

I appreciate the opportunity to speak here as a member and as a co-coordinator of the WSIS civil society Internet Governance Caucus. The basic ideas, which I am going to present reflect the position of that caucus. They also have the backing of the WSIS civil society's content & theme group. The caucus's position paper has also influenced some of the statements that have been presented yesterday.

I'd like to begin with the challenge the working group faces. One of the important challenges concern the general acceptance or legitimacy of the working group.

It is obvious that governments, private sector and civil society won't accept the outcomes of the working group if they don't recognize themselves in the results.

However, a working group with a limited membership of 20 or 40 people cannot represent all constituencies and stakeholders in this field. And for the sake of efficiency, it is even preferable that the working group doesn't get too large. An open-ended process would clearly not be efficient enough to meet the ambitious goals to be achieved in a very narrow timeframe.

So, the working group faces a potential conflict between efficiency and legitimacy: How can the working group gain international credibility and support from all stakeholder groups although it is impossible to achieve legitimacy through traditional forms of representation?

The Internet Governance Caucus has considered these questions and would like to suggest some practical answers to this question, which cover the following aspects: (1) Status of the working, (2) composition & structure of the working group, (3) operating principles.

1 Status of the Working Group

The Plan of Action asks the Secretary General of the United Nations to set up the working group on Internet Governance to prepare a report for the second phase of the summit in Tunis in 2005.

In our view this means that the working group is not expected to negotiate language on behalf of nation states but rather to support the work of the Secretary General.

A further implication of this view would be that members of the working group serve as peers.

Composition & Structure of IGWG (1/3)

The central idea we'd like to propose with regard to the working group's structure is to follow a two tier approach with the WGIG acting mainly as a facilitator. Let me briefly explain what we mean by a facilitator approach.

Most of the questions the working group is expected to investigate are not really new. In fact, the founding process of the working group itself has already evoked a number of substantial new contributions on the subject of Internet Governance (some of them put forward by members of the Internet Governance caucus).

We therefore recommend that the working group should not try to re-invent the wheel but rather regard its task as collecting, analyzing and evaluating the broad regional, technical and academic expertise already out there in the field of Internet Governance.

A further advantage of the facilitator approach would be that the working group could reach out to user, expert and business communities from around the world and provide opportunities for meaningful participation.

The second tier in this structure should thus comprise expert advisory groups and ad hoc expert consultations. Together, they could help the core working group to assemble and analyze the expertise relevant to the working group's mission.

The facilitator approach as suggested here would not devalue the status of the working group but would help the working group to share the heavy work load and at the same time make it more inclusive.

Composition & Structure of IGWG (2/3)

The working group will have to address a broad range of issues in a very short period of time. Compressed schedule, heavy workload,

and need for a significant commitment of time suggests that the working group should be formed at the working level not as a High Level Group. We would therefore also suggest that the working group should have a relatively small membership.

In our view, the membership of the working group

- must be balanced between participants from governments, the private sector and civil society,
- from both developing and developed countries, and, equally important:
- not favouring one group over any other
- In addition, the working group should respect gender diversity.

Composition & Structure of IGWG (3/3)

These criteria lead us to the following suggestion for a basic structure:

The working group should comprise women and men with a high level of experience in international ICT policy making including the issues the working group will address. The wg should include:

- Six to 10 participants from Governments
- Six to 10 participants from Civil Society
- Six to 10 participants from the Private Sector
- plus a Chairperson or co-Chairs

The working group would thus have 19 to 32 members. Governments, the private sector and civil society would be represented by an equal number of members.

In addition, a limited number of observers from Intergovernmental and International Organizations should be invited to join the working group.

We further recommend that, as far as reasonably possible, representation from governments, the private sector and civil society be divided equally between participants from developing and developed countries. Regional diversity constitutes an essential feature of the working group as it conducts consultations and gathers

information. Strong consideration must also be given to ensuring linguistic diversity in the group's membership.

Operational Principles (1/2)

We agree with many other speakers who have pointed out yesterday and today that the WGIG should respect the governance principles as suggested in the Summit Declaration and Action Plan. From a practical point of view, this means that:

- The working group should hold open public meetings where interested individual may participate, either in person or remotely.
- All submissions to the working group, minutes of meetings and documents discussed should be publicly archived.
- Formal consultations should be summarized and made publicly available.
- Reports of the working group must be translated into all official UN languages. Translation of materials throughout the process will be essential to broad participation and acceptance of the working group's output.
- And to add another very important point: Reports of the working group, its interim and final proposals and decisions must reflect consideration of comments received and explain how those comments were taken into account.

Operational Principles (2/2)

As pointed out earlier, the Working Group on Internet Governance should be independent of the WSIS preparatory committee meetings.

The process should be as independent as possible of political blocs and lobbies. Otherwise it risks further deadlocks as experienced during the Geneva phase. We therefore recommend that the chair (or dual chairs) should come from Civil Society and/or the Private Sector. They should be chosen with the following criteria in mind:

- Recognized leadership in international, multi-sector groups
- Non partisan personality
- At least one of them coming from a developing country
- Fluent in several UN languages

Our last point concerns the funding of the working group:

The Working Group on Internet Governance must be provided with the resources necessary to achieve the tasks as defined by the Summit's declaration. The ambitious goals, the tight time frame and the need for inclusiveness and openness make adequate funding of the working group even more crucial.

Developing countries and civil society representatives face special funding needs in order to participate. Without financial support their participation will not be effective.

Resources should also be made available to support the translation of materials into major languages and interpretation at meetings.

Thank you for your time and attention!