emcee earlier on.

And the topics are actually pretty straightforward.

We are talking about the impact of the Arabic revolutions, their role in changing local society: where they have succeeded and where they have not succeeded yet.

We want to ask why and we want your input as to why you think, for example in Tunisia and Egypt, those social networks did work; did succeed in changing the local governments and toppled existing dictatorships but in other places they have not yet.

We also want to discuss the subject of the coming Internet in multi-lingual and how does the format of representation of the people in a mechanism that is effective, that brings in Internet governance in an effective way.

There will be other things, which we will be discussing as well. I think you have the program in front of you.

In the meanwhile, I would like to give the opportunity to Rafik to surprise everybody. He just arrived on an airplane this morning so he has not slept.

Rafik, would you like to have a few words on the topic of today, please.

Rafik Dammak: Thank you everybody for attending this session.

As a Tunisian, I am really happy to have the opportunity to talk about this revolution with you.

What I can say is that the Internet did play an important role for the people in Tunisia, for the information, because the government was trying to control the flow of the information about the events.

People using the Internet and more specifically, the social network, informed each other and also reached the outside of Tunisia to try and get the attention of other people about what is happening.

It was not that easy because first: the revolution started during the winter holidays so it wasn't really easy to get the attention of the people.

But for one month, the Internet played an important role to let people learn, especially in Tunisia, about what is happening in those regions.

I think the example of Egypt is the most complete example about the usage of Internet in organizing protests and also going forward.

We have others; it's not a domino effect, but we have many countries trying to follow the example so I'm not sure if we can call this the Arab springs or not but for today, the talks will be more about the link between the Internet policy and Internet governance and this whole revolution.

Maybe after this, I can find out whether some things happened because of that – but focusing on the Internet policies side.

Khaled Fattal: Thank you, Rafik.

Actually, to start off to make this really interactive: members of the audience here, I would like your participation.

Anybody have any specific question regarding the revolutions in the Arab world, their impact, and the role of social media, raise your hands. Anybody?

I have two hands from one person. Professor Peng Hwa, please.

Professor Ang Peng Hwa: Rafik, there are so many questions.

So, I want to know, basically the role of the Internet, social media and maybe to some extent the mobile phone in the Arab revolution or the Arab spring. So, I think that is one.

I think it's interesting that it seems to be sort of spreading and the question that comes to mind is whether there was some similar social context because usually the Media – and I teach and research the Media – by itself isn't really powerful. It needs a certain context for things to happen. So I think you need to paint the context first and then add on the layer of Internet and media and see to what extent they played a part. And then the question also would be: what if there had been no Internet or mobile phone – would this Arab spring still have developed, or not? I think that would tell us how important the Internet and social media are.

Khaled Fattal: I think these are very good questions and I would like to address those.

At least we have some participants who were supposed to join us today in the morning from Damascus, from Syria; we have some from Egypt, from Tunisia, from Beirut, Lebanon and from Amman.

Unfortunately, remember its three o'clock in the morning in their time zone and some of them as you know, in some regions would have a challenge getting to the Internet because of the government restrictions and what's going on.

But at least let me ask one of the participants who is online now.

Ebrahim, can you hear me?

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Speaks to Khaled in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Allow me to speak to him in Arabic.

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

I'm going to pose a question to Ebrahim so at least he can start comparing the Tunisian experience that Rafik wanted to discuss before and then compare that with the Egyptian revolution.

And the question that was asked by Professor Peng Hwa just now: Will the revolution have taken place without mobile phones or Internet in Egypt and Tunisia? This is what we are going to ask.

Rafik, I would like to give you the floor to answer that question first, please.

Rafik Dammak: It could have happened without the Internet and mobile phone.

Maybe it would have taken a lot more time to happen, because, for example in Tunisia, there were uprisings before but only in some areas. And we could not get information and it did not spread to the many other towns and cities in Tunisia. But also in that time, it was in 2008 – we did not have so many users on Facebook.

But in 2011, we have around 2.5 million users so it was more easy to use Facebook as a video-sharing platform to let people know what is happening – in just two years.

For mobile phones, honestly, I don't think there was or is any kind of data to compare with on how people use it, the mobile phones, to share or organize. I think it's likely they used it to send short message to organize or call people to join the protest.

You said the media, its not enough – the problem is for people outside. For example, in Tunisia, first it happened in Sidi Bouzid; it's a really poor region. If people outside Sidi Bouzid did not know what is happening, I don't think they could organize a protest in other cities.

So what happened in Tunisia then was it began in Sidi Bouzid and afterwards it spread to the neighbor of Sidi Bouzid and spread on to other regions. And that's why it becomes important. It's not just because of one protest.

Khaled Fattal: And I think if I may add, this is partly where we find commonalities.

I'm going to jump in and out of Arabic and English so that those who are online can actually follow us.

Ebrahim, did you hear that question or would you like me to ask that again in Arabic for you?

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Speaks to Khaled in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Ok, you can hear me.

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

So Ebrahim will join us and will give us the answer to your question, Professor.

Please Ebrahim, go ahead.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Speaks to Khaled in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Let me just translate – This is Ebrahim Abouhief connecting with us from Egypt.

