

Remarks by Constance Bommelaer, Senior Manager Strategic Global Engagement, Internet Society, to the 13th session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

Panel discussion on Enhanced Cooperation: Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) at the regional and international levels.

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First of all I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to participate to this discussion. The Internet Society has had the privilege to contribute to all consultations organized since 2008 by the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and it is a pleasure to participate today in the 13th session of the United Nations Commission for Science and Technology for Development (CSTD).

I would like to start with just a few words about the Internet Society (ISOC).

ISOC is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet related standards, education, and policy. With offices in Washington D.C., 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.

ISOC 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 as a global clearinghouse for technically sound Internet information and capacity building and as a facilitator and coordinator of 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 continues to develop and contribute to Enhanced Cooperation

The Internet Society was accredited to the WSIS during the first phase and participated actively in the entire preparatory process and in the Geneva and Tunis Summits themselves.

The goals agreed during the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) are ambitious. As it was before and during the WSIS process, the Internet model of development remains relevant to successfully achieving enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders. It remains critical for governments, the private sector, civil society, the Internet technical community, and intergovernmental organizations to continuously improve their cooperation, each in the area of their competence and mandate.

Since the Tunis Summit, the Internet Society has been actively involved in support of implementing the targets, recommendations, and commitments of the WSIS as they pertain to the Internet, and to Internet Governance, as well as in capacity building and support to Internet standards organizations. We now have more than 28,000 individual members, 90 chapters around the world and more than 100 organizational members. We also have five regional bureaus to better serve the Internet community around the world (the Latin American and Caribbean bureau is located in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the African bureau in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the European Bureau in Brussels, Belgium, and the South and Southeast Asian bureau in Suva, Fiji, and the North American bureau is located in Reston, Virginia, USA.)

This global and diverse community continues to deploy efforts in a wide range of areas, working to enhance their cooperation and their contribution to the development of Internet-related public policy solutions around the world. Through its sponsored events, developing-country training workshops, tutorials, public policy, and regional and local chapters, the Internet Society serves the needs of the growing global Internet community.

ISOC works with all stakeholders in ways that contribute to the implementation of critical WSIS Action Lines, such as:

- *C.1: The role of public governance authorities and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development* and *C.11: International and regional cooperation*: Enhancing our cooperation with the OECD (coordinating the Internet Technical Advisory Committee to the OECD), CITEL, ITU, UNESCO, UNECA, etc.
- *C2: Information and communication infrastructure*: ISOC is the organizational home for groups responsible for Internet infrastructure standards (IETF, IRTF, IAB, IESG).
- *C4: Capacity building*: training network operators on basic and advanced internetworking skills and techniques, helping launch of IXPs in Africa, etc.

ISOC also continues to actively participate in the Internet Governance Forum.

We recognize the IGF as one of the most active and successful outcomes of the WSIS. As an organization ISOC has contributed financially to the operation of the IGF each year, has participated in the Advisory Group to the UN Secretary General, and assisted Advisory Group members from developing countries to participate. ISOC has organized informational workshops at the IGF and worked with all other stakeholders to make the IGF a success.

One of our largest commitments has been to establish an ISOC IGF Ambassador program that brings qualified participants to the IGF from around the world and from all stakeholder groups to learn and to teach about Internet governance. The 2009 Ambassadors, for example, came from seventeen developing countries and three developed countries, and were from governments, academic institutions, businesses, and civil society. ISOC believes the value of the IGF is its ability to bring together people who might not otherwise meet.

The IGF inspires people to work effectively in support of people-centered development – a key goal of the WSIS. It feeds work in communities, in countries, in all regions and at the global level. For these reasons, ISOC supports the continuation of the IGF in its present form, so that it can continue to contribute to all stakeholders' understanding of issues and to develop appropriate approaches to vital public policy issues related to the Internet.

Turning to additional recommendations for Enhanced Cooperation

We have taken the time to consult widely with the membership of ISOC on this important question. Our consultations showed that ISOC members regard cooperation and collaboration as central to advancing the development of the Internet for the benefit of all mankind, and therefore we place a high value on the continuing pursuit of enhanced cooperation. As we highlighted in our report to you in October last year, we believe that ISOC and our fellow organizations in the Internet community, such as the IETF, have long demonstrated a strong commitment to cooperation and collaboration. This has only increased since the WSIS. We have also increased our participation in other stakeholder groups' activities related to the essential tasks associated with the Internet, to contribute to creating an environment that facilitates this development of public policy principles as a result of their efforts to be more inclusive. As one particularly good example at the global level, I would point to the steps taken by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to include the Internet technical community and civil society in their Internet related policy work since the June 2008 Seoul Ministerial Meeting on the Future of the Internet Economy. The Internet Governance Forum is another example that you will know well.

