UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)

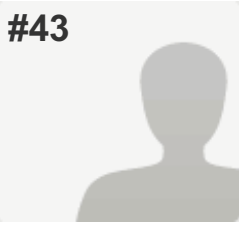## Contribution to the CSTD ten-year review of the implementation of WSIS outcomes

Submitted by

ICANN

#43

PAGE 1

Q1: Salutation:

Mr.

Q2: First Name, Surname:

Nigel Hickson

Q3: Organisation:

ICANN

Q4: Country:

Switzerland

Q6: Which stakeholder category do you belong to?

Technical or Academic Community

Q7: To what extent, in your experience, has the "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society", envisaged in the opening paragraph of the WSIS Geneva Declaration of Principles, developed in the ten years since WSIS?

As noted in the overall Summary and in the text below we believe significant progress has been made in the development of a "people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society". Whilst recognizing that significant progress is still needed (not least in providing citizens in developing countries with secure and affordable Internet access) we would note how, since, 2005, the Internet has become much more of a tool for citizens – for use in their everyday lives – while not diminishing at all the positive affect it has had on revolutionizing business supply chains and delivering efficient public services.

Q8: How far do you consider the implementation of specific WSIS outcomes to have been achieved?

This is an area where significant work has, and continues to be done by those responsible for the WSIS Action Lines.

The extent to which the specific WSIS Outcomes have been achieved has been recently documented by the Action Line Facilitators in providing input to the High Level Meetings hosted by UNESCO and the ITU in March 2013 and June 2014 respectively.

At both these excellent Review meetings evidence was put forward on where progress had been made, where targets had been met, and where continued work was required.

Q9: How has the implementation of WSIS outcomes contributed towards the development of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

As noted in 1) above significant developments have taken place since 2005 on a wide range of fronts. While the degree to which the WSIS process (and the subsequent implementation) has contributed to a people centered and inclusive Information Society may be difficult to determine with any degree of precision, we believe it has, and will continue, to have an effect. Not least the opportunity and encouragement to debate issues through the annual WSIS Review Sessions.

In the context of ICANN we would like, in addition to the new gTLD Programme which is described in the Summary, to note the introduction of International Domain Names (IDNs); in itself contributing to the multilingualism of the Internet.

Until recently, the Root Zone of the Internet was limited to a set of characters conforming to US-ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) or "Latin" alphabets. This changed with the introduction of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), which introduced top-level domains (TLDs) in different scripts and enabled Internet users to access domain names in their own language. Specifically, the approval of the IDN country code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) Fast Track Process by the ICANN Board at its annual meeting in Seoul in October 2009, enabled countries and territories to submit requests to ICANN for IDN ccTLDs representing their respective country or territory names.

Q10: What are the challenges to the implementation of WSIS outcomes? What are the challenges that have inhibited the emergence of a "people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society"?

ICANN, as one of the many contributors to this Review, would suggest that the challenges in implementing the WSIS outcomes are similar to the challenges inhibiting the overall development of an inclusive and development-orientated Information Society. They would include, inter-alia, the cost and complexity of solutions allowing access, the support mechanisms for developing local content and, in some cases, the lack of a fora, for problem solving discussions.

Q11: How are these challenges being addressed? What approaches have proved to be effective in your experience?

It is not for ICANN to address wider issues of inclusive Internet development. However, no doubt like other contributors to this Study, we would, in terms of Internet Governance, reference the excellent multi-stakeholder discussions which take place annually at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF); established – of course – through the WSIS process. This has, at witnessed by the year-by-year growth in attendance – facilitated a dialogue of growing relevance across the global Internet Community. It is a forum where all stakeholders take part on an equal basis; sharing experiences and knowledge. It is only through such multi-stakeholder approaches that the necessary knowledge is pooled to solve the "challenges" referred to in the previous question.

In the context of solving challenges, it would be remiss not to highlight the importance of the NETMundial meeting , hosted by Brazil in March 2014 (http://netmundial.br). While born out of the concerns and worries emanating from the revelations of mass surveillance in June 2013, this multistakeholder meeting in Sao Paulo witnessed a unique multistakeholder dialogue that agreed both an important set of Internet Governance Principles and a Roadmap for an Internet Governance Ecosystem.

The important ideas and proposals from NETMundial were both debated at the recent IGF meeting in Istanbul (September 2014) and in a potentially important initiative by the World Economic Forum at the end of August (http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-internet-governance)

Q12: What do you consider the most important emerging trends in technology and other aspects of ICTs which have affected implementation of WSIS outcomes since the Summit? What has been their impact?