Please Ebrahim, go ahead.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Speaking in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: (Speaking in Arabic to Ebrahim)

Ebrahim is saying that he believes that there would still have been a revolution in Egypt without the mobile phones, without the Internet.

But as Rafik may have mentioned, the challenges would have been different because the roles of social media have actually helped in organizing and gathering people together so that they can feel that they are not alone.

It sounds like it would have taken a lot longer.

Let me just add my input to this: the role of media – Professor, you mentioned the role of media.

For most people who are living in the Middle East – the centralized media in the Middle East, in most countries is actually the state media. Now, the state media is standard. When the news comes on, it's always talking about what the King has received or said goodbye or the King has done this, it's his birthday, etc. It's normally very focused on the role of the government itself. So when it came to the role of the media in these events, the public stopped believing its authenticity.

So, all of a sudden now, what may have happened is the role of social media has prepared the public to start generating its own source of information that they believe is reliable. Now, some of it could actually have been infiltrated with misinformation but to a large extent for those who were organizing themselves, they knew where that information were coming from and they could sort of confirm its reliability and credibility. So this is probably where it might have been more helpful.

Personally in my own opinion, I do not believe that the revolutions could have taken place or for example, in the case of Tunisia and Egypt, that these dictators could have been overthrown without the role of social media because they were the tools – they were not reasons – that empowered those who had failed.

Just to add another example, in the last 30 years, there are at least two or three events every decade in the last 30 years that could have been a good cause for revolutions in the Arab world but they all failed to actually help the masses rally primarily because the apparatus of the local governments had been stronger versus the ability of the citizens to coordinate and cooperate; so that would be my answer.

Yes, an interaction from the floor? Could you please step up to the mike and could I please ask you to identify yourself as well.

Shoba: Hi, my name is Shoba and I'm a PhD student at the National University of Singapore.

My first question links back to what Professor Ang was asking about prior conditions before the revolution. There is some work done on print media and how youths were organizing themselves in Egypt using print media and other publications to get their voices heard. And I'm wondering if that formed a kind of priming influence because sometimes when we look at the social media we think it just started with that.

But there might have been some priming over the years of young people to get them politically engaged and perhaps that is why social media was able to be used so effectively.

My other question goes on for after the revolution: whether social media can be used to keep the momentum going. Because what happens very often is the political engagement is very high before the incident and after that it suddenly all dies down, and everything goes away.

We see that in Singapore as well on a very small scale with the general elections where everyone was going crazy on Facebook and Twitter and suddenly now, there's hardly anything. So I'm wondering now, with the Egyptian and Tunisian context, whether social media can be used.

Khaled Fattal: Sure, I think this is an excellent question – the second one, and the first one also, it's quite relevant.

The topic of what happens after revolution is one of the topics that you probably could gather that is in our program because in some parts of the Arab world, the revolutions have succeeded metaphorically, we can say – but there are still a lot of challenges and we can spend two days in debate and discussion about what's not happening still in Tunisia, about what's not happening still in Egypt – but we also recognize that in some other parts of the Arab world, the revolutions have not succeeded yet and the regimes have actually adapted to the role of social media and how to actually absorb it.

For example, I'm a Syrian-birth citizen so in Syria, the Internet was not cut but the Internet has actually been curtailed so its no longer dependable if you want to re-organize; whereas in Egypt, we all remember, the decision of the Ministry was to shut it off.

But the question here that we want to ask ourselves is why, one, why in some parts of the Arab world they succeeded and the other parts have not? And secondly, what do we do with social media post-revolution? How effective can it be?

Now, I have my own opinions but I want to ensure that this is also a debate and discussion. Would you like to address the question, the role of social media, Rafik, post-revolution?

Rafik Dammak: I can talk about social media post-revolution but the case of Egypt is totally different from Tunisia because for one, people thought that young people are not interested in politics in Tunisia.

But there were some groups of activists – the most important of them was the group Nawet. They played an important role during the revolution to aggregate all the information. Any kind of video, articles; they put it in one place and made it easy find the information.

I think the former Tunisian regime, somehow, helped the revolution because of their censorship and Internet filtering policy. For example, they blocked all the video-sharing platforms and they made Facebook the de facto video-sharing platform.

Everybody shared any kind of video on Facebook. Through sharing there, people can see it spread instantly.

If we compare us to the case of Egypt, how the Tunisian Internet architecture was designed in Tunisia, was that the government centralized everything to only one access point. They could really in that time, shut down the Internet easily but for some reason, they did not do that.

Some people call this the 'dictator Internet connection' because you keep the Internet connection but at the same time you try to control it.

I don't think the traditional media helped a lot in the case of Tunisia but the role of broadcast channels like Al Jazeera and Frast 24 were really important during that time because Internet can be useful for young people and those people who are connected but for others, its easier to watch TV and information from Al Jazeera during that time.

They didn't have a reporter on the ground in Tunisia – they just used the videos taken by the revolution people during protests and posted it on Facebook. It was kind of citizen journalism.

Until now, we don't know who did that. They uploaded videos and many, many TV stations used that. It was only after awhile that the government decided to let international TV to go on the ground but it was too late.

For after the revolution, the problem now is that we still don't have the media, which can help a democratic transition. We have the same people there and the other problem with the Facebook is that it becomes a space for conspiracy theories.

