

Number Resource Organization

INPUT ON THE INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

NRO February 15, 2006

The NRO sees the creation of the IGF with interest and expectation, as we believe it will be a useful tool for dealing with those issues which constitute real problems for the community and for which there are no adequate governance mechanisms.

In view of the consultation meeting to be held on February 16-17, 2006, we believe it is an appropriate time for us to express our opinion regarding the characteristics which this forum should have.

Although many aspects relating to the forum have already been considered under the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, it is likewise important for us to highlight some of them.

The IGF must be a multi-stakeholder forum without decision-making attributions. The different stakeholders must participate on a level playing field, all of them having exactly the same privileges. The archives of IGF meeting minutes and documents must be accessible to anyone without the need for accreditation.

These basic and fundamental aspects must constitute the foundation on which the IGF is built.

Structure

The NRO shares the idea that the IGF should not be a bureau but a Programmatic Committee. These Programmatic Committee members should be designated by the UN Secretary General after consultation with different stakeholders. All the stakeholders should be represented in the Committee to include governments, civil society, private sector, and Internet organizations. Its composition should be balanced from regional, gender and stakeholder representation points of view.

There could be a need for permanent support provided by a secretariat; this secretariat should then be very small and independent.

Frequency of Meetings and Forms of Participation

The current agenda of meetings having to deal with different aspects of Internet Governance is quite intense. The sheer number of events could be a barrier for stakeholders from countries with limited economic possibilities, as they could not meet the costs incurred to participate in all these events.

Therefore, while it seems important for the IGF to meet periodically, it is also important that the number of meetings being limited. We suggest one meeting per year with the possibility, through consensus, to call for more meetings if necessary.

For us, the availability of participation tools and mechanisms is more important than the number of meetings.

The IGF must use broad participation mechanisms such as on-line discussions, electronic forums, public consultations via electronic means and webcasting for remote participation in face-to-face meetings.

Consensus Mechanisms

A mechanism based on discussion and consensus commonly used in various Internet forums should be considered as a model for the IGF discussion mechanism.

Location of the IGF

The NRO recommends that the IGF not be based in any particular city, and that its meetings always be held back-to-back with other important meetings on related subjects. For instance, indistinctly and on a rotational basis, IGF meetings could be held together with the meetings of organizations such as the ICANN, the ITU, the IETF, the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs), the Internet Society, etc.

IGF meetings should last no more than two days (so that they can be scheduled jointly with other meetings) and must ensure regional diversity criterion, by taking place alternatively in different regions of the world.

The format of the WGIG consultation meetings could be used as a model for the IGF's working methodology.

If the IGF establishes a permanent secretariat, its location must be chosen by the UN Secretary General only after consultation with stakeholders, which could be undertaken during consultations on the composition of the Programmatic Committee.

Issues to be dealt with by the IGF

In our opinion, the IGF can be a very useful tool for the community if it deals with issues which are identified as real problems, instead of launching duplicate ideological discussions which have already taken place within the framework of the WSIS.

The community has great expectations that the IGF could successfully deal with issues such as Cyber-crime, Privacy Rights, SPAM, Interconnection Costs and Capacity Building.

We believe these are the important topics which should be tackled by the IGF.

Within the framework of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, <http://www.itu.int/wsis/documents/doc_multi.asp?lang=en&id=2267%7C0>, changes were recommended to organizations dealing with Internet Governance so that each stakeholder can fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

IGF could also play an important role as a forum where reports on the evolution of the above mentioned changes could be presented and monitored.

Summary

The NRO recommends that the IGF have a Programmatic Committee which is responsible for preparing the agenda of meetings, and a very light secretariat to provide logistic support.

The IGF should meet once a year, unless there is consensus on the need for extraordinary meetings.

Working mechanisms should be implemented so that consensus can be achieved. The mechanisms should be based on those currently used in various Internet forums.

IGF meetings should rotate among the different regions. In addition, its meetings should always be held back-to-back with meetings of other organizations dealing with related issues.

There should be broad participation mechanisms in place, including broad participation tools, on-line discussions and remote participation to face-to-face meetings.

The IGF agenda should consider issues which are real problems for the community; the IGF should not be used to reopen discussions of ideological nature which already took place within the framework of the WSIS.

Raúl Echeberria

Chair

Number Resource Organization

