

**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation

**Contribution to the guiding questions agreed during first meeting of the
WGEC**

Submitted by

Canada

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Canadian contribution to the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation

Canada is pleased to submit the following in answer to the questions posed by the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation (WGEC). In providing this input to the discussions, Canada's goal is to ensure the Internet continues to provide the economic, social, and cultural gains we have benefited from since the Internet's inception and phenomenal growth. Canada's proposals here aim to sustain an open, free and secure Internet where individual's rights and freedoms are protected; where information and ideas flow freely; where innovation flourishes and continues to generate prosperity, and where both the information it holds and its digital infrastructure are protected.

1. What are the high level characteristics of enhanced cooperation?

Canada believes that when decisions regarding the Internet are reached with broad support from all stakeholders, this provides a form of guarantee that the implementation of these decisions will be facilitated by all those who took part in the decision. Therefore, enhanced cooperation **must be open to, and inclusive of**, all stakeholders. This does not mean that everyone must be involved in every decision but it must allow that, if a party believes it has an interest, then: they are a stakeholder and should be allowed to participate in the process. The role of a stakeholder cannot be fixed. It will evolve depending on the task at hand. In enhanced cooperation, Internet users, business, expert technical organizations, academics, civil society representatives, and governments collectively develop policies and make decisions based on consensus in a transparent and inclusive manner.

As people's lives increasingly move online, we need to be careful to ensure that human rights are respected in every process in which we engage. From a governmental perspective, our national security and prosperity rely inherently on the protection and promotion of these rights. Such a fundamental infrastructure as the Internet must be in line with this priority. Therefore, **enhanced cooperation should result in outcomes which would protect and promote human rights, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.**

Enhanced Cooperation is inherently transparent. Because many stakeholders are involved and as they are accountable to their respective constituencies, it would be impossible and unhelpful to reach decisions behind closed doors. This transparency prevents arbitrary decisions being made as the flow of information in and out of an enhanced cooperation decisional process ensures that the factual basis underlying decisions are continually checked and double-checked by the community of stakeholders. This also creates a permanent permeability to new facts which can continue to inform and improve the decision-making process.

Canada believes that these characteristics of openness, inclusivity, transparency, using facts, and aiming to promote and protect human rights can apply in both developing and developed country contexts and can be used to address any of the issues related to the Internet. These high-level characteristics will stand the test of time in a fast-changing, technology-driven environment, and are drawn from common provisions found in previous articulations of Internet principles, existing international law, and based on Internet-related tenets that already enjoy widespread or universal support.

We acknowledge that Enhanced Cooperation is not an easy process, but it is a strong process which has the best chances of bringing about good decisions.

2. Taking into consideration the work of the previous WGEC and the Tunis Agenda, particularly paragraphs 69-71, what kind of recommendations should we consider?

The recommendations of this WGEC should be in line with the priorities the world has set for itself in 2015 with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We should ask ourselves which parts of public-policy related issues of the Internet can advance the 2030 Agenda and ensure that Enhanced Cooperation is applied to bring solutions about.

Our recommendations should promote and protect human rights, commit to a single, interoperable, inclusive and un-fragmented technology to allow all Internet users to innovate and capture the inherent social and economic benefits. They should also ensure that Internet users are able to have trust and confidence that they are safe online and not subject to malicious cyber activity. All stakeholders have a role to play in improving security of digital networks that support economic prosperity and social development. Furthermore, our work should aim at preserving the security, stability and resiliency of the Internet, which is of paramount importance. All stakeholders can and must work together to ensure that it is preserved.

Enhanced cooperation must be undertaken in a way to encourage innovation and promote economic growth and development. Canada's experience has taught us that reinforcing an open and decentralized Internet brings economic benefits to all. It is critical that the international community rally to preserve and foster an inclusive online environment that promotes, rather than constrains, dynamism and human creativity. Government-centric approaches would stifle the innovation and dynamism associated with the Internet. The current model has led to enhanced productivity, innovation and inclusion, creating better quality of life and economic growth in the global digital economy.

Over a billion new Internet users are expected to come online in the next few years, with the vast majority connecting via mobile devices in the global south. It will be important to ensure that these new Internet users are able to contribute and influence outcomes as part of the multistakeholder decision-making processes at the relevant institutions. In this regard, the last WGEC had intended to look at barriers for participation in Enhanced Cooperation. In our view, this remains a problem and a report explaining these barriers and how to overcome them would be a successful outcome.