You have people making a video of themselves talking about different theories. So social media becomes less reliable for information and it's unfortunate because a democratic transition is more complicated and more challenging because we have a problem because we don't know who is behind that and there is no consensus. People are thinking in all sorts of different ways.

Khaled Fattal: Actually, just a reminder for most people here in our presence – I'm not quite sure if you are aware but in Tunisia, after the revolution what we would call as 'people power' and after the President had run away, the first government that came in contained members of the old regime; so people went back onto the streets again and they objected to that government.

And then, as a consequence of the pressure, the government fell and a new government came into place as these numbers grew. But then, the people went back to the streets because they felt as if it was looking very superficial.

In a matter of 6 weeks – I can't remember exactly – in less than two months, the revolution or the people had gone back to the streets continuously and forced 3 changes of governments. What that tells you is: the role of social media was effective in making them heard in terms of what their demands are. And it forced three successive governments in a matter of 6 weeks until they got National Unity Government to transition and prepare for elections, which are supposed to take place next month.

Rafik Dammak: No.

Khaled Fattal: It's been pushed forward? At least, it's going to be pushed forward for another two months; or something like that?

Rafik Dammak: 23$^{rd}$ of October.

Khaled Fattal: So, the key here is to building a democratic country; a democratic set-up with institutions – this is where the challenge is going to come: whether the role of social media and social network is going to come in and occupy that space. Because from experience, and to simplify what we have seen in Egypt, Tunisia and many Arab countries is that social media has helped rally people around. It actually gave them a platform to make them feel that they are not alone and most people who were watching what was going on in Egypt would have recognized that at the beginning, even the revolution, the members of the revolution who ended up in millions in Tahir Square did not know whether they could really get rid of Mubarak. It became a frenzy. So, it has implications.

I think if I can bring Ebrahim to give us his opinion. Ebrahim, can you please give us your answer on whether you think there is an important role for the social media after the revolution, like it was before the revolution?

I'm going to translate the question to Arabic.

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Speaks to Khaled in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Ebrahim is acknowledging full-heartedly the role of social media in the revolution – so I am just going to paraphrase. Go ahead, Ebrahim.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Continues in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: What he is also adding is that the impact of Tunisia's success of getting rid of Ben Ali, the President of Tunisia, gave huge impact on their ability to feel that they had a shot or a chance to do the same in Egypt.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Continues in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: This is an important thing about Ebrahim that I must add: Ebrahim was very heavily involved in and the organization of the revolution in Egypt and he's also a journalist, by the way.

He was referring to an event which took place in 2008 in Egypt which was to do with a social unrest because there was a workers' strike and the event of that strike was so strong that it was believed that if the strike and the events had taken place for another two hours – we are not talking two days or two weeks – there was a chance that the government then might have fallen. That is debatable; but this is what Ebrahim is saying.

Go ahead, Ebrahim.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Continues in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: The question I'm asking and posing to Ebrahim is: the impact and what he thinks the role of social media is now, after the revolution?

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Answers in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Ebrahim is also describing that after the revolution, there is still a lot of interest in social media, but it's more interactive and is about people's aspirations.

The question I will re-ask is: the importance o the social media in helping in building institutions – is social media capable in providing this platform?

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Answers in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Interesting. The answer I'm getting is that the events that have succeeded the revolution in Egypt, the participation of people within the social media and especially Facebook has actually helped create a link between the members of the revolution with the new government so that the process of understanding between the two sides can still come about.

I'm not quite sure if that is actually leading to the formation of new institutions but at least its actually having a role in bringing about dialogue and bridging the gap between the positions of the government of old and the desire of the people.

At the present time, we have those who… Yes, questions, please? Please identify yourself, thank you.

Ng Tze Yong: Good morning, my name is Tze Yong and I'm the Social Media Editor at the Straits Times and I would like to thank the organizers for organizing this and for the panel to share their lessons with us.

I believe in the power of social media but for the sake of this discussion I want to play devil's advocate. There is a romance associated with social media from the origins of Google starting out in a garage to Facebook starting out in a public dorm to Obama's campaign and now, to the Egyptian revolution. So, going forward what is the implication of this romance?

Could it be that it makes us over-estimate the power of social media? And if we look at the revolutions today in Syria and the other places, which took place after the Egyptian revolution, could it be that lives were lost because people over-estimated the power of social media after the Egyptian revolution?

Khaled Fattal: Before we answer your question, and I believe there are some good answers to this one, can you give me your personal opinion first as to why you think it happened?

I know you asked this question but I'm just asking to see how would you answer it based on your experience as a journalist because you are a journalist in the Asian community and you are watching what is going on the Middle East as it happens there so you would probably have a unique angle of that experience, please.

Ng Tze Yong: I do think that it is very easy to over-estimate the power of social media. This doesn't just happen in the political arena. It happens in marketing – people think that they can make money out of social media but its not social media is not powerful but the story is so compelling and because it's so new, it tends to put blinkers on us.

For example, the reportage of the Egyptian and the Tunisian revolution – I think a lot of it was focused on the social media and I think that had an impact on the rest of the Arab region and that may have made them put less attention on the non-social media aspects of having a successful revolution.

