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Continuation of the Internet Governance Forum

Note of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 60/252 *inter alia* endorsing the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its second phase, requested the Secretary-General to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and to make recommendations to the United Nations Membership in this regard. The present note responds to that request.

Having held formal consultations with Forum participants, the Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly extend the mandate of the Forum. In addition, based on the views expressed by participants, a number of improvements to its format, functions and operations should also be considered.

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I. Background

1. The concept of Internet governance emerged in the international arena at a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in February 2003. In 2005, at the conclusion of the Tunis phase of WSIS, Internet governance was provisionally defined by Member States as “the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.”
2. Member States recognized that “Internet governance, carried out according to the Geneva principles, is an essential element for a people-centred, inclusive, development-oriented and non-discriminatory Information Society” and committed themselves to “ensuring the requisite legitimacy of its governance, based on the full participation of all stakeholders, from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities.”
3. The public policy issues articulated in the Tunis Agenda under the heading ‘Internet governance’ illustrate its broad scope. Beyond Internet naming and addressing, the Tunis Agenda explicitly mentions such issues as management of critical Internet resources, the security and safety of the Internet, accessibility and affordability, technical and regulatory matters, consumer-protection, equitable development for all and a range of other development challenges requiring international cooperation and dialogue with many different stakeholders.
4. In order to better understand the issues related to Internet governance and promote dialogue among stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner, Member States decided to establish the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) convened by the United Nations Secretary-General. The main function of the Forum is to discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, such as those enumerated by the Tunis Agenda, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet in developed and developing countries. The IGF was not to replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations. It was intended to constitute a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process, and have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet.
5. Due to its unique nature as a multi-stakeholder platform, there was no ready template to copy for the convening of the Forum. Therefore, to fulfill the mandate given to him, the Secretary-General asked his Special Adviser for Internet Governance to start broad-based consultations on this mandate with the aim to develop a common understanding among all stakeholders on the nature and character of this new entity.
6. Through its de facto bureau named the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) established by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2006, a common understanding evolved of how the IGF should operate and what issues it should address. The MAG has 56 members nominated by different stakeholder groups taking into consideration geographical and gender balance. The programme of the annual IGF meeting is prepared by MAG. It has been the practice of the MAG to meet three times per year chaired by the Special Adviser for Internet Governance.
7. IGF and MAG are supported by a Secretariat headed by an Executive Coordinator and reporting to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management. The Secretariat is funded through voluntary contributions and is physically located within the United Nations Office at Geneva.

8. The Forum has organized itself an annual conference of stakeholders. The first meeting was held in Athens in 2006, the second in Rio de Janeiro in 2007, the third in Hyderabad in 2008 and the fourth in Sharm El Sheikh in 2009. The Government of Lithuania will host the fifth annual meeting of the Forum in Vilnius, Lithuania from 14-17 September 2010. Meetings are held on a different continent each year in order to facilitate broad-based participation.

II. Taking stock of the Internet Governance Forum

9. When the IGF was created in 2006, it was given a lifespan of five years, after which time Member States would review the desirability of its continuation. The Secretary-General was asked to assist in this process by examining its merits and shortcomings taking into account the views of its many participants. More precisely, Member States, in paragraph 76 of the Tunis Agenda “ask the UN Secretary-General to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants, within five years of its creation, and to make recommendations to the UN Membership in this regard.”
10. The formal consultations were initiated by an online process in June 2009, starting with a questionnaire prepared by the IGF Secretariat, and a *note verbale* subsequently addressed to all diplomatic missions accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva soliciting input from all UN Member States. A total of sixty-two written submissions were received following these calls for public comment, of which forty-five responded to the online questionnaire. Contributions were received from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and organizations representing civil society and the private sector, including representatives of the academic and technical communities. Comments were also received from a number of individuals.
11. In November 2009, a formal consultation with IGF participants was convened by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs during the fourth meeting of the Forum in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. Forty-seven speakers from the different stakeholder groups delivered a short statement on this subject. Eight statements of participants who were not given a speaking slot due to time constraints were posted online. In addition, seven statements were submitted after the consultations. The total number of contributions over the six month consultation period from May to December 2009 was thus 124.
12. A majority of those who participated in the formal consultation during the fourth meeting of the IGF in Sharm El Sheikh, or who provided written contributions, expressed support for its continuation. Of the stakeholders who contributed comments, 28 per cent called for continuation of the IGF in its present state, 68 per cent called for continuation with improvements, and 3 per cent indicated that their support for continuation would be conditional on a number of reforms. Most stakeholders were of the opinion that the mandate of the Forum, if extended, should continue for at least another five years. One stakeholder recommended a shorter time frame of two to three years in order to evaluate results more regularly. A summary of views of stakeholders and distribution of contributions by stakeholder group are given in tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1: Summary of views of stakeholders participating in IGF stocktaking exercise, May-December 2009

