

United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
Inter-sessional Panel

Room 26, Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
15-17 December 2010

Panel on “Follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society –
Working Group on the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)”

Meeting report

1. Mr. Frédéric Riehl, vice Chair to the CSTD, who had been tasked by the Chair of the CSTD to assist her with establishing a working group on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)¹ gave an account on steps taken towards the setting up of the group. Two informal consultations (one in Vilnius, Lithuania on 16 September² and one in Geneva, Switzerland on 24 November³) as well as online consultations⁴ had been organized by Mr Riehl to discuss issues related to the mandate of the Working Group as well as modalities of its work with a wide range of stakeholders. Mr Riehl had also met with representatives from the Permanent missions to the United Nations Office in Geneva that are members of the CSTD in Geneva on 6 December to discuss the composition of the Group.
2. During the meeting of 6 December, the member states present had decided that the Group shall include twenty member States and be composed as follows: fifteen CSTD member states, with three members from each ECOSOC’s regional groups⁵, plus the five countries that have previously hosted IGF meetings.⁶ At that meeting, the representatives of Portugal and of the United States had expressed their countries’ reservation regarding the decision on the composition of the working group and stressed the need for multistakeholder

¹ On 19 July 2010, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted by consensus resolution 2010/2 on the “Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society”. By this resolution, ECOSOC “invites the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to establish, in an open and inclusive manner, a working group which would seek, compile and review inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in line with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda, and which would report to the Commission at its fourteenth session in 2011 with recommendation, as appropriate. This report is to constitute an input from the Commission to the General Assembly, through ECOSOC, should the mandate of the IGF be extended.

² Summary of this meeting available at

http://www.unctad.org/sections/un_cstd/docs/cstd2010d01_en.pdf

³ Summary of this meeting available at <http://www.unctad.info/upload/CSTD-IGF/IGFsummary.pdf>

⁴ Summary of responses to a questionnaire available at <http://www.unctad.info/upload/CSTD-IGF/IGFsummary.pdf>

⁵ African States; Asian States; Latin American and Caribbean States; Eastern European States; and Western European and other States.

⁶ Greece, Brazil, India, Egypt and Lithuania.

participation and contribution to the work of the CSTD Working Group on the Internet Governance Forum.⁷

3. The Chair of the CSTD invited member States to share their views regarding the decision taken on 6 December concerning the composition of the Working Group. A proposal to include not only the five member States that have previously hosted IGF meetings but also the hosts of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Switzerland and Tunisia, and thereby raising the number of member States represented in the Group to 22, was endorsed.
4. Following the endorsement of the decision on member States composition of the working group, the Chair opened the discussion regarding the participation of other stakeholders in the Working Group. This discussion revolved mainly around interpretation of ECOSOC Resolution 2010/2 as well as the applicability of the Rules of Procedures of ECOSOC on the composition of the working group and the involvement of other stakeholders.
5. Some CSTD members stressed that ECOSOC Resolution 2010/2 invited the Chair of the CSTD to establish the working group in an open and inclusive manner and as such the composition of the Working Group should also be inclusive, with representatives of other stakeholders participating on an equal footing with representatives of governments. Furthermore, parity in participation would provide more credibility and expertise to the working group. The Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) was cited as a successful example of such an approach.
6. Other States insisted that the intention behind Resolution 2010/2 was to involve stakeholders in the work of the Working Group, but not on the same level as governments. It was important to maintain the intergovernmental character of the work pursuant to relevant ECOSOC rules on participation, which allow other stakeholders to voice their views during meetings of ECOSOC committees but do not give them the right to vote on decisions. Instead, innovative ways should be found to allow for a meaningful participation and involvement of other stakeholders.
7. The Chair then proposed that in addition to 22 member State representatives, five representatives each from civil society, the business sector, academia and the technical community and intergovernmental organizations be allowed to participate in the Working Group.

⁷ A full summary of the meeting is available at http://www.unctad.org/sections/un_cstd/docs//cstd2010d08_en.pdf

8. Following some serious discussion regarding this proposal, member States agreed on the following text to establish the Working Group:

“The Chair of the CSTD establishes a Working Group of 15 member states plus the five member states which hosted the IGF meetings plus the two member states which hosted WSIS. This Working Group will seek, compile, and review inputs from all member states and all other stakeholders on improvement of the Internet Governance Forum, in an open and inclusive manner throughout the process.

The Chair invites the following stakeholders to interactively participate in the Working Group, bearing in mind the established rules of procedure of the ECOSOC, who will remain fully engaged throughout the process:

- 5 representatives from the business community
- 5 representatives from civil society
- 5 representatives from the technical and academic community
- 5 representatives from Intergovernmental organizations

Pursuant to the ECOSOC decisions 2010/226, 2010/227, and 2010/228, maximum possible assistance, diversity of ideas, and equal representation of stakeholders from developing and developed countries in the Working Group should be ensured in consultation with the stakeholders.

The report of this Working Group will be adopted by consensus.”

9. The stakeholders invited to participate are requested to coordinate among themselves and propose five representatives which should reflect the diversity of every stakeholder category, with a view to providing a balanced representation.