Khaled Fattal: I think you are very, very close and you are sharing an opinion that I think I will share with you as well. Primarily because, the media, if you want to call it the international media, whenever they are reporting about a story, they have to give it a brand, a picture, a characteristic so that it would become easier for them to discuss it.

And social networks were, in my opinion, the actual images of these revolutions. However, if we ask ourselves – I'll give you another answer.

About a month and a half ago, I was participating in an event in Kuwait. It was the Arab media forum and this event was a huge media event that included major networks, the satellite channels; many of them were actually the top news reporters who were participating or covering the revolution.

And the subject matter came up about the relevance of credibility in media. For example, if you read a story in the New York Times (NYT), you can actually say, "You know, it's a news story coming from the NYT, so you have credibility; you have authenticity. It has the background of the brand of NYT.

The problem with social media is: in Tunisia, it surprised everybody. By the time it got to Egypt, not many were surprised but some people started now, to manoeuvre around it. So one of the information that was authentic was also mixed with information that was not there was authentic. You have no way of validating the information. Anybody can go online and put whatever they want and this is part of the challenge that actually, by the time it got to Syria, Yemen, and parts of the Arab world, social media became used by different players to serve different purposes that you had no relevant authentication or credibility unless you knew the person who was posting.

This is part of the challenge. And this is probably part of why, in Egypt and Tunisia, it succeeded but in other parts it has not succeeded because now you have a political apparatus at a local level and international level coming in to use the same platform. It's no longer unique to the revolution. It also became a part of the apparatus of the regime.

I hope that actually answers your question and I think this is a huge issue that is worth debating for the future.

Rafik, would you like to add to that, please.

Rafik Dammak: I think it is a good question about the role of social media and how media, foreign media wrote about that.

About the rumours, I think it's more about the narratives of the foreign media. After the revolution, some media that wanted me to help them find people to talk about the revolution contacted me. All the time, they were looking cyber activists; bloggers and sometimes, they

find people on Twitter and on the tweets where they are looking for someone to talk about the revolution.

It happened like all things, that there was one who was bashing the revolution. After the revolution, he was interviewed on CBS for the 60 minutes only because the media were looking for specific narratives: social media revolution, Facebook revolution, Twitter revolution, Wiki Leaks revolution. But the reality is, in terms of social media's, people use it; people in Tunisia and Egypt use it – social media and the Internet – but it just played some role there but it was not the most important part of the revolution.

And there is a danger, and also my worry, that people outside in other authoritarian states: they think that just using social media can topple a government. I think the best reference about that is – you can read the book about it for yourself – it's called Net Delusion. That guy was also what they call, a cyber utopian. He thought that just using the Internet could change things. After he was more pragmatic, more than that, he became a cyber pessimist. We need to be careful. Social media is a tool but it's not the end. It needs more to make a protest. In Tunisia, we didn't really use social media to organize. It was mostly for information sharing and if we talked about social sharing, it was mostly on Facebook because there were not too many users on Twitter. Maybe just 1,000 or 2,000 that's all.

Back to the question about after the revolution and the role of social media and Internet – I think now, one of the trends in Tunisia is that people are talking about open governance and open data and there are different initiatives on that matter. So, how we use the Internet to create a new institution but we need to fix a really basic problem, which is Internet access. We have just 30% of people connected to the Internet. You cannot create this open governance, everything; based on Internet and forget about the 70%.

Khaled Fattal: Absolutely, absolutely. Thank you, Rafik.

We have a question from the chat room. The question is from NTV:

We often use the word success. How do we define success and how can we measure it in the latest of impact of social media on social revolutions? How necessary is it to measure impact?

You know, now, we are getting to the scientific arena of measuring information. Perhaps I can answer it this way, and perhaps by linking it to our second topic of the day and the topic is Topic B in the program.

**Topic B**

Khaled Fattal: It says, 'It is clear that these popular revolutions have started to force a change on not only their local politics, but on global politics. Recently President Obama stood clearly in support of the legitimate demands of these Arab revolutions, and the US and its G8 partners have pledged to support the Arab Uprising with the cancelling of old debts and making new pledges in the billions of dollars in aid to show they are in support of these New People Power Revolutions.'

Now, quite clearly, we can conclude there has been an impact on not only local politics but also on global politics. The G8 is now committing to aid to these revolutions, to these new governments and so did President Obama. The question here is, and I would like to get feedback from you guys, and from Rafik and from Ebrahim as well – will these aid go to support these revolutions or will these aid go to the new powers; some of which have started looking like they're absorbing the revolutions. Who would like to answer that?

Would you like to touch on that briefly Rafik – Are you happy with the progress the Tunisian government has made since the revolution?

Rafik Dammak: For the government, I think it was a big mistake to put as Prime Minister someone who was Minister at the time of Reagan and the Soviet Union.

Khaled Fattal: Yes. Do you think he's from the old school and that he's too old for the new Tunisia?

Rafik Dammak: Perhaps. It will take him some time to learn about democratic process. For the aid, surprisingly, after the revolution we have United States, the European Union and different countries that want to help Tunisia and they are putting a lot of money, especially to fund civil society for different projects.