<i>General position</i>	<i>Number of contributors</i>	<i>Percentage of contributors</i>
Extension as it is	24	28
Extension with improvement	59	68
No extension without major reform	3	3
No opinion	1	1
Total	87	100

Table 2: **Distribution of contributors to IGF stocktaking exercise by stakeholder group**

<i>Stakeholder group*</i>	<i>Number of contributors</i>	<i>Percentage of contributors</i>
Governments	26	30
Intergovernmental organizations	11	13
Private sector firms	9	10
Civil society organizations	41	47
Total	87	100

* Figures should be considered approximate as the IGF meetings do not follow a formal accreditation procedure. Some stakeholders indicated that they were acting in a personal capacity.

13. According to many participants, the Forum’s multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent character is unique and valuable and should be preserved. Inclusiveness is a fundamental principle underlying development of an Information Society for all, as envisaged at WSIS, and a durable attribute of Internet governance appreciated by all stakeholder groups. It is a place where Governments, civil society, the private sector and international organizations discuss important questions of economic and social development. They share their insights and achievements. Above all, they build a common understanding of the Internet’s great potential while addressing the many risks and challenges in its governance.
14. The General Assembly also reaffirmed a commitment to continuing cooperation among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society at its sixty-fourth session. In particular, the Assembly encouraged “the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms in a joint effort and dialogue with developing and least developed countries, development partners and actors in the information and communication technologies sector.”¹
15. The most significant concerns expressed by stakeholders were that the IGF, despite its role in promoting dialogue and understanding, had not devoted sufficient attention to its development remit or the specific question of management of critical Internet resources, that the IGF had not provided concrete advice to intergovernmental bodies and other entities involved in Internet governance, and that more needed to be done to engage stakeholders in Internet governance mechanisms, especially stakeholders from developing countries.
16. It should be noted that IGF and the MAG have themselves made an effort at the start of each annual planning cycle to examine the working methods of the Forum and improve upon them. For example, after each meeting there was a broad based stock-taking discussion, looking at what worked well and what worked less well in order to document ‘lessons learned’ that would then be fed into planning of the subsequent meeting and its preparatory processes.

¹ General Assembly resolution 64/187

III. Recommendations

17. Given the previous views expressed by the General Assembly on the question of multi-stakeholder dialogue and strong support for an open discussion forum on public policy issues related to Internet governance among those who participated in the consultations, the Secretary-General recommends:
- (a) That the mandate of the IGF be extended for a further five years;
 - (b) That the desirability of continuation be considered again by Member States within the context of a ten-year review of implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015.
 - (c) That improvements to the format, functions and operations of the IGF be considered at its sixth meeting in 2011.
18. Three areas of concern are described in more detail in the following section along with further recommendations of the Secretary-General in the relevant areas. Other improvements, such as the membership and rules of procedure of MAG, which the United Nations Secretary-General was entrusted to convene by paragraph 78 (c) of the Tunis Agenda, may be within the authority of the Secretary-General to address. Where this is the case, it has been indicated that Member States may wish to take note in their deliberations of changes that are within the purview of the Secretariat and/or IGF participants themselves.