The last 10 years have witnessed unprecedented changes in technology, especially in the realms of the Internet. Relative to the WSIS Outcomes and Action Lines, the most significant development has, arguably, been that in mobile technology and particularly Mobile Internet Access; affecting Action Lines C3, 5 and 7; especially with respect to the developing world. Despite the relative high costs of mobile access, the technology has revolutionized Internet access in many parts of Africa and elsewhere; allowing access to services and knowledge that would still be unavailable through fixed access. Increasingly sophisticated exploitation of scarce spectrum resources has aided this revolution as has more efficient and faster wireless standards and technologies.

ICANN, whilst not involved in access issues as such, has aided the use of Internet resources through the exploitation of a security standard known as DNSSEC ; this helping to give confidence to Internet users on the web-sites they access (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domain_Name_System_Security_Extensions).

Similarly the work the technical Community has brought forward (with the help of many different actors) on introducing the IPv6 standard for Internet Addressing has laid the path for connectivity for all citizens. Limiting the DNS to the use of IPv4 addresses would have been a significant limitation. The rapid deployment on IPv6 networks over the last few years will hopefully allow all citizens to benefit from the innovative services emerging.

Q13: What should be the priorities for stakeholders seeking to achieve WSIS outcomes and progress towards the Information Society, taking into account emerging trends?

In terms of securing the WSIS Outcomes the priorities of stakeholders of course will differ depending on their respective roles and responsibilities. ICANN has specific responsibilities in continuing (though its role with respect to Critical Internet Resources) to strive for an open, interoperable and secure Internet.

As such (as noted in Summary) we will continue, through the multi-stakeholder process, to meet citizen expectations and choice with respect to top-level domain names. We will also contribute, as appropriate to the wider debate on Internet governance in promoting a multi-stakeholder approach to discussions on, and problem solving of, Internet Governance issues.

More widely we believe that a key priority for securing WSIS outcomes lie in open and innovative economies. ICANN recently commissioned a Report by the Boston Consulting Group, which, inter-alia, assessed the economic contribution the Internet made across a range of economies, and, crucially, the factors which allowed countries to derive greater economic benefit.

The Report is at https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/bcg-internet-economy-27jan14-en.pdf and is entitled "Greasing the Wheels of the Internet Economy"

It demonstrates that there are relatively simple and practical steps that can be taken by governments to enable the positive financial and economic benefits of the Internet to be realized. These range from having an economically focused and pro competitive telecommunications framework to ensuring that local Internet content be developed. Conversely policies that restrict the openness and innovation potential of the Internet tend to reduce social and economic benefits (such as reduced public costs) as well as reducing access.

Q14: **What role should information and communications play in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda?**

While ICANN plays only a limited role in the broad canvas of Internet Governance we do have a strong belief that the Internet can play an effective role in a wide range of developmental issues. While it might be difficult to reference particular ICT and Internet goals within a developmental context we do believe there is some merit in a horizontal objective for ICT deployment given the positive effect it can bring to other developmental goals, such as facilitating education or improving healthcare.

Q15: Please add any other comments that you wish to make on the subject of the review that you believe would be helpful.

Respondent skipped this question

Q16: **We would also welcome any documents, reports, etc. that you can forward which you think will provide useful evidence for the review. Please send these to cstd-wsis10@unctad.org. It would be helpful if you could list these in this box, together with any URL which enables access to them on the World Wide Web.**

A Summary Document.

UNCTAD: 10 Year Review of Progress Made in the Implementation of the WSIS Outcomes

ICANN offers this document along with specific comments and references made on the attached web-form

Summary

ICANN[1] is delighted to have the opportunity to participate in this important Review. While only responsible for a part of the Internet Governance Agenda, we believe that the developments in ICANN especially since 2005 are instructive in the broader context of the developments of multi-stakeholder participation in Internet Governance. As such we believe that the WSIS Outcomes were, and are relevant in the continuing evolution of the Internet. ICANN certainly has, and will continue to pay attention to them; especially the relevant Action Lines. We value the opportunity to take part in the annual WSIS Review sessions.

ICANN was formed in 1998 and since then has had responsibility for the overall coordination of the Domain Name System. As well as overseeing policies relating to the management of domain names and IP addresses, it also has direct contractual relations with, as well as setting standards for, a number of registries and registrars; including all those offering new generic top level domains (gTLDs). ICANN pursues its responsibilities with an international and multilingual staff of just over 300; a multinational and regionally diverse Board and a wider multi-stakeholder Community. The latter not only includes business, civil society, user groups and technical representatives but also governments (over 140) . While decisions on DNS policy (such as on generic top-level domains for example) are ultimately the responsibility of the Board, the different constituency groups have a significant input into the decision making process.

