

Number Resource Organization Statement on WSIS Phase II, Tunis

The Number Resource Organization [NRO] is the coalition of Regional Internet address Registries [RIRs] which operate in the world today. It was formed in October 2003 by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the RIRs, and it is soon to be formally incorporated in Uruguay, as an International Non-profit Organisation. The NRO represents the collective experience and interests of individual RIRs and their communities, and provides an efficient interface to other parties interested in the work and responsibilities of the RIRs.

The RIRs are responsible for distribution of Internet Number Resources [IPv4 and IPv6 addresses and Autonomous System Numbers]. These number resources are the most fundamental of the identifiers on which the Internet relies: the Internet can operate without domain names; but it cannot operate without numbers. The RIRs have carried the responsibilities associated with managing these critical resources collectively for over 10 years, since well before the start of ICANN. This has been done very effectively through the entire “modern history” of today’s Internet which includes both the “dot com boom” and the “dot com bust”.

As the Internet continues to evolve, the NRO will ensure continuity, fairness and equity in the processes of Internet number resource distribution and management.

The RIRs, and the NRO, have participated in the World Summit on the Information Society [WSIS] processes for over 3 years, including Prepcoms, regional meetings and the final Summit of both phases. Our representatives have attended as observers and as subject matter experts, with a genuine aim to assist in discussions related to Internet Number Resources in general and to IP addresses in particular. The RIRs themselves have also initiated meetings and projects of their own, aimed at increasing understanding of and participation in WSIS within our regions and communities.

The NRO has participated in the WSIS processes as active supporters of the current Internet administrative model, which has supported the successful development of the Internet to date, but also the means of community self-regulation to administer and manage Internet Number Resources. The NRO has supported ICANN, not as a component of that organisation dependent upon it for support; but rather as an independent component of the broader Internet administrative framework of which ICANN itself is a part.

The NRO strongly supports the ongoing evolution of the Internet’s administrative and technical infrastructures.

The RIRs themselves represent an ethos of ongoing evolution within the Internet community, through their regular Open Policy Meetings and associated policy processes, by which IP address management is subjected to regular review and continual refinement. As self-regulatory organisations, based on open membership structures, the RIRs are entirely subject to the needs and directions of their communities.

The RIRs have long supported a range of activities beyond their core responsibilities for Internet resource distribution and management. These have included extensive technical training activities undertaken over many years throughout world, often in collaboration with Internet operational meetings and conference, and with like-minded organisations in the technical and development sectors. They have included the operation of one Internet root server (K-Root in Amsterdam), and the distribution of many root server mirror sites, in many parts of the world. They have included strong support for Research and Development activities, resulting in new technologies and services now critical to Internet operations, and also in funded R&D grants given to organisations involved in independent activities.

The establishment of new RIRs in Latin America in 2002, and in Africa in 2004, was strongly supported by the RIRs existing at those times. These represent some of the proudest, and most profound, achievements of the RIR system in recent years.

In practical and operational areas, the RIRs have undertaken and supported many activities which have contributed strongly to global Internet development.

Particularly in developing regions of the world, there are also many broader needs that have been identified throughout the WSIS progress. The NRO believes that these can be addressed, and that they now need to be addressed as a priority. These include the development of human and social resources which must precede the development of the Information Society in any given part of the world, and the equity of opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in, and to benefit from, that development.

The NRO is committed to supporting the broader aims of the Summit, in actively promoting these developments, and in actively removing barriers to participation and benefit.

The WSIS has reached agreement on many matters that can assist in developing a proactive agenda for the Information Society. The NRO hopes that remaining disagreements can be put aside, so that practical measures will be adopted and implemented with further delay. We have clearly made much progress, and it is clearly time to move on.