

Mr Chairman, distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my pleasure and honour, to be with you, and to reaffirm our full engagement in making WGIG a success. I also, thank you for the opportunity to explain what I think is the general framework of Internet Governance.

ICT constitutes a primary priority and an important tool to achieve economic and social development in most developing countries. The holding of the World Summit on the Information Society will undoubtedly lead our countries further toward development.

The WSIS will help provide solutions regarding the implementation and the follow up upon the recommendation stated in the Declaration of principles and Plan of Action adopted by the international community in Geneva by stakeholders at national, regional and international levels with particular attention to the challenges facing the Least Developed Countries and it should complete the work initiated in Geneva on Internet Governance and Financing. The reports of the Task Force on Financing mechanisms and the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance would provide valuable inputs to the negotiations in WSIS phase II.

We understand that "Internet governance" is one of the major issues among stakeholders, so we will do our best to facilitate the work of all the groups, and we'll try to help:

- In developing a working definition of internet Governance;
- In identifying the public policy issues that are relevant to Internet Governance;
- In developing a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, existing intergovernmental and international organizations as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

The Internet, as it is today, has many specific characteristics that have to be taken into consideration when discussing the Internet governance:

- Global: communication on the Internet is non-territorial. The routing structure is independent from political jurisdictions and connection costs are insensitive to distance and political boundaries.
- End-to-End: The Internet protocols were designed to provide a neutral, transparent channel for the widest possible variety of information services. The network is limited to transmitting simple data units as efficiently as possible, leaving responsibility for higher-level functions to the devices connected to it. Most of the intelligence and responsibility is located on the edge, not in the channel itself
- Open Standards: The Internet is based on open and non-proprietary standards that can be freely adopted by anyone.

Some would think that since it is much more than a single network operated by one or few entities, the Internet, being a composition of heterogeneous networks sharing a common technology based on the IP protocol, can not be governed.

Others could think that "governance" in a conventional sense could open doors to governments and intergovernmental organizations to interfere with centralized and bureaucratic approaches.

Some Developing countries criticized ICANN and argued that the ITU should take over its functions. Meanwhile, some industrialized countries, business communities and civil society organisations objected this argument. This sharp divergence was behind the creation of the WGIG.

A wide-spread disagreement on the most basic definitional questions still persists. Nevertheless, a real commitment to an open and inclusive dialogue is needed.

Our goal should be the continued stability and growth of the Internet and its ability to deliver social and economic benefits for all. Some concepts need to be further developed.

We might not all agree on a common definition of "Internet governance", however, we would agree on a minimal set of issues it should cover :

- The management of the IP resources and all the duties of the ICANN;
- The definitions of new technology standards and all the related work of the IETF;
- Issues related to the intellectual property, dispute resolution, and related duties of the WIPO;
- The hierarchy of the Certification Authorities;
- Copyright issues, fraud;
- Lawful interception;
- Offensive content, SPAM mail, etc;
- International laws related to e-commerce, and the role of WTO on these matters.

At any rate internet governance should not thought of as a means of restricting what may be done but rather as a means to facilitate access to and development of new uses of this medium.

- The Internet community all around the world has some experience with the issues stated above. It would be wise to evaluate what went well, and what did not go well, and try to make the necessary adjustments, in a transparent and democratic manner. This means involving all the stakeholders from the private sector, the governments, the civil society and the International organizations. It might even be interesting to involve the whole world community through a process similar to what the "ICANN at large Advisory" has been trying to implement. Today, it's obvious that every stakeholder would try to make the rules in his favor. However, it's important for all of us to find a balance between conflicting interests in order to reach a consensus.

- We should also take into consideration the specificities of countries and cultures.

In this regard, we might agree on certain guidelines that all countries should adopt for the benefit of the Internet as a whole, but accept some specific local differences on issues that we consider part of the Internet governance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We believe the mission of the working group completes the specific tasks requested by the WSIS Declaration and Action Plan, and consolidates the debate launched in order to install appropriate national and international actions. The mission of WGIG and the WSIS is tremendous and offers a great opportunity to provide an important and valuable legacy to the world.

At the end of the process, we shall reach a common understanding on respective rules and responsibilities of governments, intergovernmental and international organizations as well as the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

We look forward to working with all involved parties, particularly to make sure that the determination and commitment of the international community to shape an information society accessible to all are translated into concrete actions.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the importance of the constructive participation of all components of the international community including civil society and the media in accordance with the established procedure.

In the end, I would like to thank you for your attention and take this opportunity to express the hope to see you in Tunis, where you'll be welcome to pursue our work.