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*The views presented here are the participant's and do not necessarily reflect the views and the position of
the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*

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to the
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The decade since WSIS has seen considerable progress towards a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society – with developing and emerging economies leading the way in Internet growth and innovation.

While Internet growth in developed economies has plateaued in recent years, it is still growing at phenomenal annual rates in developing economies. For example, some 22 percent a year in Argentina, 20 percent in Malaysia, and upwards of 80 percent per annum in some countries in Africa.

In terms of Internet data traffic, research by Cisco Systems indicates that IP traffic is growing fastest in Latin America (51% compound annual growth rate (CARG) between 2009-2014), followed closely by the Middle East and Africa (46% CAGR).

And in terms of mobile data traffic, the Middle East and Africa is projected to have strongest traffic growth of any region (133% CARG 2009-2014) followed by Latin America (111% CARG).

And Internet users in these countries are not just downloading YouTube videos...

Because of the “permission-less innovation” the Internet facilitates – they’re already transforming from “Internet Consumers” to “Internet Creators” – quickly developing the innovations, efficiencies, and opportunities that will help fuel the next wave of Internet growth, investment, and prosperity.

Indeed, according to McKinsey, over 150,000 Internet-related businesses start up each year in emerging and developing economies.

The Internet has also demonstrated its potential for promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – with new Internet and mobile data applications emerging almost every day to help citizens in developing countries protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, improve maternal health, and help farmers get better prices when bringing their goods to market.

And what's even more exciting is that many of these applications and services are "home grown" in developing countries – empowering people on the ground with local knowledge to address local issues.

The Internet Society has been involved in Internet development for over 20 years. In fact, bridging the digital divide, promoting infrastructure development and the use of the Internet for all people through the world, is one of the founding pillars of our mission.

In our 20 years experience, we have found that promoting Internet Development takes a truly multi-stakeholder approach – connecting policymakers, network operators, universities, business, and civil society, together to develop sustainable solutions. All have respective responsibilities, expertise and valuable know-how to bring to the table.

At the Internet Society, we consider the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) a key catalyst for multi-stakeholder cooperation – including on key development and access issues. Indeed, it has been as one of the most successful outcomes of the WSIS.

Let me give you a few recent examples, of how the multi-stakeholder approach -- and the IGF itself -- is providing concrete dividends in meeting development challenges.

The Internet Society is proud to be a project partner in the African Union's AXIS project, which is aimed at developing Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) in Africa. The project, known as AXIS, working with partners across Africa to provide Best Practices and Technical Assistance workshops to help lay the ground for IXP development.

This multi-stakeholder collaboration has been exemplary, where the Internet technical community, governments, development institutions, and civil society are working together to build technical and human capacity.

Over the last 18 months Internet Society and African Union teams, working together and leveraging our respective strengths and key contacts across stakeholder groups, has conducted 19 Best Practices workshops and 13 Technical Assistance workshops across Africa – and we are currently following up on the specific requests for further assistance in setting up IXPs across Africa that emerged from these and other workshops.

The IGF itself has been an important part of helping expand and extend Internet Exchange Points in other parts of the world.

Since the first IGF in Athens in 2006, ISOC has partners with stakeholders, including governments and inter-governmental organizations such as the OECD and African Union, the technical community, and civil society – to hold workshops to raise awareness about Internet traffic exchange issues – and the role of IXPs in helping lower costs, improve Internet resilience – and catalyzing broader Internet economy growth.

Every successive IGF has resulted in new requests for assistance in developing IXPs from various regions across the world and stakeholder, to which we and others have responded with in-country workshops, technical exchange, and equipment assistance – and ultimately establishing IXPs.

Simply put, without the IGF we would have not had the opportunity to interact, collaborate, and draw together the broad range of stakeholders that make these key infrastructures possible.

Further, the multi-stakeholder process is also effective in addressing issues identified by governments as key challenges. At the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT), for example, many policymakers, especially from developing countries, identified Internet spam as a key concern. We've taken up the challenge to assist countries on this issue and help deliver real results.

Our "Combating Spam" initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership that facilitates dialogue among experts and highlights their experiences combating spam with regions and countries who seek to better understand the options available to form and implement spam mitigation solutions.

These workshops bring a range of parties together (including governments, industry, and technical experts, among others) to exchange approaches and experiences built upon the recognition that spam is a global pervasive problem that requires all stakeholders to work together to stop its proliferation.

We are pleased that both the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) and Inter-American Telecommunication Commission (CITEL) have been key delivery partners in this work.

And our multi-stakeholder anti-spam collaboration delivers more than just talk. It provides links to practical tools to use, lessons learned from various government approaches, and best practices for combating the proliferation of spam, malware, botnets and phishing based on experiences and approaches that are being used to day.

In addition to the in-region spam workshops, the IGF has been an important platform for the project to discuss and disseminate concrete tools and approaches for addressing this key challenge – and to get others involved.

In short -- the multi-stakeholder principles of the WSIS, and the IGF itself, have concretely helped lay the foundation for development cooperation – an achievement that should be recognized by all.

As part of our commitment to the multi-stakeholder process and the IGF Internet

Society Board of Trustees, during its meeting in Buenos Aires last month, agreed to increase support for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as an indispensable part of the multistakeholder Internet ecosystem, including making a sizeable financial contribution.

To be sure, there continue to be challenges – technical, policy, development or economic – that we must collectively address in order for the Internet to continue to grow and evolve.

These are difficult issues – how to secure our networks in ways that don't fragment the global Internet; how to ensure privacy in a data-driven economy; how to bring down costs so end users can fully benefit from all aspects of the Internet.

WSIS confirmed that existing Internet government arrangements have worked effectively, but called for a process of enhanced cooperation. The Internet Society is fully engaged in this process.

We hold the view that the current distributed system based on voluntary collaboration among many organizations in the Internet ecosystem is best suited to deal with the distributed nature of the Internet.

We also hold that as the Internet governance framework continues to evolve it is sufficiently robust and dynamic to cope with emerging challenges.

The IGF is an indispensable part of this ecosystem. It is necessary for the health of the Internet to extend its mandate.

Indeed – the continuation phenomenal Internet growth, economic innovation, and social development we have seen since WSIS and over the last several years -- depends on it.

And by working together, we can deliver on the promise of the Internet for this generation and generations to come.