A. Identification of key public policy issues related to Internet governance

19. When the IGF was established, it was given significant latitude in setting its own agenda with the evident constraint that its programme of work relate to key elements of Internet governance. Though not stated explicitly in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, which conveys the mandate of the Forum, the establishment of the IGF as an outcome of WSIS implies that the Forum should contribute to a “people-centre, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society” with respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. These underlying aims were articulated in the Geneva Declaration of Principles for building the Information Society, later reaffirmed in paragraphs 29 and 31 of the Tunis Agenda as a preamble to commitments by Member States on Internet governance matters.
20. The mandate of the Forum provides further guidance on the kind of public policy issues the IGF should consider. Although not intended to be an exhaustive list of agenda items, specific reference is made to:
- (a) The sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet;
 - (b) The availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world;
 - (c) Emerging issues;
 - (d) Assessment of the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes;
 - (e) Issues relating to critical Internet resources;
 - (f) Issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet of particular concern to everyday users.
21. Over the last five years, the agenda of the Forum has converged towards a set of standing items embodying these original terms of reference. The inclusive and participatory approach to agenda-setting among stakeholders in the MAG has resulted in validation of the range of key public policy related to Internet governance articulated at WSIS.
22. However, since the IGF was established there has been considerable refinement in the delineation of these issues and in understanding of their interrelationships. For example, in 2006 the issues of openness and security were discussed separately whereas from 2008 onwards these two questions have been addressed

together, along with privacy, in recognition of the connections among such subsidiary topics as access to knowledge, freedom of expression, intellectual property rights, Internet crime and State security.

23. There has also been shifting emphasis on topics within the larger issue areas. Whereas multilingualism was given considerable attention in 2008 in connection with the broader subject of diversity, in 2010 the provisional programme gives significantly greater weight to infrastructural and regulatory matters under the access and diversity heading. Similarly, spam featured prominently in discussions of security in 2006, whereas in the 2010 programme security has been expanded to include the more general question of regulation of malicious Internet content.

Table3: Agenda of the Internet Governance Forum, 2006-2010

<i>Issue area</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>
Openness	Openness	Openness	Promoting cyber-security and trust	Openness, privacy and security	Openness, privacy and security
Privacy	-	-			
Security	Security	Security			
Access	Access	Access	Reaching the next billion	Access and diversity	Access and diversity
Diversity	Diversity	Diversity			
Critical Internet resources	-	Critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources	Managing critical Internet resources
Emerging issues	Emerging issues	Emerging issues	The Internet of tomorrow	Impact of social networks	Cloud computing
Internet governance	-	-	-	Internet governance in light of WSIS principles	Internet governance for development
Taking stock	The way forward	Taking stock and the way forward	Taking stock and the way forward	Taking stock and looking forward	Taking stock of Internet governance and the way forward

24. Many participants consider the wide-ranging, interconnected nature of the IGF agenda to be a strength that has led to considerable maturation of stakeholders' understanding of the issues. At the same time, some observers feel that the Forum has not given sufficient attention to the development and human rights dimensions of Internet governance. This may be due to the relative dominance of technical specialists in the Forum and the relative absence of development and human rights practitioners. Those invited to attend IGF meetings are Governments, international organizations, WSIS-accredited entities and other institutions and persons with proven expertise and experience in matters related to Internet governance.
25. Other participants question whether the agenda of the Forum is sufficiently specific for the purposes of informing public policy-making. For example, some participants would like to have more time devoted to dialogue on issues such as freedom of expression or gender equality. Others would prefer more discussion of particular topics in crime prevention or the question of cost and affordability of Internet access. While all

such suggestions are by definition valid given the open-ended nature of the IGF mandate, they may point as much to a desire for more tangible progress on the issues at hand as to the need for continued dialogue.

