

At the December 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, governments adopted a Plan of Action that, inter alia, called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to set up a Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG). The WGIG's mandate was to analyze the governance of Internet and make proposals for action, as appropriate; develop a working definition of Internet governance; identify the public policy issues involved; and advance a common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. In November 2004, Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed forty individuals from government, the private sector, and civil society to the WGIG. After seven months of work, the WGIG's Report and a longer Background Report were released in July 2005. The two reports surveyed the landscape of public and private sector Internet governance mechanisms; advanced recommendations for improved governance in a range of key issue-areas; offered alternative models for the future oversight of the Internet's core resources and logical infrastructure; and proposed the establishment of a global, multistakeholder forum to facilitate continuing, inclusive dialogue on Internet governance. The reports elicited much debate around the world and served as key inputs in the second phase of the WSIS process, which culminated with the November 2005 Summit in Tunis. The issues they addressed remain of central importance in the post-Summit global debate on Internet governance.

With the continuing debate in mind, this volume presents papers by former members of the WGIG and its Secretariat staff that were written subsequent to the release of the group's reports. The contributors offer their personal reflections on the value of the multistakeholder cooperation in the WGIG and beyond; and on some of the key substantive issues and institutional reform proposals currently under consideration by the international community.

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