Remarks

by

Mr. Hadil da Rocha Vianna
Ministry of External Relations
Brazil

The views presented here are the participants’ and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
1 – WSIS IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), held in Geneva, in 2003, and in Tunis, in 2005, developed a "common vision of Information Society" based on the commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society. The Geneva Principles' recognized that information and communication technologies should not be taken as and end in themselves, but as a means "to promote the development goals of the Millennium Declaration, namely the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement of maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and development of global partnerships for development for the attainment of a more peaceful, just and prosperous world."

In 2005, the second phase of WSIS dedicated itself to three specific issues of importance, addressed on a comprehensive manner by its operative document, the Tunis Agenda2: financial mechanisms, Internet governance and implementation and follow-up. Tunis Agenda paragraph 105 assigned the system-wide supervision of the WSIS system-wide follow-up to the ECOSOC, and determined the revision of the mandate and composition of the Commission of Science and Technology for Development for this purpose, taking the multi-stakeholder approach into account.

The implementation of WSIS conclusions, through appropriate public policies and strategies concerning the wide array of issues raised by the Summit's final documents, may benefit from an exchange of national experiences and, whenever feasible and desirable, from a coordinated effort to identify, at the international level, issues that may

---

contribute to streamlining national initiatives, in line with the WSIS commitments, and possibly result in new co-operation opportunities. It is clearly understood that the achievement of these goals task does not rely solely on Governments. As WSIS documents stated, all stakeholders should work together to that end: The way such multi-stakeholder approach will work at the international level remains, however, a question yet to be answered. Perhaps the first true experience in this sense is under way at the Internet Governance Forum, also created by the WSIS3.

1.1 - INTERNET GOVERNANCE

WSIS recognized that "the Internet has evolved into a global facility available to the public and its governance should constitute a core issue of the Information Society agenda; that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations in their respective roles"; and that Internet governance "is an essential element for a people-centered, inclusive, development-oriented and non-discriminatory Information Society". The Tunis Agenda also stated that "Policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of States. They have rights and responsibilities for international Internet-related public policy issues"5. The mechanisms and mandates established by WSIS have not yet been explored to their full potential.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has just finished its second meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 12-15 November. Being the representative of the host country of the meeting in the Advisory Group to the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) in the convening of the event, I had the pleasure of co-chairing both the preparatory process for the 2nd IGF and a man session devoted to evaluate the challenges and achievements of the Forum with Mr. Nitin Desai, Special Adviser of the UNSG for Internet Governance.

The second IGF meeting advanced in the path inaugurated in Athens towards the full implementation of its mandate. in terms of participation, scope, thematic agenda,

---

2 Tunis Agenda: Document: WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-E
3 Tunis Agenda, paragraph 72.
4 Tunis Agenda, paragraphs 29 and 31; Geneva Principles, paragraphs 48 and 49.
5 Tunis Agenda, paragraph 35(a).
organization of work and possible results. It contributed to the incremental process that aims at the fulfillment of the Forum's mandate by 2010, at the end of the five-year period initially established by the Tunis Agenda. In terms of substance, besides the important themes of access, diversity, openness and security, the Rio meeting contributed to broaden the debate on Internet governance by devoting a main session to the discussion on critical Internet resources and the improvement of the global mechanisms in charge of their management. In terms of organization of work, another improvement achieved in Rio was the sharing among different stakeholders of the chairmanship of main sessions. A next step in the evolution of the IGF towards the accomplishment of its mandate is the establishment of mechanisms able to ensure balanced geographic representation and meaningful participation of representatives from both the developed and developing world in each stakeholder group with a view to providing the necessary legitimacy to the recommendations that the IGF is allowed to make. This issue could be considered during the upcoming preparatory processes for the next IGF meeting in New Delhi in 2008.

1.2 – ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Notwithstanding the effects that may result to the way States traditionally do business among themselves, including the decision-making processes at the international level, the introduction of ICT in the international agenda will continue to require close consideration by Governments, and cooperation among them, at relevant international organizations. ECOSOC, through CSTD, has a fundamental role to play in this process, as a truly inter-governmental forum in which Member States may exchange views, discuss and agree on possible joint actions regarding public policy issues related to science and technology for development, which includes ICT as a matter of priority, since WSIS.

In promoting the building of a development-oriented and inclusive information society, some elements could be highlighted as essential for the successful use of ICT. Such elements should be sought from experience, considering a bottom-up approach on a multi-stakeholder environment. Among these elements, perhaps one of the most important is the idea of democratic governance. Any model based on intensive use of ICT depend of attracting citizens' participation, during its formulation, implementation and decision-making process. Accountability and transparency are essential requirements for that purpose. This guideline is also applicable to the choice of technological infrastructure
to be used by a certain community, as the chosen technology must be adequate to the community's needs and interests. Therefore, ICT projects must embody a commitment to the development at community level.

Such initiatives should be backed by e-Government projects, aiming at offering public services of quality through electronic means. In underdeveloped areas, for many people, becoming full citizens, by means of having access to public services like document issuance or social security registration, for instance, is a first step to social and digital inclusion. Digital inclusion projects should also consider the use of Free and Open Source Software (FLOSS) as a means of reducing costs with licenses of proprietary models. FLOSS is also a powerful tool for local ICT improvement and broad participation in the digital economy, particularly in developing countries, owing to its positive impact on the building of a competitive and enabling environment for innovation. FLOSS helps reduce "first mover advantage", thus facilitating the incorporation of small and medium companies to the market of software and services.

There seems to be a link between ICT penetration and the level of income and of education of a specific group of citizens. This fact reinforces the idea that ICTs are not an end in themselves, neither a solution to underdevelopment, but rather tools to facilitate the introduction of policies and measures aiming at reducing social and economic disparities.

