

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

**MEETING ON ENHANCED COOPERATION ON PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES
PERTAINING TO THE INTERNET**

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Contribution by

USA

**The views presented here are the contributor's and do not necessarily reflect the views and the position of the
United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development**

In the context of these consultations the United States of America submits the following basic principles to help facilitate an increased *shared understanding of enhanced cooperation* in global Internet governance:

We believe that all stakeholders have an important role to play in both Internet institutions and Internet policymaking. We welcome the ongoing process of enhanced cooperation amongst governments, civil society, industry, academia, and the technical community, noting the value of all opportunities, including CSTD, to convene stakeholders to address the pressing Internet-related concerns of the developing world.

Internet governance is defined by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) as: “the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet.” We recognize the very broad set of issues addressed by the World Summit on the Information Society and at the many international fora in the ensuing years. These issues range from the specific Internet institutions to broad public policy questions such as privacy, cybersecurity and intellectual property protection.

In order to best understand the role of various stakeholders and the most appropriate venue for a topic’s discussion, it is helpful to address the broad range of issues by distinguishing between Internet institutions and Internet policymaking as follows:

Internet institutions include technical standards bodies, administrative entities, and fora in which best practices are discussed in a transparent, open, multi-stakeholder fashion. The global community is best positioned to benefit from a vibrant, growing Internet environment when commercial, civil society and governmental stakeholders jointly participate in this decentralized network of Internet institutions, each performing specific tasks without unnecessary duplication.

Internet policymaking addresses economic, social, political, and security-related issues affecting the experience of the end-user – including issues of privacy, intellectual property protection, access, and the exercise of fundamental freedoms. Discussion on these topics occurs in a variety of international venues. Governments typically lead policymaking processes by establishing baseline legal rights and responsibilities, implemented with the support of vital multi-stakeholder participation.

Internet Institutions

We reaffirm a multi-stakeholder and decentralized model that has been successful in the operation of the Internet institutions and call upon all stakeholders to contribute to enhanced cooperation within and between all existing international fora, including the Internet Governance Forum. In this regard, flexibility and transparency must be maintained in order to adapt to the fast pace of technological and business developments.

We seek pathways to increase multi-stakeholder participation from developing countries in the Internet institutions. We welcome enhanced cooperation in exploring means to expand the set of opportunities for governments, civil society, industry and individuals from developing nations to

more meaningfully contribute to these Internet institutions, according to the following principles, which are informed by the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the OECD's Internet Policy-Making Principles:

1. A variety of global Internet institutions perform essential tasks in establishing technical standards and ensuring the Internet's functionality. These institutions must continue to operate in an open, accountable, and multi-stakeholder manner.
2. As a decentralized network of networks, the Internet has achieved global interconnection without the development of an international regulatory regime. This system should be maintained and strengthened, particularly through broader, multi-stakeholder participation from the developing world.
3. The development of a formal regulatory regime risks undermining the Internet's growth by adding political and bureaucratic layers unable to keep up with the speed of technological change. Centralized control over the Internet through a top-down government approach must be avoided as it would put political dealmakers, rather than innovators and experts, in charge of the future of the Internet. This would slow the pace of innovation, hamper global economic development, and lead to an era of unprecedented control over what people can say and do online.

Internet Policymaking

We recognize that there is broad global consensus that the Internet provides a unique and rich opportunity for developing and emerging economies to expand socioeconomic opportunities for their people, and contribute to national growth.

We recognize that in numerous developing countries, despite improvement, information and communications technologies are still not affordable for the majority of people, particularly those living in rural areas.

We recognize that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as lack of resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity, and issues related to technology ownership, standards, and flows, and in this regard call upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources and enhanced capacity building.

We recognize that multi-stakeholder, international policy cooperation is essential in order to increase accessibility of information and communications technologies across the globe. We regard specific strategies from the OECD's Internet Policy-Making Principles and the Declaration endorsed by the Coalition for Freedom Online¹ as important first principles for all stakeholders seeking enhanced cooperation. These principles are equally appropriate for developed and developing nations as they speak to the need for cooperation in addressing the

¹ Signatories include Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Estonia, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, the Republic of Maldives, Mexico, Mongolia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Sweden.

most fundamental concerns of the digital divide: the expansion of high speed networks, the addition of local Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), the creation of local content, the security of networks, and the promotion of trade and innovation.

We recognize that international discussion of Internet policy issues occurs in numerous fora not limited to the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the UN's Human Rights Council, and the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime, and many others.

We are committed to continuing the multi-institutional process of enhanced international cooperation to further narrow the digital divide and conduct cooperative Internet policy making according to the following principles and pertaining to issues such as human rights protection, privacy protection, intellectual property rights, cybersecurity, and law enforcement:

1. Internet policymaking should be conducted in a multi-stakeholder process that ensures transparency, fair process, and accountability.
2. Policymakers should work amongst the international community to find attainable solutions to the unique challenges facing developing nations, particularly those challenges associated with access, content, and capacity.
3. Policymakers should promote and protect the free flow of information online. Internet users should be able to send and receive content of their choice with limited interference, consistent with international human rights norms.
4. Policymakers should encourage a safe and secure online environment through cooperation and the proliferation of best practices while ensuring access to legitimate content. Mutual recognition of laws that achieve similar objectives and cross-border enforcement are essential for online security and innovation.