

Number Resource Organization (NRO) Comments on the WGIG Report.

15th August, 2005

We, the Number Resource Organization, congratulate the WGIG on their work and understand that important conclusions are represented from this report.

Internet Governance –

The WGIG has opted for a broad definition of Internet Governance. The definition itself as well as the broad nature of the group's works serves to emphasize the large number of issues involved in the question of Internet Governance. It is a very significant development in the discussion of Internet Governance as it clearly shows that there needs to be an understanding of the complexity of this issue. This definition firmly establishes that fact that Internet Governance is much more than Internet Resource Management. It is only with this definition that any analysis of Internet Governance models and systems can take place.

The Geneva Principles –

The report clearly shows a strengthening of the concepts already agreed by the Nations during the first phase of the summit, which are usually known as "The Geneva Principles."

The strengthening of these concepts is a very important aspect of the work of the WGIG and of the entire process. However from our point of view, the report has not sufficiently emphasized the need for implementing these principles in all of the existing organizations that have a role in Internet Governance.

This would imply a particularly significant change in intergovernmental organizations; that we feel would greatly benefit the global spectrum of all stakeholders.

Thus we believe that it is very important that the WSIS take substantive action in this regard.

We are convinced that the active participation of all interested parties on an even playing field is a key factor in the success of any governance model. Thus the interpretation of "Multilateral" as "Multistakeholder", as it has been broadly accepted during the WGIG process, is a very positive concept in relation to the Geneva principles and deserves the full attention of the WSIS.

The WGIG Experience –

The experience of the creation and work of the WGIG has been very positive from the point of view of the implementation of a multistakeholder model, as it has brought to the United Nations working methodologies that are very common in other arenas but until now not seen within the United Nations.

This must be highlighted as a successful multistakeholder working experience, and it must be considered an important precedent for the future.

Operational level vs. Policy level –

We believe that the decision of the WGIG of focusing on policy aspects and not on operational aspects of Internet, as explained by the Chairman of the WGIG during the presentation of the report, has been very wise.

We understand that it is an important endorsement of the current functioning of the operational aspects, which have been broadly acknowledged by the majority of those participating in the process, regardless of their nationality and the sector to which they belong.

Roles and Responsibilities –

The NRO salutes the explicit acknowledgment, included in the WGIG report, of the existence of the technical and academic community and their important contribution to the development of the Internet.

It is important that the WSIS takes this into consideration in order to ensure that participation and representation mechanisms reflect this reality and, although we do not object to the more widespread practice of classifying stakeholders as Civil Society, Private Sector and Governments, it is important that the academic sector and the technical community have adequate participation and representation in the governance mechanisms.

IP Addresses –

We observed with satisfaction that the WGIG made only one recommendation in relation to this important issue, as this implies an acknowledgment of the effectiveness of the RIR system.

As to the recommendation itself, that is to say the recommendation of ensuring equitable access to resources, especially in the context of IPv6 deployment, we express our agreement. This goal is an aim of the RIR system itself, and one toward which we strive through the ongoing operation of our open policy processes.

Oversight –

We strongly support the WGIG recommendation in the sense that no single government should exercise oversight functions in relation to Internet Governance or any of its components.

As a consequence of this principle, we believe that the current oversight role that the United States Government exercises over ICANN and the IANA functions must finish. The preservation of the operational stability has to be the key principle in which the transition to any new framework should be based.

The Four Models –

The WGIG has presented four (4) oversight models for certain specific Internet functions, those usually named as “Administration of Internet Resources”.

The NRO supports the proposal presented as Model 2. We believe that the participation of interested parties in all organizations relating to Internet Governance, together with the multistakeholder forum proposal included in the report, ensures the efficient control of the system. This control exercised by all stakeholders, including governments, is much more beneficial than an oversight exercised exclusively by governments.

At the same time, this proposal takes advantage of all the experience that has already been generated in the current system.

We recognize that the current governance structures can be improved (as is always the case), therefore, we strongly recommend that the WSIS select the option of building on the structures that already exist.

We note that current systems have been very beneficial for the communities of developing countries. The creation of Regional Internet Registries in developing regions: AfriNIC for Africa and LACNIC for Latin America and the Caribbean , has provided a very successful examples in management of Internet Number Resources.

We strongly recommend caution by the WSIS as it considers oversight. The creation of either purely or mainly governmental oversight structures may have negative impacts such as slowing down Internet innovation, subordinating technical decisions to political criteria, and increasing bureaucracy. All of these will surely reduce the highly valued security and stability of Internet.

Other Topics –

We understand the importance of matters related to domain names, IP addresses and root servers and are aware of the concerns on the part of national governments in relation to these issues. However, we strongly recommend that the WSIS not overemphasize these matters. It is extremely important that the Summit pays attention to those other matters which have and will continue to have considerable impact on the development of the Internet and information society. These matters which include Capacity Building, Freedom of Expression, Privacy, Internet Access and Internet Interconnection Costs deserve the in-depth attention of the WSIS.