



October 6, 2008

Mr. Guido Bertucci
Director, Division for Public Administration and
Development Management
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations
Two UN Plaza, Room DC2-1714
New York, NY 10017, USA

Dear Sir,

On behalf of Ms. Lynn St. Amour, President and CEO of the Internet Society, I am writing to respond to your request that the Internet Society (ISOC) provide you with an annual performance report on the topic of enhanced cooperation. I would like to thank you for providing us with a copy of Nitin Desai's 2006 *Report on Consultations on Enhanced Cooperation*. The report helps us to understand the context for the request. This letter is intended to provide you with information about the open and collaborative Internet model in which we work as well as highlighting specific areas of ISOC's cooperation with other partners in the international community and in the Internet community.

The Internet has grown from a small research network to become a vital link among the world's peoples and a major force advancing human freedom, creativity, and both social and economic development around the globe. But the Internet differs from traditional telephony systems. It is a complex system that is still evolving rapidly. And as it has been since the beginning, the Internet is a network of networks working cooperatively together with no centralized control or governance mechanisms required. As a matter of design, the intelligence of the network is predominantly at the edges, with the users. That is to say, the business of the network is to carry bits of information to their addresses; the users' activity and equipment decides what bits are to go where, and what they will do when they get there. This has proven to be a model that is flexible, adaptable and responsive to users' needs. But there is no doubt that the Internet model presents a challenge to traditional governance players and mechanisms that have evolved to regard central control as the norm.

Adding to the challenge, the Internet is inherently global, and therefore it can operate trans-jurisdictionally as easily as within national boundaries. And as bits of information trigger activity at their end points in different jurisdiction, the cultures and institutions at the two end points of the transmission do not always share an agreement on what is acceptable and what is not (with some obvious exceptions). While this may be true, the challenge is not unique to the Internet.

In practical terms, what does the Internet model mean? There are several aspects that need to be understood as background to an informed discussion of enhanced cooperation. First, the Internet is a network of networks, characterized by shared global ownership without central control. Second, it is now governed primarily through collaborative engagement in many organizations. People and organizations from many backgrounds and with different expertise are involved: researchers, business people, civil society actors, people from academia and from governments. This diversity is key to the model's success. Third, the development of the Internet is based on open standards, which are also openly developed. Participation is based on knowledge and need rather than formal membership in the Internet organizations (another benefit as it encourages broad participation and works to reduce any barriers). And finally, the Internet model is also based on openly developed and widely supported key principles (such as the "end-to-end principle" which means that the job of the Internet is simply to carry bits of information from originator to receiver without modifying them while in the network).

In short, the Internet model is an inter-related set of open, bottom-up, freely accessible, public, multi-stakeholder processes for both technology and policy development. The Internet truly functions as an ecological system. As we know, ecological systems are composed of intricate, interdependent and sometimes undetected interrelationships. They are not easily taken apart and reassembled, especially if you want the system to work well in future. And it works well now, precisely because of the integration that has taken place during its growth so far, and its continuing openness to participation and developing new linkage as required.

The Internet model has served the Internet and its users well. For the Internet to continue to be an engine of growth, creativity, commerce and social development, it is vital that the model is understood and encouraged so it will continue to function.

We believe it is important that the stakeholders in the WSIS process who expressed their desire for enhanced cooperation in the realm of Internet governance become acquainted with the deeply cooperative mechanisms that now exist, and continue to evolve to make the Internet work as a responsive and responsible system. As a key participant in the Internet model, the Internet Society is pleased to provide the following information.

The Internet Society is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet related standards, education, and policy. With offices in Washington DC, USA, and Geneva, Switzerland, it is dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution and use of the Internet for the benefit of people throughout the world.

The Internet Society provides leadership in addressing issues that confront the future of the Internet, and is the organizational home for the groups responsible for Internet infrastructure standards, including the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) and the Internet Architecture Board (IAB). ISOC acts not only as a global clearinghouse for Internet information and education but also as a facilitator and coordinator of many Internet-related initiatives around the world. For over 15 years ISOC has run international network training programs for developing countries and these have played a vital role in setting up the Internet connections and networks in virtually every country connecting to the Internet during this time.

The Internet Society has more than 80 organizational members, more than 28,000 individual members and over 90 chapters around the world. ISOC has also created regional bureaus to better serve the Internet community around the world.

Through this range of activities, and with its broadly based global public support, ISOC has long been fully engaged with other stakeholder groups, including interested governments and international organizations, and our ongoing efforts to enhance the open and collaborative Internet model. The following links will direct you to the majority of those, and help you to understand the deeply cooperative approach taken by this organization:

1. **Cooperation with organizations and groups on public policy issues related to the Internet:** <<http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/community/>>. Please be sure to refer to the links appearing in the box on the upper left corner of the page. ISOC continues to expand its linkages with regional organizations involved with public policy issues related to the Internet. The ISOC web site is regularly updated to provide up-to-date information on those relationships.
2. **Cooperation in the field of Internet standards:** This is a major part of ISOC's activities, as can be seen by the following links showing organizations with which we cooperate at different levels:
 - a. Internet standards organizations:
<<http://www.isoc.org/standards/orgs.shtml>>
 - b. Other major standards organizations
<<http://www.isoc.org/standards/otherorgs.shtml>>
 - c. Internet administrative organizations:
<<http://www.isoc.org/standards/adminorgs.shtml>>
3. **Cooperation in the field of education and human capacity building:** Our efforts to create an Internet for all is a further area where ISOC is and has long been active. See for example the range of activities and partnerships listed at the following URL: <<http://www.isoc.org/educpillar/>>. Note in particular the high level of cooperation with regional network operator groups and operator forums <http://www.isoc.org/educpillar/rnog.shtml>, which are vital to the technical foundation of the Internet around the world.

I trust this will be of use to you in preparing the Secretary-General's response to the Economic and Social Council. I look forward to seeing the report when completed. Please be assured of ISOC's ongoing commitment to an enhanced level of cooperation with all interested and responsible stakeholders in the realm of Internet governance.

Sincerely yours,



Bill Graham
Strategic Global Engagement
Office of the President
The Internet Society