For example, for the next election, for the citizen monitoring during the election period – that project will be funded by the State Department so the question and that is really important about what can happen in a critical thing like election is that if it is funded by a foreign government… I come from a region where it is really easy to make a conspiracy theory.

Khaled Fattal: To create conspiracy theories or to believe them?

Rafik Dammak: To create, to believe and to spread them. So if the United States were to fund the elections, it would be easy for the people to make a conspiracy theory that maybe the United States is trying to meddle in the transition process.

Khaled Fattal: The question here is – you are touching on a very important subject, about the issue of conspiracy theories – the general Arab public, let's be honest; they are not stupid. They've clearly shown that they are very intelligent, that they are aware but there are plenty of conspiracy theories.

Do you think this is just because they are in doubt of how genuine what's going on around them is or is it because historically for years, they feel that they have been lied to and they don't believe anything anymore?

Rafik Dammak: We don't trust governments.

Khaled Fattal: Domestic and international, you mean?

Rafik Dammak: Yes, we don't trust governments which were supported by the United States so that's why projects like this: working in accountability and transparency are really important. We are not just working to create institutions but the transparent process can help people to have more trust and confidence.

Khaled Fattal: Thank you.  As a matter of fact, I hear this all the time. I travel around, all over the Middle East as well, and I will always hear this – Why are the Middle East citizens always talking about conspiracy theories? Most people don't know.

For example, and most people are too young to remember, the Iran Contra Affair which took place in 1986 over in the North and all that stuff was actually a huge disaster to the Iranian government. Most people don't realize that the story broke out from a news story in Beirut.

Now, it showed also that the US was actually conducting covert operations against the constitution, among other things, and most people in those regions started thinking that this was taking place everywhere. But there was no evidence.

So, when you hear about people claiming that the Middle East is always thinking about conspiracies, they have historical experience over decades of being deceived, lied to – they know what's going on and as Rafik has said, they don't trust governments. When a new government comes in and says we are going to promise you this, they say, "Yeah right, we've heard that before."

Going back to the topic that we were discussing today which is the role of international community and the dedication of funds towards these springs or revolutions in the Arab world. I would like to actually bring in Ebrahim to ask him his opinion over whether he thinks in Egypt, this money that the US is going to be giving to Egypt for this revolution, will go to the right people who support the revolution, or not?

Now, remember today, in Egypt, it is the military that is in-charge that has appointed the Prime Minister. So we see that Egypt is under military rule today.

(Speaks in Arabic to Ebrahim)

The question that I asked to Ebrahim was: do you think the aid will go to the institutions that will help support the desire of the revolution and the demands of the people, or not?

Ebrahim, you have the mike and give me the opportunity to translate for you as well.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Answers in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Sorry to interrupt you Ebrahim, but this is a very interesting comment. Ebrahim is saying in Egypt, many believe that the revolution can end and get rid of the Western reliance or Western connection between the power in Egypt and the West. He is saying that they don't want the aid. That's his position.

Go ahead, Ebrahim.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Continues in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: He's adding that there is tremendous amount of money coming into Egypt from expats who live overseas and there are a lot of investments that are coming in and he would prefer that the aid does not come in with the conditions that it normally comes with such that it will take away from the revolution itself.

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Continues in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Ebrahim is saying that he expects that Egypt will not follow the same footsteps as the Mubarak regime and there will be a change, if you want to call it, in the foreign policy approach.

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

Let me ask Ebrahim this question:

The funds or the aid will go to the military in Egypt today – and the military in Egypt as we all know, and you probably better than others, has not changed a lot from the Mubarak regime. So, do you think the US that is supporting the current government is helping the revolution or not helping the revolution?

(Speaks to Ebrahim in Arabic)

Ebrahim Abouhief: (Answers in Arabic)

Khaled Fattal: Ebrahim is clarifying that the government of Egypt is a civilian government but the military is in-charge of appointing that government. So the aid will go to the civilian government, and he hopes that the funds and the aid will come in to support the changes that the government is going to be implementing.

One of the things that we want to keep asking ourselves – we are today at an event called Internet governance and Internet governance has been a topic that has been ongoing since 2005 after the end of the World Summit.

The question here is:

Can we learn anything from the experiences from these Arabic revolutions – the role of social media in actually improving the mechanisms of Internet governance?

Many of us who have been involved in the space for more than a decade have seen the journey of the governance of the Internet from the days of the World Summit and Information

Society between 2001 and 2005 and have observed some of the challenges that the Internet Governance Forum has actually been through.

Let's be honest with each other.

Can I have a show of hands, how many can actually raise their hands saying that the successes of IGF means them feel so far, that we have done a fantastic job?

I don't see too many hands. So, how many would wish there were better successes on Internet governance? I see Professor's Ang Peng Hwa's two hands!

Let me just add this and I want to be controversial on this but I think it would invoke some thoughts. One of the most important issues today on the global Internet is child pornography. Now, I've always been saying, with child pornography, you are far more likely to get the most extreme members of the American society to agree with the most extreme of the Iranian society – that this subject should be dealt with and curtailed and controlled.

Now, on an issue like this and as simple as that, within the forum of governing the Internet, we have failed to come up with a solution that can actually bring about the law enforcement agencies to cooperate and bring down and actually save some of these children.

