

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

Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation

**Revised recommendations submitted in preparation for the 4th WGEC
meeting**

Submitted by

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ICC BASIS contribution to the 4th meeting of the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation

The third meeting of the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation saw substantive discussions on the possible recommendations the working group could make.

Echoing the collective voice of its over 6 million members in more than 100 countries around the world, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) through a representative of ICC's Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS) initiative conveyed the views of global business during the meeting and took note of the feedback of the working group.

Based on these discussions and the feedback received, ICC BASIS would like to submit an enhanced version of its position. We believe that this could benefit the work of the Chair and the working group members when taking stock of the meeting and reflecting on their own contributions.

From the perspective of the private sector, **enhanced cooperation is not a mandate; it is a method of operation, an on-going activity and a culture of cooperation between stakeholders, including relevant organizations, guided by the objective of information sharing, creating more awareness and where appropriate, coherence in work programmes and continuing collaboration.**

Paragraph 69 of the Tunis Agenda is often cited with respect to enhanced cooperation. In reviewing the text of the paragraph, and looking at the words used in other nearby paragraphs, differences can be identified. For example, the reference in Paragraph 69 to "international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet" is not the same as the role envisioned in Paragraph 68 which refers to the "development of public policy" by governments, which can be argued is the role in a national context.

The subtlety of the implication of such differences is often lost in the use made of the paragraphs when quoted. Governments exist in a national context to provide a social, legal, and in the case of telecommunications, regulatory framework that responds to the needs and will of the population. In an international context governments seek to arrive at the best common set of denominators that can meet their national needs. In the international context the United Nations has come to play a major role. With the evolution of the Internet that has evolved outside of the government context, there are other organisations that are international in nature that have a role, which adds a further dimension to what is emerging as a complex environment in which international public policy pertaining to (and therefore relevant) the Internet are discussed.

Enhanced cooperation, with openness to participation, enables stakeholders to better carry out their roles and responsibilities because it ensures transparency, awareness, responsibilities, and accountability, of addressing different facets of a public policy issue that not only takes account of the different stakeholders, but also different national social, legal and regulatory norms.

The Internet and public policy issues relevant to the Internet touch a wide range of issues and forums and, because of the expertise and invaluable implication, also stakeholders. As a result, cooperation and partnership among different institutions enables all that are impacted by an issue, the different interests and stakeholders, to discuss policy matters openly.

Well-established processes for enhanced cooperation have been initiated in the past years, and continue to be initiated, through outreach to and between relevant UN agencies and also relevant multistakeholder and technical organizations within and outside the UN remit. Such co-operation includes all stakeholders. These processes take on the task and present an opportunity to continue to build better informed approaches and better equipped initiatives within and across relevant stakeholders, including the plethora of organizations working on the broad spectrum of Internet governance policy issues.

Strengthening and opening up existing processes for cooperation and exchange of information between stakeholders and fora can be leveraged to avoid duplication in activities and work plans and progress enhanced co-operation.

Working group recommendations should aim to improve such methods of cooperation in a manner that could be applied by different stakeholders across different organizational configurations with the goal of well-informed, better-equipped deliberations on important public policy issues concerning the Internet.

This can be done by continuing to enhance information resources to explain the opportunities and cross-link initiatives so awareness of and participation in the different enhanced cooperation activities is increased between all stakeholders. Mutual reinforcement of efforts should be fostered by continuing to connect national and regional stakeholders at the plethora of internet public policy related events throughout the year.

Creating a new mechanism, with a new forum does not add clarity. Rather any new mechanism has the potential to add confusion between it and current mechanisms into whose mandate the establishment of any new mechanism may overlap, albeit unintentionally. Any new mechanism will add costs not only with the need to provide a secretariat, but to members, from whatever stakeholder group, who will seek to participate in any new mechanism. Additional costs will no doubt be incurred with the need to work between any new mechanisms and existing agencies.

A subsequent issue to that of costs is the impact of any decision of mechanisms on the issue of expertise. Noting that as yet there are no definitive and explicit public policy issues identified that are Internet-specific, any policy issue that is raised is done so in terms that have a wider social context. For example the issue of human rights where the same rights offline apply online. This duality will continue, and will no doubt require various experts. The question is do the issue experts come to the internet experts or vice versa? Whilst attempts to answer that question around the interpretation of the relevant paragraphs of the Tunis Agenda unfold, the Internet will continue to evolve, and issues that arise from its evolution will be resolved.

Today, in any discussion within the UN, it is governments that take the decisions. However different UN bodies, forums, agencies etc., have different outputs and this situation perhaps contributes to confusion and uncertainty in discussions related to enhanced cooperation. There is no common understanding as to what is the output with respect to enhanced cooperation in this context.

In accordance with UNGA resolution 70/125, echoing the Tunis Agenda, all stakeholders have a

responsibility and role in operationalizing enhanced cooperation. Continued and collective efforts should be made to facilitate and increase the participation of the relevant stakeholders, particularly those that have not been engaged, in cooperative processes and forums at national, regional, and international levels.

Working group recommendations should re-enforce the importance of multistakeholder processes, and the need for cooperation between and among stakeholders that is fundamental to the successful resolution of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet in a manner that scales, is effective and benefits all, while not harming innovation, creativity, investment, and opportunities that have been the cornerstone of the Internet's success.

The working group should recommend options and methods to increase participation in activities where enhanced cooperation is implemented, not only in terms of materially supporting stakeholders to be present at meetings but by opening up existing processes to involve relevant stakeholders, by awareness raising, information sharing, connecting local actors, capacity-building and remote participation. Fellowship and ambassador programmes sponsored by many stakeholders help fuel future participation by supporting developing country governments and other stakeholders with travel costs as well as youth outreach programmes to encourage awareness and participation of local or regional youth from developing countries. There is a need to continue building on and raising awareness of these opportunities.

At the same time, **it is important to recognize the frame within which this work is being developed** – which are the overarching global goals. **The 2030 agenda for sustainable development** is the current context for the working group to keep in view.

The 2030 agenda of the U.N. General Assembly does not set a goal for Internet policy but rather notes in Resolution 71, Article 15, the spread of information and communication technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies. Much work is now going on across many agencies and existing fora to link or at least consider how Internet and ICT public policy issue discussions relate to reaching the important national and local goals through meaningful Internet connectivity - be these goals on health, education, water and resource management, partnerships or others. Agencies and international discussions not typically Internet focused are now grappling with how public policies relating to Internet will impact their way of meeting their goals, be they touching human rights, privacy or security as well as skills development, literacy or delivery of government services. This context highlights how these issues are transversal and have now broken well beyond the frame or silo we aimed to contain them to in the earlier stages of their development. These cannot be fit into a mechanism, institution or process. The enhanced cooperation already underway across these activities should continue to be developed and encouraged so the relevant expertise and input can be shared rather than housed or hoarded.

The 2030 agenda recognizes the important role of all stakeholders in setting an objective for Internet policies and actions to support the agenda of sustainable and inclusive development. It will not be possible to achieve these goals without collective engagement of stakeholders. Most governments today recognize that they cannot solve these issues alone. Most recently ICC has made the case regarding the sustainable development goals that meaningful connectivity can only be achieved if policymakers take a holistic approach to what enables sustainable

investment for development¹. The important role of stakeholders was also recognized in Paragraph 12 of the outcome document of the UNGA WSIS+10 review.

The Working group recommendations should continue to support this work and be framed so that the work of this working group contributes to the collective effort to advance the 2030 agenda and the global goals.

¹ [International Chamber of Commerce statement: ICT, Policy and Sustainable Economic development](#), June 2017