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Pakistan's Comments on the Preliminary Report of the Working Group on Internet Governance

(24 February 2005)

We would like to thank the Chairman of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) Mr. Nitin Desai for his preliminary report. Having worked within his previous incarnation at the UN Headquarters, we were hoping to interact with Mr. Desai today in order to get his views and response to questions being raised.

We would like to thank the Secretary General of the United Nations for setting up an inclusive Group on Internet Governance. An expert of our delegation has worked with the group to thrash out some of the difficult issues. It is, however, clear that we have some way to go before Tunis.

The value of the WGIG is in the fact that it is not a negotiating body and that it is a preparatory role – a role it is performing in an open and transparent manner.

Mr. President,

Free and competitive markets and rejection of monopolies are the strength of today's globalized world. How does the Working Group propose the application of the principles of free and competitive markets to the management of critical Internet resources outlined in Para 34 (i) of the report? In this context, we agree with the Brazilian delegation that the principle of more democratic, transparent and multilateral governance of the Internet is essential.

In a similar view, during yesterday's discussion on Para 26 a 1 of Chapter 2 of the operational part of the final document relating to reduction of Internet interconnection costs charged by backbone providers, a reference was made to the issue falling in the commercial domain thereby implying its exclusion from governance. Keeping in view that the WGIG has identified "peering and interconnection" as a public policy issue and that Para 49 (a) of the Declaration of Principles recognizes that the "Policy authority for Internet-related public issues is the sovereign rights of states", how does the Working Group react to such comments?

We would also like to know whether the Working Group's final report would contain recommendations on changes in existing governance mechanisms of critical Internet resources for consideration and adoption.

As a developing country, like China has stated, we are particularly interested in getting the views and recommendations of the WGIG on multilateral democratic governance for cheaper and indiscriminate access to the Internet. Therefore, Para 34(iv) of the report needs elaboration. We also believe that the concept included in Para 35 of cross cutting issues such as economic and social aspects of the Internet require examination. Finally, we support the general thrust of the statement made by the delegation of Brazil.