As outlined below, since 2005 we have witnessed unprecedented developments in the use of the Internet, both in terms of physical access and in innovation and variety of uses. In the DNS space we have witnessed an exponential growth in the actual number of domain names in use but also (more importantly) a growth in consumer choice for top-level designators in both Latin and non-Latin scripts. This latter development was cited as important in the recent WSIS High Level Event hosted by the ITU. [2]

---

[1] www.icann.org

[2] http://www.itu.int/wsis/implementation/2014/forum/

The role of governments in Internet Governance, and particularly their responsibility with respect to public policy, has evolved in general since 2005 (as witnessed by increased involvement in international and regional fora) and particularly in ICANN. In 2005 there were around 40 governments taking part in the Government Advisory Committee of ICANN while today there are over 140 in membership with over 30 International and Regional Governmental Organizations as Observers. This is both a clear example of Enhanced Cooperation (negating need for any separate process as far as management of critical Internet Resources are concerned) and the success of the multi-stakeholder approach to governance of the Internet. During recent years the governments; working collectively within the GAC, have been instrumental in implementing important public policy considerations in the new gTLD Programme, that ICANN has rolled out, as well as policies concerning the personal data held by Registries and Registrars of domain name applicants.

Reflecting WSIS Action Lines ICANN has, since 2005, become a more global and international organization. Formed in 1997 by the US Government, as a private non-profit organization under Californian Law to manage the (growing) Domain Name System it naturally had both technical and organizational ties to the US Government. These have evolved with (most significantly) the US Government (in March this year announcing its intention to transfer its stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) Functions (regulated under a contract with the US Government) to the global multistakeholder community[3]. A multi-stakeholder process is now underway to determine the way this should be effected.
In addition a wider debate has been initiated by ICANN on its accountability, a process that was started by the Affirmation of Commitments in 2009[4]. This again reflects (give reference) the principles underpinning the WSIS Action Lines.

At a practical level ICANN has changes considerably from 2005, it now has over 300 multilingual staff (it then had around 40) with hub offices in Singapore and Istanbul (in addition to the HQ in Los Angeles) and has engagement offices in Brussels; Beijing, Seoul, Montevideo, Washington DC and Geneva. Senior Management (and respective functions) now operates outside of Los Angeles with the trend set to continue (not least reflecting the increasing global nature of the DNS). Our presence in Geneva and New York, for example, reflects the need to deepen our engagement with the IGOs (such as the UN and ITU) and UN country missions.

The new gTLD Programme

---

[3] https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/transition-2014-03-23-en

[4] https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/aoc-review-2012-02-25-en

ICANN takes it responsibility of the stewardship of the Domain Name System seriously as it does its duty to reflect the needs of the global Community. While domain names are not (like other physical entities) a scare resource the individual choice is limited through the number of generic top-level domains (such a .COM) and country code names (such as .UK or .CH). Against this background ICANN (working with the Community including governments) set out on a process in 2008 to expand the range of gTLDs though an open application process. Working to detailed rules (again laid down by the Community) the Round was launched in March 2012. Over 1900 application for new Names (some duplicates) were received including over 100 applications for names in non-Latin Scripts[5] (such as Chinese, Cyrillic and Indian). The "new" Names are now entering the root of the Internet allowing citizens access to geographical (such as .Berlin or .London), and generic (such as . Music and .App) names.

The Future

Looking to the future ICANN will seek to continue to evolve as a global organization; as an active player in the global Internet Governance Ecosystem and serving an ever expanding and diverse Community. It will continue to work closely with other bodies, not least our sister technical orginisations such as ISOC, IETF[6] and the Regional Internet Registries, but also such as the ITU, OECD and UNESCO, in the IG space. ICANN is committed to further expand the DNS space, responding to demands from the wide Community, with another gTLD Round likely in the next few years.

The UNGA Review

In closing ICANN looks forward to the privilege of working at CSTD (as an observer) to help shape this important Study ahead of the final Review by the UNGA of the WISIS Outcomes. We trust (building on the UNGA Resolution on the modalities for the Review) that Observers under CSTD (and other appropriate WSIS stakeholders) will be able to play a full role in the Preparatory process for the UNGA Review and in the High Level Meeting itself. We applaud UNESCO, the ITU and UNCTAD for facilitating a broad church of input during this WSIS+10 Review process and are confident that the necessity for ensuring this happens up to and during the final Review will be recognised.

---

[5] http://icannwiki.com/index.php/New_gTLD_IDN_Applications

[6] https://www.ietf.org/

We are confident that the UNGA will endorse the overall positive effect the WSIS Outcome, and the respective Action Lines, have had; and thus will look to a continuation of the overall process, including the opportunity for the annual WSIS Review sessions to take stock of progress and discuss where further actions and initiatives might be appropriate.

ICANN
15/9/2014