

Marília Maciel

I was born in Recife, a major city in northeastern Brazil. Despite being one of the poorest regions in the country, it is also a land of tenacious people. I wanted to carry this spirit with me when I decided to leave my home city.

In 2005, after my graduation in law from the Federal University of Pernambuco (Recife), I decided to pursue an academic career and become a researcher. With that in mind, I moved to the South of Brazil in 2006, to take a Masters Program in Latin American Integration at the Federal University of Santa Maria. I was finishing my course credits and had already begun to write my dissertation when I received an e-mail that announced the deadline to apply to Diplo's Internet Governance Capacity Building Program (IGCBP). I was selected, and the course exceeded all my expectations. I became deeply interested on IG issues, to the point that I decided to change the topic of my Masters dissertation.



The hubs are local meetings that take place in parallel with the IGF. They exhibit the webcast of the event, so people can not only be informed, but can actually watch what is being debated, and they are able to send text and video questions that will be answered by the IGF panelists by using an interactive platform. In addition, the hubs can hold panels and roundtables to discuss the themes of the IGF from a local perspective, raising awareness and fostering local networking and follow-up initiatives.

Because of the change in topic, I faced a lot of difficulties, such as the need to rewrite part of the work and the scarcity of research sources, but I wanted to contribute to awareness-raising and knowledge-building about this relevant subject, in my country.

I concluded my Masters in 2007. *My research focused on how ICTs can foster citizens' participation in policy-making processes, especially in integration processes, such as European Union and Mercosur.* During the same year, I also participated in the IGF in Rio, as a Diplo fellow and youth representative.

2008 brought meaningful achievements. *I began to work with Diplo in the IGCBP, as a tutor to the bilingual English/Portuguese class and I had the opportunity to give a lecture at the 73rd International Law Association Conference, on the panel "The Role of Civil Society in the International Regulation Process: ICANN as a case study".*

I am also involved on a project closely related to the Internet Governance Forum. Since the beginning of 2008, a group of individuals from different institutions have joined together to create the **Remote Participation Working Group (RPWG)**, with the aim to enhance the remote participation experience at the IGF in Hyderabad. This group proposed and implemented the organization of **local IGF hubs** for the December 2008 meetings with the support of the IGF Secretariat and the host government.

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It was a great day when I received an e-mail saying that I had been selected for a fellowship to attend the IGF meeting in Hyderabad. Being at the IGF 2008 gave me the opportunity to participate in the debates that I had previously followed in Rio, and this will be fundamental to improve the quality of my academic work. *I hope to be able to help raising awareness in the academic sphere in Brazil about the issues that were discussed in Hyderabad, particularly Youth issues and multilingualism.*

In Hyderabad I had the opportunity to be one of the speakers in the workshop “Youth and Internet Governance: challenges for the future?” organized by the People’s Development Organization and DiploFoundation and on the best practice panel “Internet Governance Capacity Building”, promoted by DiploFoundation.

It was also very important for me to join other members of the RPWG to be physically present at the IGF, so we could follow the implementation of the remote participation mechanism, working in partnership with the Secretariat and DimDim, and providing assistance to the hubs. Brazil was one of countries that benefited from remote participation with a hub in the City of Knowledge in São Paulo. There were also hubs in Argentina, Colombia, Serbia, India, Pakistan and three in Spain.

*After the IGF, the RPWG has been working on a report about the remote participation in Hyderabad. We hope that it will give publicity to what has been accomplished and that it will help to evaluate this experience in order to improve it for the upcoming IGF in Egypt. We have also been trying to *establish partnerships and focusing on advocacy*, with aim to gather a community of different stakeholders committed to strengthening remote participation.*

Academically, I was particularly intrigued by the discussions on Multilingualism and the Internet that took place at the last IGF, and I have decided to establish an interdisciplinary dialogue between the field of semiotics and the use of new media in the Judiciary.

Being involved with Internet Governance is challenging and gives the opportunity to be a constant learner. I have acquired

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invaluable experience and knowledge by being able to attend the IGF. *But the most precious lesson learned is that everybody can be involved and make a difference to the IG process, regardless of age, sex, background or nationality.* IG is a groundbreaking field, and we should have an entrepreneur spirit to move forward the ideas we believe will be positive, both to our local and to our global, borderless Internet community.

