**Statement**

**by Professor Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus,**

**International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR),**

**Geneva, December 17, 2010**

Mister Chairman

My name is Wolfgang Kleinwächter, I am a professor for Internet Policy and Regulation at the Department for Media and Information Studies at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. I am the Chair of the Summer School on Internet Governance (SSIG) and I am also a member of the International Council of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the world largest academic association of communication researchers with more than 3000 academic members in more than 120 countries. The IAMCR is a recognized NGO under the ECOSOC rules.

The academic community, in particular its members dealing with Internet Governance, are rather concerned about the recent decision of the UNCSTD to continue the discussion on the improvement of the IGF in a closed intergovernmental working group. We see this as fundamental departure from the principle of multistakeholderism. This principle emerged in the first phase of the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). It became the guiding principle for the establishment of the UN Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) as well as the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG). Both WGIG and MAG, where governmental and non-governmental experts worked hand in hand on an equal footing, demonstrated that the multistakeholder collaboration works and enables progress and success.

Within WGIG the academic community made a significant contribution to the elaboration of the definition of Internet Governance, a definition which was accepted word by word by the heads of states and governments from 180 UN member states in the Tunis Agenda. The academic community contributed also to the success of the IGF with numerous workshops and in particular with the annual symposium of the Global Internet Governance Academic Network (GIGANET) at the eve of each IGF. GIGANET, where the IAMCR was a founding member, unites now around 500 Internet Governance researchers around the world.

Multistakeholderism, the participation of the various stakeholders in their respective roles in policy development and decision making with regard to Internet Governance, is not only a precondition for success, it gives the process also the needed credibility and legitimacy. A departure from this principle undermines not only the legitimacy and credibility of the process but risks also to pave the way for a failure.

The IAMCR wants to contribute to the improvement of the IGF, but it does not understand why the authority over the definition what improvement means should be the exclusive right of 20 governments. The decision of December 6 is in our eyes not only a step backwards, we are also questioning the legitimacy of this decision. The decision is not in line with the language of the relevant UN Resolution, adopted in November 2010. And according to the public announcement, only 18 governments out of 43 UNCSTD members participated in the meeting. It is unclear, how many of the 18 governments supported the “government only approach”. There are no transcripts, no reporting of a voting, no specifications of the arguments around the pro and cons of the two options for the formation of such a group. There is no explanation why an intergovernmental group will work better than a multistakeholder group. I think it is a duty of governments, if they make decisions, that they have it to explain it to public. The 21st century needs an open, inclusive and transparent diplomacy which includes also an enhanced communication, coordination and collaboration among all involved stakeholders.

The IAMCR invites the UNCSTD members to recall its decision and to form a truly multistakeholder group which is the only way to come to a balanced proposal how the IGF can be further improved. The IAMCR is ready to participate constructively in this discussion process. In an Annex to this statement you will find six concrete proposals on how the IGF could be further improved.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

**Towards an Improvement of the IGF: Six proposals from the IAMCR for an enhanced role of the IGF**

1. **Observatory:** The IGF is an ideal place to "observe" the broad range of Internet developments, globally and locally. It could be the place where all information about new Internet applications and problems, national and international Internet policies and other Internet related facts and figures can be collected and made available to the broader Internet community.
2. **School:** The IGF is a space where people can come to learn and to get all the knowledge they need to understand Internet governance. It is like a "global school" where participants learn from each other and can listen to high-level experts and share best practices. It is interesting to note that the GIGANET has decided to have its annual symposium always at the eve of the IGF. And also the emerging Summer Schools of Internet Governance are linked closely to the IGF.
3. **Laboratory:** The IGF is a unique place to test and figure out what works and what not in Internet governance. The workshops create platforms where good and bad examples can be discussed, and where stakeholders can learn from each other and get the needed inspiration to translate the global experiences into national and local policies.
4. **Clearinghouse:** The dialogue among various governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions can clear the air with regard who has to do what. It could lead to a more enhanced and developed division of labor where institution can spin a web of interactions, which also can be formalized in informal MoUs, LOIs or AoCs.
5. **Scout:** The IGF is a great place to look into latest Internet developments and to find out what may be the next issues. It is a place where the future can be explored, and it can be also an early warning system that helps to identify emerging problems social, political or economic problems.
6. **Watchdog:** Stakeholders have an opportunity to raise their critical points. If a government or an Internet user has concerns about ICANN, IETF, ITU or UNESCO, or with policies executed by national governments and global Internet companies, the IGF is a good place to raise the issue and to enter into a dialogue to get the point recognized.