International Internet connection costs are a burden for developing countries. In this respect, a fair environment for business competition in global scale would contribute to an overall improvement in access conditions. Governments should stimulate the establishment and maintenance of such an environment whenever possible, and take action to correct market imperfections whenever necessary. International financing arrangements should be developed to support investment in areas in which Internet services are not commercially viable. Regional cooperation and Internet Exchange Points are particularly valuable resources to help reduce the demand on intercontinental backbones for domestic or regional communications, thus reducing access costs.

It is also of utmost importance that the logical infrastructure of the Internet be managed in the interest of the international community as a whole, taking governments roles and responsibilities into due account. The ongoing debates on Internationalized Domain
Names (IDN) and the of risk higher cost for developing countries in the transition to IPv6 addresses in face of the uneven distribution of old IPv4 addresses illustrate the public policy dimension of the management of internet critical resources and the role of governments in this task.

1.3 – WSIS FOLLOW-UP AND THE ROLE OF CSTD

By having a coordination role and by being an intergovernmental organization, the CSTD should seize the opportunity to build an environment of reflection, among Government representatives, and with appropriate participation of all stakeholders, about issues pertaining to a future model of Internet governance that adequately meets the criteria and guidelines established by the WSIS conclusions.

In this regard, it is worth to recall that – in addition to the convening of the IGF, the creation of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms, and initiatives such as the Global Alliance for ICT and Development, that have made substantial progress since 2005 – Tunis Agenda paragraphs 69-71 invites the UNSG to start a process of enhanced cooperation involving all relevant organizations and all stakeholders in their respective roles with a view to enabling governments, on equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. The balanced implementation of all action-lines defined by the Tunis Agenda is essential for the accomplishment of the WSIS follow-up process and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES: THE BRAZILIAN PERSPECTIVE

With a population of 185 million and an area of over 8.5 million sq km, Brazil offers an interesting case for study to help understanding the role and importance of ICT for development and the challenges faced by developing nations when trying to implement WSIS conclusions at a national level.

The data related to access to electricity by Brazilian homes could be used as a baseline for ICT access by Brazilian citizens. While 97.2% of Brazilian households are connected to the electric grid, only 13.7% of such homes are connected to the Internet; 18.8% have a
desktop computer at home; around 50% have conventional telephone lines; 60% have
 dwellers with mobile phones; and TV and radio equipments are present in around 90% of
 Brazilian homes.

Many initiatives have been launched in Brazil aiming at the reduction of the digital divide,
either by the Federal Government or by municipalities and/or States. The decentralization
has been a mark in this process. Banco do Brasil, the main State-controlled bank, for
instance, has created alone around 1600 public access centers in the country. In an effort to
put together all initiatives, the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Planning, has
decided to create a National Observatory of Digital Inclusion⁶, aiming to create a consistent
national database of digital inclusion initiatives.

The Federal Government also develops specific projects in the area of e-health and
e-education. On e-health, the main focus has been the training of health family teams on
primary health care, to work with citizens living in communities that are distant from health
resource facilities. The uses of ICT in public health are also being important for the
purpose of epidemiological surveillance, in particular at the Amazon region. This initiative
benefits from the existing infrastructure of the National Research Network (RNP)⁷, and its
collaboration with other Latin American institutions under the Clara Network, created
through EU-LAC cooperation under EU project Alice.

The use of ICT in education can provide important motivational tools for learning and can
promote greater efficiencies in education systems and practices. According to the World
Bank⁸, radio and TV have a much greater potential than the Internet to be used for the
purpose of distant learning in developing countries. New Internet technologies such as
Power Line Communication (PLC) or Broadband Wireless protocols (e.g. WiMax) hold
promise, but are not yet operational. Community access centers are a hot topic, but
successful, replicable models have not yet emerged. It seems that a mix of various
technologies is probably the best way to meet society's needs in education.

⁶Observatório Nacional de Inclusão Digital - ONID. More information can be obtained at
www.inclusaodigital.gov.br
⁷Rede Nacional de Pesquisa, RNP
⁸Knowledge Maps – ICTs in Education. infoDev: the Information for Development Program, World Bank,
2005.
The Brazilian Ministry of Education is implementing many programs in the area of distant learning and e-education. Among them, the In-Service Teacher Training Program is a two-year course aimed at training teachers of basic level from distant regions of the country. The National Information Technology Program on Education promotes the use of ICT as tools of pedagogical enrichment at fundamental and secondary public schools. So far it has benefited municipalities by installing ICT laboratories. In 2003, the Electronic National Information Technology Program was created to provide a virtual tool for communication and cooperative work among students.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education launched the Public Domain Website, a digital library developed in open source software which receives an average of 3 million hits per month.

The Ministry of Science and Technology has just launched a Plan of Action for the period 2007-2010, aiming at the reinforcement of the role of science, technology and innovation in national sustainable development, particularly in engineering and cutting-edge and emerging areas. The Plan is structured the following action lines:

1. expand, integrate, modernize and consolidate the National System for Science and Technology in coordination with the governments of the federal states with a view to enhancing the national science and technology plant;
2. take action in order to accelerate the development of an enabling environment for innovation in the private sector, strengthening the National Policy for Industry, Technology and Foreign Trade;
3. reinforce research and innovation in strategic areas for national sovereignty, particularly energy, aeronautics and space, public security, national defense and the Amazon region;
4. promote and divulge science learning, universal access to science-based goods and technologies that may improve life quality.

ProFonnaclo, more information at www.mec.gov.br/seed/proform
ProInfo and e-ProInfo, more information at www.eim.c.rfo.mec.gov.br/
www.dominiopublico.gov.br