Our 2010 survey on Internet governance of our global membership¹ provided many examples of how enhanced cooperation is also taking hold at the local and national level, which we believe is a sign of the high level of commitment to this contribution of the WSIS process.

The Internet Society welcomes opportunities of this type, and continuously seeks new areas where we can offer sound advice and creative collaboration in global, regional, and national efforts to extend the benefits of the Internet.

¹ http://www.isoc.org/isoc/conferences/wsis/docs/survey_governance_20100506.pdf

Turning to the question of steps to be pursued in enhanced cooperation, we would like to put forward three key recommendations (also submitted in March 2009 to the under-Secretariat of the United Nations²).

The first recommendation is that all stakeholders should take advantage of the opportunity to become more involved in the Internet community organizations, where technical standards are developed and where issues at the intersection of technology and policy are discussed.

In that regard, the Internet technical community's Memorandum addressed to the OECD ministers at their conference held in June 2008, formally invited "governments to join us in an open and collaborative community, together with business and civil society, as we work to extend the benefits of creativity and convergence to all communities, in all parts of the world."

And yet, governments, international organizations, and civil society groups can still do much more to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them. The Internet brings technology and policy together in ways not previously experienced. New approaches, new venues, and new forums have arisen to respond to the opportunities and challenges that have been created. It is vital that all stakeholders in turn take up the challenge by participating in these new forums that are so critical to the Internet's responsible development.

The United Nations should take steps through its component organizations to create awareness of the opportunities to engage with others in developing a holistic approach to Internet-related public policy principles. It should go even further, by supporting capacity building programs to help member states understand how best to get involved in relevant organizations, how and when they can contribute to discussions, and how to develop the expertise required to do so meaningfully. The CSTD could play a helpful role here, because many of the Internet forums either are technical in nature, or would benefit from informed technical expertise. Support and encouragement from the United Nations could make local, regional, and global forums concerned with Internet technology and policy and their intersection more dynamic and inclusive in their practice.

The second recommendation is for governments and international institutions to make their Internet policy related and decision making activities more open and inclusive of all stakeholders.

Some governments, and some regional organizations have been more open, and some international organizations have shown a commitment to enhanced cooperation. Once again, I would point to the steps taken by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to include the Internet technical community and civil society in their Internet related policy work. The Internet Society welcomes these opportunities, and suggests that the United Nations consider the OECD example as a case study for increasing openness in its own organizations, and for recommending mechanisms that member states could implement locally and

² <http://www.isoc.org/isoc/conferences/wsis/>

regionally. Our report to the UN/DESA highlighted many examples of enhanced cooperation at the local level.

The third recommendation we are proposing applies to the process of enhanced cooperation at the broadest level.

Whether speaking of enhanced cooperation in governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental, or international organizations, it is essential that efforts to advance enhanced cooperation be founded on a commitment to openness, inclusiveness, and outreach, so that the entities that may be affected by decisions are able to participate in the development and implementation of those decisions. This approach obviously is fundamental to the development of an Internet that itself will be open, inclusive and beneficial to all of the people of the world. And yet we have repeatedly observed that in certain organizations, mechanisms have not been implemented to allow all stakeholders to participate in discussions and debates, even when in many cases these are specifically related to the management or deployment activities of non-government stakeholders, or to technical and operational matters that do not impact on international public policy issues. In particular, we have found our opportunities to participate most restricted when actual binding decisions are being made; for example at global assemblies and at treaty-making conferences. It is our view that the debates preceding a decision should welcome informed contributions and discussion from the full range of stakeholders.

Conclusion

From the perspective of a not-for-profit organization such as ISOC, there can be no doubt that the innovations and openness that the WSIS brought to all organizations and stakeholders involved has continued into the implementation phase. We welcome the opportunity to be part of this effort, and look forward to continuing with others to contribute.

Thank you.