26. The issue of enhanced cooperation, another WSIS outcome enshrined in the Tunis Agenda, is one such issue of concern to many stakeholders, specifically as it relates to the management of critical Internet resources. Some stakeholders felt that the IGF had contributed to enhanced cooperation among all institutions dealing with Internet governance issues. Others felt the IGF should address this issue as a matter of priority and make recommendations to the relevant intergovernmental organizations and other institutions accordingly.
27. It is evident from the consultations that there continues to be confusion as to the meaning of enhanced cooperation. Some interpret enhanced cooperation as dialogue among Governments on public policy issues related to the Internet. Others interpret it to mean improved dialogue among Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, possibly in multiple Internet governance mechanisms, including at the regional and national levels.
28. Finally, there is a perception among some civil society stakeholders that the agenda-setting process of the MAG is not sufficiently inclusive or transparent. Given the concern, the United Nations Secretary-General may undertake a review of the structure and functions of the preparatory meetings of the IGF, through DESA in cooperation with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General for Internet Governance and the MAG members, with due regard for convening an effective and cost-efficient bureau as called for in paragraph 78 (b) of the Tunis Agenda.
29. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends:
 - (a) That the General Assembly reaffirm the multiple dimensions of the IGF agenda and provide guidance on public policy issues related to Internet governance that should be given particular consideration in the next five years;
 - (b) That the General Assembly provide guidance on 'enhanced cooperation' as it relates to the IGF, and on how the Secretary-General could best assist Member States in this regard, and which organizations would be relevant to the process;
 - (c) That the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to report, at its 66th session, on steps taken to improve the format, functions and operations of the preparatory meetings of the IGF with a view to enhancing inclusiveness, transparency, effectiveness and cost-efficiency while ensuring balanced stakeholder representation and participation.

B. Contribution to national and international public policy-making

30. The Tunis Agenda authorizes the IGF to interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview, advise stakeholders on ways of accelerating the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world, bring emerging issues to the attention of the relevant bodies. All of these functions are intended, inter alia, to support Governments in the development of public policy.
31. Some argue that even though the Forum has no decision-making authority, it offers an inclusive environment for discussing problems of common interest drawing on expert knowledge of the Internet. Some observers have suggested that it thus contributes indirectly to finding solutions and to shaping decisions taken elsewhere. For example, the work of the IGF has been reflected in two Ministerial declarations, one of the Council of Europe and the other of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Many

stakeholders have noted, however, that the contribution of the IGF to public policy-making is difficult to assess and appears to be weak.

32. In response, many government and civil society stakeholders from both developed and developing regions, have suggested the need for more tangible outcomes of IGF meetings, specifically in the form of written outputs. While emphasizing that the non-decision-making nature of the IGF is valuable and that the Forum should not be transformed into a negotiating body with agreed conclusions or joint communiqués, it could nonetheless contribute more effectively in the form of advice and recommendations, as provided for in various articles of its mandate.
33. With respect to communicating outcomes of the Forum to the relevant national or international entities, the mandate includes a provision for the IGF to “interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters within their purview.” Particular mention is made in the Tunis Agenda of the relevance of the United Nations given the role of the Organization in the promotion of security, development and human rights. The International Telecommunication Union is also singled out in the Geneva Declaration for its core competences in bridging the digital divide, international and regional cooperation, radio spectrum management, standards development and the dissemination of information.
34. Other stakeholders have proposed regularization of the budget of the IGF within the United Nations or even transforming the IGF into a formal body within the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations as means of strengthening the connection with public policy-making. This would have the effect of giving Member States the authority to request specific reports from the IGF in a format suitable for intergovernmental deliberations.
35. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends:
 - (a) That the General Assembly encourage the IGF to produce and offer to the Member States useful capacity-building outputs, such as off-line/online training and toolkits aiming at greater awareness and better understanding of Internet governance related issues to facilitate national and international public policy making.

