BRAZILIAN DELEGATION

WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY
SECOND PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA ITEM: INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Geneva, February 24, 2005

Madame Chair,

Brazil is thankful to the Working Group on Internet Governance for the Preliminary Report on the status of its deliberations, which has been submitted to the Second Preparatory Committee of the WSIS.

This preliminary report before us is the result of a decision we took at First PREPCOM, nevertheless, we have to ask ourselves why our Heads of State instructed the United Nations Secretary General, in December 2003, to set up a working group on Internet Governance. Brazil does recognize the tremendous expansion, remarkable stability and outstanding reliability of the Internet worldwide. These features are real, but they do not explain why we are debating Internet Governance today. We are doing so for a simple reason: there is a lack of democracy in the decision-making process of how the Internet is being administered; there is a lack of transparency on who are taking decisions on our behalf; and there is a lack of participation by the international community. In a nutshell, we are in need of a more democratic, transparent and multilateral governance of the Internet.

Madame Chair,

These are the principles we have all agreed upon as they are enshrined in the Declaration of Principles: democracy, transparency and multilateralism. In Brazil, for our Parliament, these principles are very real. Democracy means representation and free flow of information; transparency means accountability and openness; multilateralism means decisions taken in an intergovernmental manner. That is why we keep repeating ourselves in favor of more representation in the decision making process of internet related matters; in favor of more accountability; and in favor of an intergovernmental organization to deal with multilateral public policy issues. An unilateral system has no future in our digital society.

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Madame Chair,

Allow me to focus our discussion on internet governance beyond Principles and towards practical matters that our citizens are in need. Our citizens are demanding cheaper access. This could be translated here by:
a) lower internet interconnection costs;
b) affordable hardware;
c) free and open source software;
c) regional administration of the root server system;
d) national administration of country code top level domains (ccTLDs);

Madame Chair,

The problem before us is how to draw a line dividing what is generally classified as the "technical coordination and management of the Internet" and the "international internet-related public policy matters". As the system works nowadays, private sector entities are not working together in a cooperative and productive partnership with governments or the civil society. Governments not only feel but actually are excluded from the decision making process. Similarly, few members of the civil society are really empowered to participate and most of them are not from the developing world.

The next step ahead of us is the PREPCOM III, where we are going to analyze the Final Report of the WGIG. We hope to get valuable suggestions on how to solve the lack of democracy, transparency and multilateralism of the status quo.

To conclude, Brazil would like to emphasize that our Parliament is worried about the lack of legitimacy in a system where decisions are taken without representation of all stakeholders. How can we ask our people to abide by laws created by entities that do not accept the presence of representatives of our Governments on an equal footing? We are ready to come to an agreed Declaration of Principles in Tunis as we are also ready to take action, in Tunis, to launch negotiations on an international treaty on Internet governance specific issues. The World Summit on the Information Society is chartered to do so.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

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