I will also recite a fact: this was an information where I was at an event in Geneva about a year ago and a member of Interpol was giving a presentation and he was a member of Scotland Yard as well.

He gave a statistic – he said in 2005, in the city of Manchester alone, the British police confiscated 500, only 500 images of child porn. This is 2005. By year 2010, the confiscated images were 1.5 million – Manchester alone. Now, if you can do the math, you can really figure out that on a global scale, this has actually mushroomed.

My question here is, and this is for all of us to ask:

What can we learn from what we've seen in social media and how it rallied people into having their position heard?

How can we actually improve the process of governing the Internet on issues that are less contentious than politics? This is an issue, for example, on protecting children.

Anybody wants to touch on that subject? What about the mandate of Internet Governance Forum – do you think the mandate has actually extended itself to enable us to have more representation by those local communities?

Ng Tze Yong: Maybe the starting point when it comes to child pornography is to look at it as an opportunity. Social media is here to stay and child pornography online will always be here. So how do we want to approach the problem? Do we want to clamp down on it or do we use it to get to the heart of the problem?

Apple and Google now have face recognition technology. What if we use that to identify the children and locate them? That will be a way of looking at this as an opportunity to solve the problem.

What if we set up fake sites and through that, you can trace the people who are using these sites? In a way, we are embracing these opportunities.

Khaled Fattal: I think there are some good possibilities. The answer to the second point you made about fake site: unless they are coordinated with local law enforcement agencies, there is a possibility that those who are going to do that might be perceived as promoting child porn and that would be subject to the laws, so that will not work.

I think your first point about face recognition, as you already know: whenever you come up with one solution, the law breakers will come up with another solution to actually overcome that.

I'm trying to discuss this from a governance point of view, not from a technical solution by let's say NGOs or a company like Google, a profit-generating company. If they can do something like this, I think that is fantastic – it goes to the heart of their social and moral responsibility.

But I don't expect them to come up with all those solutions because remember, in business, people are thinking in terms of profitability.

From a governance point of view, I'll give you a scenario and tell me what you think:

What if we came up with a chapter, a one-page chapter that actually will have members of the different law enforcement agencies form different countries sign-up; that they will co-operate with each other?

Now, we all know that the British and the Americans co-operate all the time because they are on good terms. But you want the co-operation to take places between those who are not on good terms.

Using this hypothetically: a member of the law enforcement agency in one country such as the head of the law enforcement agency, let's say the US with another country who are not normally on good terms. If they have a chapter on one issue, which is child pornography, these people could actually co-operate and take down these sites and perhaps save all these children.

So, the question here is governance:

What can we do about governance? Any thoughts on that, Professor Peng Hwa?

Professor Ang Peng Hwa: I guess I should make some comments because I've been working in this area on the enforcement side, of course.

Around 1999, when Austria was head of the EU, they did in their 6-months as President try to do something in this area. They had a couple of meetings here and there. There was also a book done; I think his name is Robinson Maxwell from Ireland.

So, there is some work done there but it's more from the European context. Part of it is the concern of how do we define child pornography that spills over to freedom of expression issues. And the other issue with child pornography is that actually, a lot of it is local – it is not international – although that is changing thanks to the Internet.

Khaled Fattal: So then, the opportunities are local?

Professor Ang Peng Hwa: Yes, a lot of it is local. But the poor joke usually was, "To stop child pornography, you should close down the airport", because people go there and its global when it gets there.

So, there is some need for political will in that. In theory, I think most countries had a law against child pornography. I thought Japan had it but I met a Japanese and I was told that they don't have law on child pornography and then again there is that issue on how you define what is child porn.

Some of the issues there are definition and some of the issues are no political will. I think, in a way, the issue is highlighted and its being worked on but at a global level, it is very difficult to come to an agreement even though we agree that this is a very bad crime.

Khaled Fattal: Thank you very much for this input and I think that this is very valuable information.

Let me just add to your comment. From experience from talking to many law enforcement agencies and even government representatives, whenever an agreement of sorts was actually put forth on this issue for them to cooperate, inevitably it always had attached to it other issues.

It was never a simple thing like saying, we are only going to be touching on just child pornography and this is what we are going to cooperate on. No, everything just starts jumping in.

The issue of freedom of expression, and I think this is a vital concept to factor in, in many social environments, cultures or societies, there is a clear cut understanding of where one starts and one ends. Where I think the challenge has come – and I can say this as an American citizen – and I think the biggest challenge has come from the United States because those who do not want any controls have actually utilized the argument of freedom of expression because then the question is where does it end when you start with this.

I think this is probably where the definition needs to come in so that we can resolve this issue.

Rafik, do you want to add anything on this subject? We are linking this to social media and how social networks help.

Rafik Dammak: For example, in Tunisia after 14th January, we thought that we had ended with the Internet censorship but now it's back in different ways. First, looking at some of the Facebook pages is now banned by a military court order because they called for violence but the most important censorship Act is for pornography to protect children.

The problem is that you have people who are really poor so social media can play an important role for awareness and education to let people understand that just hiding the problem does not fix it. We need to find a solution – maybe law enforcement – because it is better to shut down these websites which host these content rather than just use Internet filters, which can be circumvented easily.

