

Remarks as prepared for delivery
by Masaaki Sakamaki,
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at
the WGIG consultation meeting
on September 21, 2004

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Firstly, we would like to join the distinguished delegations from governments, international organizations and civil societies in congratulating the chairman and the executive coordinator for the concerted efforts they have made to ensure that this meeting could be held.

We find the WGIG well-positioned to build compelling and effective solutions to many of the challenging issues that are to be defined in the forthcoming discussion.

General comments on Internet Governance

Let me also join the delegations with a very brief general comment regarding Internet Governance.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth of the Internet is the flexible and generative environment that has been created mainly led by the private sector, with appropriate assistance and guidance from the government. I would like to note at this juncture the rather special development of Japan with respect to the rapid deployment of broadband service of DSL and FTTH which are provided at very reasonable prices and mobile internet access by cell phone which has been almost standard thanks to the vigorous competition at this field. For the continued growth of the Internet, we find it essential and pragmatically efficient to build on the current structure under which its innovation and use by private entities is not constrained.

At the same time, it goes with saying that all stakeholders need to be concerned about issues pertaining to the Internet which have a significant impact on society. We in the Japanese government have been extensively involved in introducing a number of measures to cope with these issues and we continue to monitor the effectiveness of these measures in broadband internet era, many of which we believe would have been much more effective if they have been coordinated at an international level.

Composition and working methods of the working group

Now turning to the composition and working methods of the working group, we are requested to proceed in accordance with the Plan of Action which means to

- define Internet Governance,
- identify the issues,
- and define the roles of the parties concerned.

The main point here is to organize a Working Group that is inclusive, balanced, and efficient, with discussions that are both inclusive and comprehensive.

In other words, the composition of the WGIG should reflect:

- A balance of sectors:
 - Differences in Internet Growth according to regions
 - Differences in thinking – “Two schools of thought”
 - Other balances like public/private, regions and gender
- members are expected to provide expertise in public policy and ICT technology

We also welcomed the executive coordinator’s suggestion at the PrepCom to form a core group. As to the size of the group, we propose to make it reasonably large in order to ensure the credibility of the WGIG as an appropriate forum for Internet Governance discussion.

More specifically, we propose:

- To optimize the size of the WG or the core group to around 40 members although this number is a tentative suggestion,
- half of whom should come from the government (including intergovernmental organizations) and the rest from other stakeholders (including the business sector, international organizations and civil society). Regarding the representatives from the government sector, the number of members from developed and developing countries should be balanced. Regional balance should also be taken into account.

Additionally, we propose:

- To hold an Advisory Meeting at least once, in order to utilize the specialized knowledge from both the public policy and technical perspectives and to facilitate deliberations in the WGIG, and to invite their opinions as inputs on appropriate issues. The Advisory Meeting should be made up of global leaders associated with technical, social or policy aspects of the Internet.
- To ensure the comprehensiveness and transparency of the discussion.

Lastly, we reiterate the importance of ensuring that the working group is inclusive, balanced and efficient. A number of factors are involved, but we are confident that the executive coordinator and the secretary general will lead the group to a rational conclusion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.