C. Engagement of stakeholders in Internet governance mechanisms

36. The IGF is mandated as per paragraph 72 (f) of the Tunis Agenda to strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries. The Agenda enumerates four groups of stakeholders, namely governments, intergovernmental and other international organizations, the private sector and civil society, which are only very loosely associated. Central to the IGF’s identity is the idea of the Forum as a meeting of equals.
37. Its advantage is, in view of many, that freed from the constraints of negotiation and formal accreditation of representatives, an open exchange of ideas among people is possible, who might be able to take action in other venues. This enables participants to gain a better grasp of both commonality and difference in their positions and opinions, thus enabling the Forum to influence and inform stakeholders without having to be subject to the constraints of negotiation and creating policy consensus.
38. The disadvantage is, however, that many participants, question the efficacy of the free-flowing debate which has such a large number of workshops, panels and events concentrated in a three-day session with approximately 1,400 participants in 2009. As a result of the wide-ranging agenda that characterizes the Forum, there tends to be a lack of focus on key elements of Internet governance. As a practical matter, many participants have called for a more streamlined approach to the meeting sessions and workshops, as well as more synthesis of meeting discussions.

39. Some concern was expressed that the link between the workshops and the main sessions was not as clear or as strong as could have been expected. The workshops offered a wealth of information and opinion, but these inputs turned out to shape the debate in the main sessions and only to a limited extent. A number of self-organized and informal ‘dynamic coalitions’ discuss particular issues between annual meetings, but were not appropriate, neither successful as mechanism for accommodating real ongoing debate.
40. Also, in connection with stakeholder participation and representation, it is not clear whether the current IGF format and working methods are conducive to dialogue among all interested stakeholders, including particularly, those non-participating stakeholders, and provide for equitable participation and representation of stakeholders.
41. In particular, with regards to developing countries, paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda asked the UN Secretary-General to: (e) “Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world; (f) “Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries”; and (h) “Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise”.
42. As seen in table 4, participation in the IGF is broad-based but somewhat uneven. A particular concern of Member States as expressed in the Tunis Agenda, and echoed by stakeholders is the relative absence of participants from developing countries. This shortcoming applies both to governmental and non-governmental entities. Of the eighty-three governments represented at the fourth meeting of the Forum in Sharm el Sheikh, fifty were from developing regions. Some 110 Member States did not participate, a majority of which were Governments of developing countries.

Table 4: **Participation in the fourth meeting of the IGF held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, November 2009**

<i>Stakeholder group*</i>	<i>Number of countries or areas</i>	<i>Number of delegations</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>
Governments	84	156	529
Developed countries	32	46	136
Africa**	21	53	272
Asia and the Pacific (other than CIS)	22	41	88
Commonwealth of Independent States	3	5	7
Latin America and the Caribbean	6	11	26
International organizations	n/a	33	115
United Nations system	n/a	16	52
Other international organizations	n/a	17	63
Private sector	32	115	188
Developed regions	17	70	119
Africa**	5	29	49
Asia and the Pacific (other than CIS)	8	14	15
Commonwealth of Independent States	0	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	2	2	3
Civil society	71	283	544
Developed regions	23	171	317
Africa**	16	50	111

Asia and the Pacific (other than CIS)	18	42	76
Commonwealth of Independent States	3	5	9
Latin America and the Caribbean	11	15	26
Total	106	585	1376

* Figures should be considered approximate as the IGF meetings do not follow a formal accreditation procedure.