I think that example of what's happened in many countries regarding Internet censorship has helped a lot with how we can deal with that. I know that the child protection law in many ways is used like a Trojan horse to implement Internet filtering. So, awareness and education can be more helpful to let people know what's happening and then learn how they can keep their kids safe when using the Internet.

Also, law enforcement has to play an important role to shut down these content which can be outside the country – for example, I don't think we have local content in Tunisia but the content can be available outside so you need this cooperation between the law enforcement agencies to takedown these content. That would work better than just having Internet filtering.

Khaled Fattal: Thank you Rafik.

As a matter of fact, we can clearly surmise on this that one angle of the solution is not enough – we need to bring in the parents to actually protect their own environment and their own children; we need to also do so online so there is a role for it, to make it more effective; law enforcement agencies, that means you can't escape the role of governments in the format of Internet governance of some sort.

I will give all of you an example – maybe you all have the same experiences here – in the UK; a major ISP has started implementing within its own network, a mechanism for people to implement their own safety and security. It's a new detail and I don't have all the details but it's by Talk Talk.

The government actually supports it because it's actually like what we were describing earlier on, one of the solutions from a service provider that is empowering its own users to allow what goes in from their system into their homes – not just blocking it from an email or a computer site but from their own network. I think that also is a component that could be added into this subject.

## Topic C

Khaled Fattal: We are now in the last 15 minutes in our program and Topic C, which, we have in our program, is about the coming multi-lingual Internet. Who here has heard of the new

gTLDs? I'm surprised and yet not surprised. Who has heard of ICAAN – raise your hands please. Just for the record, I have people who have not raised their hands in the hall here who have not heard of ICAAN, which is quite surprising to me.

ICAAN is the body that has been managing the domain name system so you know, .com, .net, .org and the rest. The new gTLDs are programmed by ICAAN, which has been in place for the last couple of years now to launch .whatever.

So it will be, if you want to call it, new choices for people and communities around the world to add to what exists today in .com. You can apply for .whatever and the next phase is no longer going to be only in English but it will also be in other languages. It will be in Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, Pashtu and whatever the language it can be raised in. So, you can literally apply for .something in Arabic and not only offer it on the Arabic Internet but the global environment.

This is called the new gTLDs. The new generic Top Level Domains. They are different from the country codes, which are pertaining to the global country codes like .fr for France, and .lb for Lebanon and etc. etc. where the registry of the local country manages and operates their rules and requirements.

Now, this is important because for the last 10 to 15 years, there has been a cry, an outcry, to make the global Internet multi-lingual. We had a choice – either we teach the world English, make them all part of it; or we try and make it part of their own local language.

I've personally been involved in this for longer than a decade and I feel that we are very close to actually arriving at this milestone which will bring new users of the Internet to be able to use it in their own native language.

Potentially, instead of having the1.5 to 2 billion users, which we have today, we are likely to jump to the next billion plus to add to them because they are going to be using it in their local language.

Now, in that sense from what I have described to you, how exciting does that sound?  Raise your hands if you want to say something.

Only two hands; three hands… Now, with the issue of governance that we are asking ourselves is:

Should the new gTLDs in local languages be governed by a single country's laws over the whole Internet?

This is a question for debate because today, if many of you don't know, the new gTLDs and their guidebook – if you want to call it the rules of how you apply and how you are measured – have a section on it that says all applicants will be screened against US laws. US laws to do with what are fine and what isn't; and this is what you will call the black list of the United States government.

So basically, if you want to apply for something in Chinese and the US government does not like you or your company or believe you don't fit its foreign policy apparatus or agenda: they have intelligence to put your name on that list. If your name is on that list, if your company is on that list, you will be declined to operate.

Now, do you think this is an actual point of concern as far as you are concerned, as far as your community is? So you can have the Internet in your own native language, but governed by the laws of another country.

Anybody ever think about this?

Rafik from Tunisia, how do you feel about that? Do you believe that the laws of another country, outside of the Arabic world, should govern the Arabic Internet? Do you think that is ok?

Rafik Dammak: My feeling is that we need a revolution on ICAAN. It's important that we have this thing called the open session. I understand that this is a big problem – how can we include the developing countries interests in such an organization?

That is why, for example, we have working groups because it's important that we can develop initiatives from developing countries. But still, I understand that ICAAN is a non-profit organization in California that has to follow the United States laws. I don't know how we can fix that.

Of course, ICAAN needs to be more international – they need to internationalize it and not just think in one way of reasoning, the US way. It should not be the continuation of the US foreign policy that is why I understand the problem is because its based on American standards and that will bring about some issues.

Khaled Fattal: Thank you. As a matter of fact, for most who most probably have not followed the subject, let me just give you a brief synopsis.

In the last 10 years when it comes to Internet governance, it started with the World Summit and Information Society in 2001 and finished in 2005. Briefly, just to get the synopsis, there was a really important debate over who runs and controls the Internet from China, Brazil and other countries who tried to make it an international process, perhaps the United Nations.

And there were those also who wanted to leave it in the hands of the US and the US themselves, were pushing on that and at the end, it just stayed the way it was.