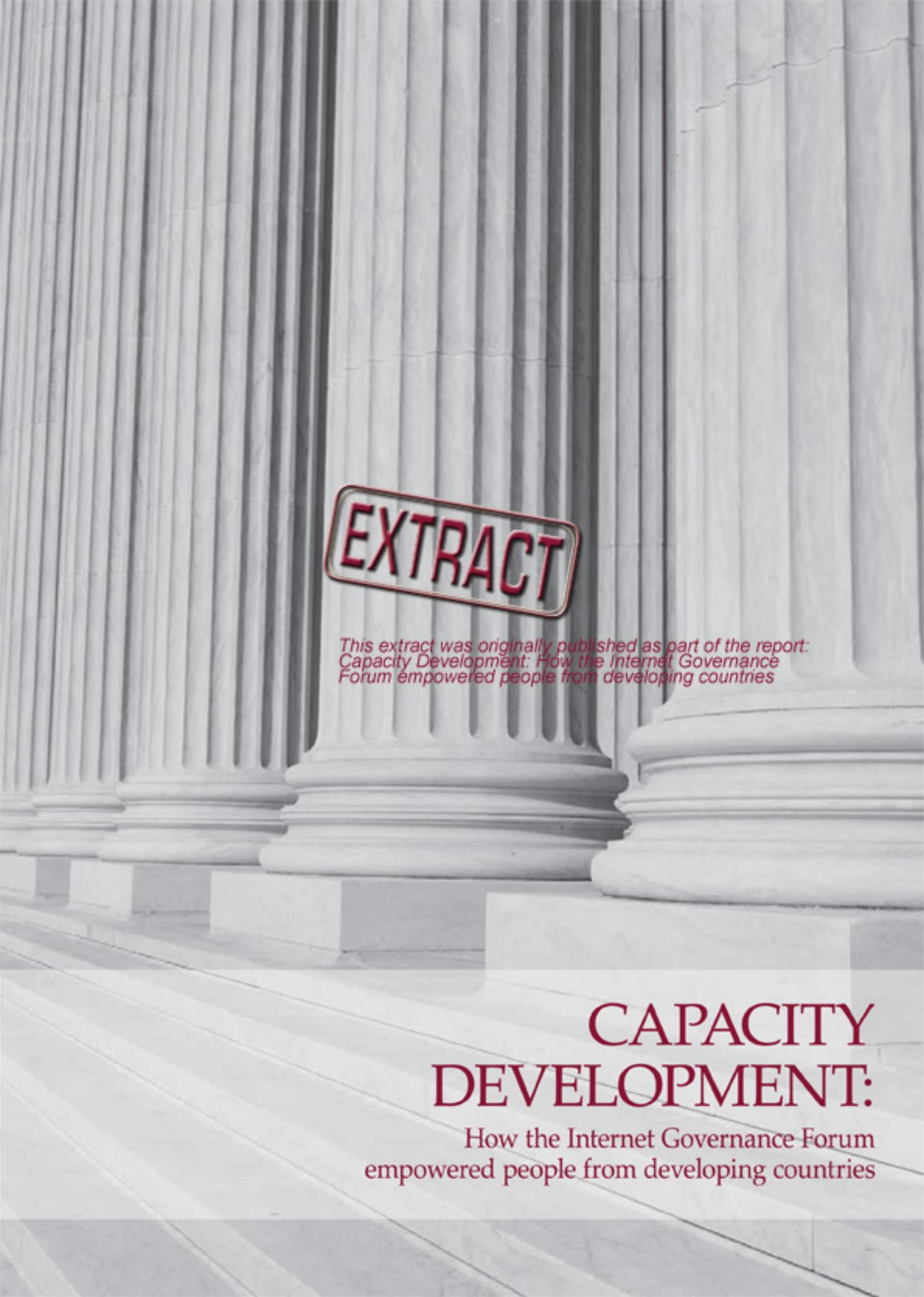
Last but not least, I would like to thank the host country for their hospitality and the IGF Secretariat for organizing the event. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the Canadian Government and the ITU for providing and administering the funds for this fellowship, to the Switzerland government for supporting the IGCBP and to DiploFoundation. ■





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

EXTRACT

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

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:

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