

Geneva, 20 September 2004

Working Group on Internet Governance (Geneva, 20-21 September 2004)
EU Presidency Statement (the Netherlands)

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the European Union and its 25 Member States, the Netherlands, reconfirms the importance we attach to the WSIS process and the EU will continue to play an active role in the second phase of the Summit.
2. The EU welcomes the progress made at the first Prepcom of the 2nd phase which took place in Hammamet last June. Its decision on the Focus, Output and Preparatory Process for the Tunis Phase together with the outcome of the Geneva Phase provide substantive guidance for our consultations to-day on the establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance.
3. Firstly, on internet governance the Tunis Phase will consider the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and appropriate action. In the preparatory process for the Tunis Phase it is foreseen that the WGIG will present a preliminary report to the 2nd Prepcom in February 2005 and a final report to the 3rd Prepcom in September 2005.
4. The work of the WGIG is clearly mandated in the Geneva documents. The EU strongly believes that the Geneva acquis should not be endangered in any way and we would not consider it appropriate re-opening negotiations on these matters.
5. The starting point for work in the WGIG is the present structure of the Internet Governance. We need to build on this structure in order to reinforce the stability and growth potential of the internet.
6. To date the term Internet Governance stands mainly for the global coordination of the Internet's Domain Name System, consisting of the technical management of core resources of the Internet, namely domain names and IP addresses, and the root server system. The WGIG should firstly concentrate on these issues. A second focal point of WGIG's work should be issues with direct impact on the Internet's stability, dependability and robustness, in particular spam.
7. In addition, a broad range of public policy issues such as harmful content, data protection, e-commerce, consumer protection, intellectual property rights and the digital divide all affect the internet without undermining its proper functioning per se. These issues, whilst not of lesser importance, are already dealt with to some extent by existing inter-governmental fora. As a rule, the WGIG should therefore not deal with issues that are already dealt with satisfactorily at the global level. Where these issues are not dealt with successfully, one should look into how existing arrangements work, identify the shortcomings and spell out the future goals.

8. As far as the composition and structure of the WGIG is concerned the EU underlines the necessity for the full and active participation of all stakeholders, namely governments, private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, as well as relevant intergovernmental and international organisations.
9. We are confident that the UNSG will ensure that a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, private sector, and civil society, as well as relevant intergovernmental and international organizations, is put in place.
10. In order to be successful, the Working Group should achieve a proper balance between the objective of legitimacy and transparency on the one hand, and the objective of efficiency on the other hand.
11. In this regard, we note Mr Kummer's suggestion made during PrepCom-1 for adopting a two-tier approach, whereby a larger, open and fully inclusive group would set up a smaller drafting group. We would see significant merit in such an approach.
12. In this smaller group, which should not exceed 40 participants, not less than half of the total number of participants should be governmental and intergovernmental representatives, while the remaining balance should cater for sufficient representation by the UN, its agencies and other international organizations, Civil Society representatives, and the private sector.
13. Thank you, chair.