

Submission to the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG)

Comments: “Developing a common understanding of the roles of all actors...”

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To complement the papers found under the heading “Developing a common understanding of the roles of all actors involved in governance arrangements,” this submission sets out a few additional points for consideration.

It is likely that the Tunis Phase of the World Summit on the Information Society will produce some sort of formal “consultative process” for Internet governance and related subjects. In anticipation of such a decision, the Working Group on Internet Governance could usefully advocate the following elements:

1. A decision for a consultative process should encourage a narrow definition of the Internet. If the process is to treat other topics as well (e.g., intellectual property rights), its mandate should set this scope out clearly (e.g., indicating that the scope includes uses of the Internet, etc.). In other words, the mandate should be clear in its terminology, distinguishing between uses of the Internet and “the Internet” per se.
2. Such a decision should envision a mechanism for transparency in multilateral initiatives. This mechanism would not be a merging of different organizations’ competencies, but rather would simply be a sort of “integrated framework” for policymaking for the Internet and related networks, and people’s uses of this technology. (This arrangement could follow the precedent of a process established among multilateral agencies involved in development for coordinating technical assistance activities).
3. To benefit from input by all interested parties (including the public at large), the integrated framework should facilitate a “notice” and “request for comment” period for pending measures by international bodies.
4. The consultative process should include avenues for organized involvement of stakeholders. A committee-type process for major categories of stakeholders (e.g., non-governmental organizations, industry, etc.) could follow the model of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in which business and labor have a regular voice.
5. Consultations on pending measures should include interdisciplinary teams – involving technologists, human rights specialists, people with experience in international policymaking, etc. Participants should be expected to act in the capacity of individuals/independent experts.
6. When offering input on multilateral initiatives to regulate the networked world, the interdisciplinary team should focus on core values for the networked world. The team could be mandated to use WSIS Declaration of Principles as a reference point; the Universal Declaration on Human Rights could also serve as an agreed touchstone.