



ISOC@WSIS: Internet Society Statement – 26 September 2005

WSIS PrepCom 3 Sub-committee A on Internet Governance

Mr. Chairman,

We thank you for your thoughtful paper and we look forward to participating fully in the Working Groups given the Internet Community's central role in existing and future governance mechanisms.

We appreciate the Chair restating that no conclusions have been drawn as there are issues within the text that deserve further consideration. We also support delegations that have noted that there are a number of documents we must take into consideration in our deliberations, including the compilation of comments on the WGIG Report itself.

We would like to see a reinforced commitment to capacity building in the Chair's paper. We strongly endorse the need for regional backbones, Internet Exchange Points and other measures to bring infrastructure to those nations that truly need it. We would also note that regulatory environments must enable Internet access and usage, support multilingualism and local language content, otherwise these infrastructure investments will be for nothing. We ask that the Chair's report focus on these matters as a priority.

We would like to see an explicit exhortation to parties to fully use the existing multi-stakeholder fora and processes that address Internet Governance matters today.

The existing organizations have and continue to pursue practices that are consistent with the "Geneva Principles." Internet management already occurs in an open and transparent manner at global, regional and national levels. The WSIS has a responsibility to encourage stakeholders to fully participate in those organizations responsible for the management of the Internet today as a matter of good governance.

We do not believe that there is a proven need for a "new cooperation model" to help implement the Geneva Principles until stakeholders have fully participated in the existing mechanisms. Further, if our priorities are the stability and security of the Internet, then we would suggest that stakeholders should seek to bring about evolutionary change from within the existing mechanisms, and not from without.

The continued politicization of the management of the Internet is counter-productive. We should recognize that many parties - governments, the private sector, the Internet community, Civil Society and more - have had key roles in the success of the Internet to date. Many of the governments here today are contributors to that success, benefiting from the openness and transparency that characterizes the Internet and the organizations that manage it.

We suggest that the participants in the WSIS process avail themselves of the leadership of the Regional Internet Registry system and other organisations that are represented here for more in-depth discussions of some of the issues raised in your paper. The RIRs have successfully evolved and managed number resources for more than a decade, and they should be commended, supported and promoted for having done so. The WSIS has a responsibility to recognize and support these organizations as examples of good Internet governance.

We heard from the Council of Europe last week about activities at an international level to address cyber-crime. That was an important contribution for it reminded us that many initiatives are underway to address many of the concerns raised in the WGIG process and Report. Global overarching mechanisms will not solve cyber-security and spam problems – effective national laws in all countries coupled with international agreements and treaties will.

Let us not forget that additional global structures can take us away from what is important – they can take us one step further from bringing the Internet to those that really need it. We do not need to further the divide, but bridge it.

Chairman, there is no consensus as to what the next steps should be. Many issues related to Internet usage are covered by existing treaties or national laws and international cooperation. Many of the issues related to Internet resources and administration are successfully addressed through existing mechanisms, although awareness of those mechanisms could be greater. The role of the WSIS should be to encourage participation in those treaties and mechanisms before assuming that some other approach is necessary.

We would submit that with more education, communication, cooperation and information sharing many of the concerns outlined in the WGIG Report would be addressed. This process has helped us enormously, but all stakeholders need to do more to encourage and facilitate participation in the existing mechanisms and processes first before we talk about change. Otherwise it becomes change for change sake, and that will not contribute to the Internet's security and stability.

If there is one area where the WSIS should seek to bring about change it is in the areas of connectivity and capacity building, for it is there that the most impetus and change is needed.

Finally - As per our statement of the 22nd of September, we would like to restate our wish for the Internet community to be recognized as a principal stakeholder in these discussions and the final documents.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.