UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT

First Meeting of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation
30 September 2016

Geneva, Switzerland

Chairman's summary

17 October 2016

1. The first meeting of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 30 September 2016. Remote participation and real time transcription of the meeting were made available to facilitate participation from Working Group members and observers.

2. The meeting was opened by Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics and Head of the CSTD secretariat. Mr. Peter Major, Acting Chair of the 20th session of the CSTD, made an introductory presentation[1]. Mr. Major nominated Ambassador Benedicto Fonseca from Brazil as Chairman of the Working Group. Following the approval of the members of the Working Group, Ambassador Fonseca accepted the nomination and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

3. The Meeting considered the following issues on the Agenda: goals and target dates to meet the request of the General Assembly (A/RES/70/125 para 65); methods of work, review of work and documents related to enhanced cooperation, proposals on topics and format of next meetings, and proposed dates for next meetings.

4. With regard to goals and targets, the Group agreed that to fulfil its mandate to report to the 21st session of the CSTD, it must finalize its work by the end of January 2018. This will allow the report to be included in the annual report of the Commission to ECOSOC, and to serve as an input to the annual report of the Secretary-General on implementation of WSIS outcomes, as requested by A/RES/70/125. Several members expressed concern over the lack of funding which prevents representatives from developing countries and other stakeholders to attend in person. To address this issue, it was suggested that the Secretariat further its fund-raising efforts; in addition, where possible, future meetings be organised back-to-back with CSTD intersessional panels and the annual sessions to take advantage of the travel support.

5. With respect to methods of work, Ambassador Fonseca indicated that the same methods of work generally adopted by the first CSTD working group on enhanced cooperation[2]

---

[1] Presentation available at:
http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Presentation/WGEC_2016_meeting1_IntroRemarks_en.pdf
[2] 2013-2014

should be followed by this Working Group. He also indicated that he would seek to promote interactive dialogue between members and non-members of the Working Group with a view to facilitating the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, as called by the GA. In that context, all members would be recognized in the order of their requests to speak, regardless of which stakeholder group they are from and whether they are participating in person or remotely. On a given topic, after the Working Group members speak, observers would be recognized in the order of their requests, time allowing. In addition, he proposed for consideration by the Group the option of having a co-chair of the Group representing non-governmental stakeholders. Members of the Working Group had an exchange of views on this subject; the majority expressed objections to the proposal. Although it was decided not to pursue the issue for the moment, the Chairman suggested that, if found appropriate, it could be revisited at a later stage. Most members of the Group expressed their preference to work in plenary rather than in break-out groups.

6. Participants took stock of work done so far on enhanced cooperation, including the documents produced by the first working group on enhanced cooperation[3]. They exchanged views on ways and means to draw on this work for the current Working Group. Ambassador Fonseca offered to prepare a reference document based on the "Mapping of international Internet public policy issues" document[4] in an effort to separate factual information from more controversial text. The aim is to have a document that could guide the Working Group in case they wish to work on selected topics at a later stage. He also indicated that such a reference document could also include those recommendations developed by the first working group on enhanced cooperation where consensus had emerged.[5] The intention is to have this reference document ready before the next meeting.

7. With regard to topics for the next meeting, the Group agreed on two questions which will guide the discussion (1) What are the high level characteristics of enhanced cooperation? (2) Taking into consideration the work of the previous WGEC and the Tunis Agenda, particularly paragraphs 69-71, what kind of recommendations should be considered? It was agreed that the Secretariat will gather inputs from Working Group members and other stakeholders with regard to these questions. The Group noted that, given the comprehensive nature of these two questions, they should allow for inputs or comments addressing any relevant issue.

8. In that context, some of the other issues highlighted during the discussion on this topic were:
   • sustainable development goals and the link to enhanced cooperation,
   • globally applicable principles of public policy issues,
   • enabling governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet,

---

[3] WGEC (2013-2014)
[4] Available at http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/ecn162015crp2_en.pdf
[5] Available at http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/CSTD_WGEC2013-14_DraftRecommend_en.pdf

- safe and secure internet, and
- bridging digital divides.

9. It was decided that the secretariat would post the questions through the Working Group mailing list as well as online. The deadline for replies is 7 December 2016. The Secretariat will compile the replies and make them available to the Working Group before the second meeting.

10. The WG agreed to hold its second meeting on 26-27 January 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.