** Includes host country, Arab Republic of Egypt

43. This relative absence of participants from developing countries is attributable to their lack of travel fund and lack of capacity, especially, their lack of essential expertise to engage in Internet governance issues. The programme of the IGF covers technical issues as well as matters related to economic and social development policy. More often than not, participants are not competent in both areas, although they may have a strong interest in and benefit substantially from exposure to other fields. Even within particular areas of interest, such as network security, some participants are necessarily better-equipped to benefit from IGF consultations than others. Given the limited attention paid to capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, there is a concern among some stakeholders that the economic and social development perspective may have been overshadowed by attention to technical matters.
44. There were some contributions and efforts made to capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries. For example, voluntary funding by some donors of attendance at meetings was provided, as well as support of dynamic coalitions for youth and disabled persons in both developed and developing countries. In particular, in order to maximize participation of developing country stakeholders, provisions for remote access, including Regional Hub meetings, are made, with overall improvement of remote participation over the previous years. The remote hubs were reported to have allowed for parallel sessions that enabled the remote participants to view, participate and discuss the IGF proceedings.
45. Notwithstanding this progress, the general view is that greater effort to improve remote participation opportunities should still be made, and more resources need to be provided in order to include those interested stakeholders, who can not physically attend the meeting.
46. In order to help build the capacity of all stakeholders from all countries to participate in the IGFs, calls are made for assistance for their active participation in the IGF meetings, including through better funding mechanism. In this connection, it is also deemed necessary that educational and training resources on a range of Internet governance issues should be provided, and their effective and innovative provision (especially, given the lack of access by many developing country stakeholders with little knowledge related to Internet governance) should be explored.
47. The website of the IGF, publications, webcast of its meetings and provision of simultaneous interpretation in six languages are concrete initiatives taken by the IGF Secretariat in consultation with the MAG. Services for persons with disabilities is also an ongoing operational concern. The MAG is constantly reviewing procedures and trying to improve on the basis of stakeholder feedback.
48. In this context, it is also to note the increasing spread of national and regional IGF initiatives since 2006. Regional IGF type meetings were held in East Africa (Nairobi, Kenya), West Africa (Accra, Ghana) and Central Africa (Brazzaville, Congo), the Latin America and Caribbean Region (Montevideo, Uruguay and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), the Caribbean (St. Kitts) and in Europe (Strasbourg and Geneva). National IGF meetings were held in the United Kingdom, the USA, Italy, Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands. While all these initiatives aimed to feed into the annual IGF, they also saw value in themselves, irrespective of any links to global discussions. It was noted that all regions had different concerns and priorities, with access remaining the top priority issue for the developing world.

49. In consideration of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends:

- (a) That the General Assembly invite Member States to provide additional funding to increase participation from developing countries in the IGF;
- (b) That the General Assembly encourage Member States to increase support for capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, including through regional and national Internet governance mechanisms;
- (c) That the General Assembly encourage the relevant UN system organizations to make a concerted effort to promote capacity-building for Internet governance in developing countries, including through enhanced technical assistance and provision of relevant education and training materials.

Annex: Mandate of the Forum for the period 2006-2010

The mandate of the Internet Governance Forum was defined in paragraphs 72, 73 and 77 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit for the Information Society at its second phase and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/252:

“72. We ask the UN Secretary-General, in an open and inclusive process, to convene, by the second quarter of 2006, a meeting of the new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue—called the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). The mandate of the Forum is to:

- (a) Discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet.
- (b) Facilitate discourse between bodies dealing with different cross-cutting international public policies regarding the Internet and discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body.
- (c) Interface with appropriate intergovernmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview.
- (d) Facilitate the exchange of information and best practices, and in this regard make full use of the expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities.
- (e) Advise all stakeholders in proposing ways and means to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world.
- (f) Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms, particularly those from developing countries.
- (g) Identify emerging issues, bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the general public, and, where appropriate, make recommendations.
- (h) Contribute to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise.
- (i) Promote and assess, on an ongoing basis, the embodiment of WSIS principles in Internet governance processes.
- (j) Discuss, inter alia, issues relating to critical Internet resources.
- (k) Help to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users.
- (l) Publish its proceedings.

73. The Internet Governance Forum, in its working and function, will be multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent. To that end, the proposed IGF could:

- (a) Build on the existing structures of Internet governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process – governments, business entities, civil society and intergovernmental organizations.
- (b) Have a lightweight and decentralized structure that would be subject to periodic review.

- (c) Meet periodically, as required. IGF meetings, in principle, may be held in parallel with major relevant United Nations conferences, inter alia, to use logistical support.
77. The IGF would have no oversight function and would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, but would involve them and take advantage of their expertise. It would be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process. It would have no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the Internet.”
78. The UN Secretary-General should extend invitations to all stakeholders and relevant parties to participate at the inaugural meeting of the IGF, taking into consideration balanced geographical representation. The UN Secretary-General should also:
- (a) draw upon any appropriate resources for all interested stakeholders, including the proven expertise of ITU, as demonstrated during the WSIS process; and
 - (b) establish an effective and cost-efficient bureau to support the IGF, ensuring multistakeholder participation.