One of the challenges was, while the status quo remained, in 2005 the IGF was created to allow people to debate but it was a condition that the IGF would be a non decision-making body and process.

I think we can remember from the IGF – a Secretariat can confirm what I'm saying – would that be correct, so far?

The question here is: these things, what we are discussing are not new. What we are discussing has been discussed or perhaps, avoided for more than 10 years. In the last 5 to 6 years through IGF, there have been many discussions on this but the discussions have been very much more like chatting where no actual solutions were being put forward.

As a matter of fact, I personally in at least 3, 4, maybe 5 discussions of the IGF, have gone on record to say that we need to discuss this so that solutions can be provided or discuss. It was never really put into any structure and then now, we are where we are.

The challenge here is, for those who have been waiting for the Internet to come in their own format that is their own language – little do they know, as you guys have shown, that this is going to be subject to the laws of a single country.

Now, a solution could have been brought about in discussions and it could have stayed under the US while recognizing other laws. But we are not talking about putting or taking ICAAN to Mars or taking it somewhere else.

The question here is: we all are celebrating something; we all want this Internet to become multi-lingual. We all want to bring the next three to four billion Internet users who could not have used it if it was not in their native language. But, the challenge that we are facing is that it is going to be subject to a law of one country. This is my opinion, my position but I believe that this is a concern of many governments and many members of the global Internet community.

We have 3 minutes left. Would anybody like to add any general questions or comments?

Please, Keith, give us a chance to close with a bang please.

Keith Davidson: Hi, my name is Keith Davidson. I think you are raising an interesting point, but it has been discussed and while there have been no resolutions, I really want to ask you:

If for example, there was a group of people who wanted to apply for .Arab. Just given the complexities of the laws in the Arab countries, you could either choose a single country under which that country's legal framework would apply or you could revert to the league of Arab states as a treaty organization which would certainly then only be given a treaty role.

Would that be preferable or more likely to be tempting to a group of Arab states compared to the US laws, notwithstanding the fact that ICAAN has been through the process of global discussions to create what would likely be the contract. So everyone has had a chance to influence the contract so by and large, the contract has been set as an international one already.

Khaled Fattal: I think you are raising some very good questions and some very good examples – using the Arab states as an example.

I am of the following opinion of the following philosophy: It is not for ICAAN – and I believe that they also believe this – to come up with solutions that actually will or will not benefit the local community. It is for them to come up with solutions will actually withstand the test of time.

Now, for example, if the Arabs cannot get their act together and have some kind of a localized, decentralized from the global centre of the Internet – the centralized system that allows their participation to this, then it is their problem.

As far as I see it, I don't believe creating a Mecca where all centre of power to the Internet, which is meant to be decentralized, and we are becoming that way, is a solution. While we use the Arab countries as an example, it's because with their unique challenges.

For example, we can use Korea. Korea has one language – from North to South, its still one language and the challenges are less severe in terms of governance if you want to do something in Korea than if you were to do it with Arabic.

The question here is: the structure that the ICAAN plan had been put forth has been to create a centralized body to actually monitor what goes on at the local level instead of decentralizing it. That's my own personal opinion. This is where we heard the same situation during the WOOSES and even in IGF – or do we want IGU to come and take that place?

It does not mean we have to go through either this or that. It's not some coffee or tea. We can create a new infusion, some kind of flavour. But to go to the heart of the question that you are raising is that none of these possible alternatives were ever seriously discussed. This is what I see from experience, maybe you can correct me.

Keith Davidson: There were certainly some serious discussions but I don't think there were serious resolutions.

I guess this goes a step further in so far as the entry that governs the new gTLDs is an entry that in a database minus the IANA database and that database is, like it or not, administered and authorized by the US government.

So its always occurred to me that there's the issue which should have been debated: whether the US government should continue to have unilateral administration over their database but while it does; then to resolve issues under US law seems to me not to be totally inappropriate because then, the decision that relates to whether their entry remains or not, or whose name is decided is actually is of totally immateriality to the continued serving of the current DNS.

So if the US government controls the entry of the database then US law should apply.

Khaled Fattal: As a matter of fact, I would agree with you.

In the discussions, in their request for comments, the US government had actually put out, prior to the exploration of the Joint Project Agreement which led to the beginning of what is known as the Affirmation of Commitments – I hope this is not all gibberish to the members or

the audience – many from the international committee who did not believe that it should be a single country controlled of the IANA by the US government when the option was to release ICAAN totally on its own cord, I personally, professionally believed that it should stay in the hands of the United States if the option was to release ICAAN to have no supervision whatsoever, to anybody.

As a matter of fact, we are seeing some action from the US government in a manner that I believe is responsible in responding to the needs of the local and global community. But having said that, most people don't recognize that there are two roles here: the IANA and the ICAAN – the body and the process that has gone through the ICAAN versus the IANA function. I think this will be a huge debate that will be ongoing and will give us more fruitful conversation for the future.

Keith Davidson: Certainly, some aspects of this are going to continue in the next sessions in this room so for those who are interested in this topic, please stay in the room.

Khaled Fattal: I look forward to it. I think we have reached the end of our allotted time. I would like to thank all for a great participation and hope that the conclusions and the summaries will be effective and will reflect the positive nature of the debates in this session.