

# Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus

23<sup>th</sup> May, 2007

## **Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus's input into the open round of consultations on 23 May 2007 to discuss program and agenda for the second meeting of the IGF in Rio de Janeiro.**

In addition to its earlier contribution/ statement on substantive agenda issues for the second IGF meeting in Rio, the Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus will like to make the following inputs which are mostly in regard to the 'process' issues for the next IGF meeting. However, this contribution/ statement also contain some additional suggestions regarding the substantive agenda for the Rio meeting.

At the outset, the Caucus wishes to express its satisfaction with, and great appreciation for, the widespread and genuine adoption of the multistakeholder principle for all activities of the IGF. We hope that this practice is kept up and strongly institutionalized in the IGF as its key constitutive principle. If we are able to do so, along with delivering real outputs from the process, IGF will become a path-breaking innovation in global governance in an increasingly connected global information society.

We are also, in general, satisfied with the openness of the IGF process, with its processes of regular consultations, taking in of online inputs and their compilation for its various meetings.

As for the main sessions and workshop structures, we are for a greater connection between the various workshops and the main sessions, and find the proposal of having official reporting back sessions, as per the 'draft programme outlines' very useful. We also find the proposal of open sessions for all major organizations dealing with Internet governance related issues to discuss their activities very promising. In regard to the Tunis mandate of the IGF (72 b and 72 c) of facilitating discourse between these bodies, and interfacing with them, it will be in order if the IGF specifically requests and encourages some of these bodies, which have important IG implications, to hold such open forums. We are also strongly of the opinion that there should be no limitation on the number of open workshops as long as they conform to the overall mandate of the IGF as per the Tunis agenda.

We will like all the sessions and workshops to be more interactive, rather than be a series of panel presentations. We also will like to see further development of online processes for remote participation, for participants to keep track of parallel events, and for greater inter-sessional activity of the IGF with full participation of all groups and stakeholders. In this regard we will like to see the IGF develop into a continuing process, using its various online and offline components, rather than just a single annual event.

In the above regard, we will also like to see more focus on the activity and outcomes of the 'dynamic coalitions' and their closer integration with IGF processes. A transparent, multi-stakeholder and democratic process should be commenced to develop criteria for the recognition of "dynamic coalitions" by the IGF, whereby the output of coalitions that satisfied those criteria could be formally received for discussion at a plenary session of the following IGF meeting. The IGF was created to help solving global problems that could not be addressed anywhere else; simple discussion is not enough, and would be contrary to what was agreed in Tunis and is clearly stated in the mandate of the IGF itself. We stand ready to provide more detailed procedural suggestions on how this could work in practice, or to participate in any multi-stakeholder working process to define it.

We are happy to see that the 'draft program outline' document mentions that the preparatory process for the Rio de Janeiro meeting will be as open and inclusive as possible. In this regard we have some comments to make on the composition and the role of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group. We note that the proportionate representation of stakeholder groups and the cross-cutting technical and academic communities, was not openly and transparently discussed prior to its appointment; nor there is any transparency or clear norm on its terms, mandate and working principles. We think that clear terms and rules should be established for the Advisory Group between now and Rio, through an open process involving all the participants in the IGF, as a shared foundation for our common work. We further consider that if these rules and the quotas for representation from each stakeholder group were openly established, it would be possible for the Secretary General to do the actual process of selection of Advisory Group members in close, direct, open and transparent consultation with the stakeholder groups themselves. Moreover, we express our dissatisfaction with the very limited representation of civil society in the first instance of the Advisory Group, which amounted to about five members over about forty. We think that the significant participation of civil society and individual users, as proved by the WGIG, is key to making Internet governance events a success both in practical and in political terms; thus we would like to see such participation expanded to at least one fourth of the group, if not one third, and to the same levels of the private sector and of the Internet technical community

The IGF submission to the CSTD notes that: "The main task of the Advisory Group was to prepare the substantive agenda and programme for the first meeting of the IGF. It was made clear that any decision on how to prepare subsequent meetings and on any future structure and future working methods of the IGF would be taken in light of the experiences made during the preparatory process for the Athens meeting." We are not clear what is being done in this regard.

The IGF submission also notes that the "geographical balance of participants was tilted somewhat in favor of developed countries". This is a matter of serious concern since IGF was seen by many as the vehicle for ensuring wider participation of such sections in the IG processes who may find themselves currently excluded. We request the IGF to urgently take up the matter of funding participation of more representatives of the civil society, especially from developing countries, to give

greater legitimacy to the IGF. This matter should be given urgent attention in the present consultations itself.

On the issue of logistics of the IGF meeting in Rio, we hope that the host country and all those responsible for organizing the event will ensure that all participants, specifically those from the civil society, and other under-resourced groups, face no difficulties. Speaking from the experience of Athens, we specifically request that adequate inexpensive arrangements for lunch be available at the venue. Similarly, inexpensive accommodation close to the venue, with adequate transport facilities, must also be ensured. We request that adequate wireless connectivity, and enough number of computer terminals, are available for the participants at the venue.

While the Civil Society IG Caucus have given a separate input towards the substantive agenda for the Rio meeting, there are two more specific points which we want to add here. One, is to express deep dissatisfaction for the lack of transparency and inclusion in the so-called “enhanced cooperation” process, which, as agreed in Tunis, should discuss these matters in a multi-stakeholder fashion. We ask that prompt communication is given to all stakeholders about the status and nature of this process, and that steps are taken to ensure the full inclusion of all stakeholders in this process. Two, we will like to see ‘human rights’, as a set fundamental rights that are a pre-requisite for development of individuals, groups as well as nations, be included as a cross-cutting theme along with the ‘development’ theme for the Rio meeting.

We end with a note of thanks for Mr. Desai, Mr. Kummer and all the members of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, as well as of the IGF secretariat, for their hard, and often thankless work, in developing the IGF processes thus far in such a successful manner. We greatly look forward to the Rio meeting of the IGF to take these processes further to enable the IGF to meet its full mandate.