Brief information in support of Parminder's nomination to be considered for the Executive committee and high level committee of the Brazil meeting on the the Future of Internet Governance

General background

Parminder is Executive Director of IT for Change, an India based NGO, in Special Consultative Status with UN's Economic and Social Council. This Special Status has been granted to IT for Change for its work at the global level on Information Society issues at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and thereafter.

IT for Change's core mandate is to work at the intersection of new ICTs and progressive social change, from the standpoint of equity and social justice . The interests of marginalized sections, including women, remain IT for Change's key focus. IT for Change is widely acknowledged to be a key actor bringing representation of voices from the South, and those generally of marginalized sections, to global forums on information society and Internet governance. IT for Change works in a range of developmental sectors – chiefly, governance, gender, education and community informatics. It has extensive partnerships and networks with a diverse set of development actors in all these areas, both at the national and global level. Many of these networks have been built and developed by IT for Change. It is from such a hands-on experience in different sectors of development, and trusted relations with diverse actors in each sector, that IT for Change forms its perspectives on various Internet governance (IG) issues and brings them to global forums. A detailed account of IT for Change's work is available in its annual reports.

Parminder leads IT for Change's work in the area of governance and community informatics, and has been its main representative in IG spaces at the global and national levels. He has led various field projects and research projects in the areas of community informatics, ICTs for development and e-governance. He has written a few papers on these subjects in books, journals etc. Parminder has been on the advisory committee of the UN Global Alliance on ICTs and Development.

In the Internet Governance Space

IT for Change is quite well known for bringing Southern perspectives to global Internet governance discussions. It has participated and held workshops in all the seven UN Internet Governance Forums (IGFs) held till now. IT for Change formed a 'Dynamic Coalition on Framework of Principles' at the first IGF in Athens. Later, this coalition merged with the coalition on Internet Rights to form the Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles. Parminder is a member of the steering committee of the group.

Parminder was the first elected co-coordinator of the Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus. He has closely and intensely participated in the Caucus' activities since the WSIS. He was selected as a Special Advisor to the Chair of the UN IGF in 2008, in which position he served for 3 years. He was one of the five civil society representatives on the Commission on Science and Technology for Development's (CSTD) Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). He is now on the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation.

During his coordinatorship of the IGC, Parminder was instrumental in developing a proposal along with the Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights to make human rights as the overall theme of the IGF. He has consistently argued for the indivisibility of human rights and that social and economic rights are as important as civil and political rights, and therefore civil society's approach should be informed by the whole gamut of recognized human rights.

Parminder played an important part in developing the 'Charter of Internet Rights and Principles' and the shorter document of '10 Internet Rights and Principles' put forward by the Dynamic Coalition on Internet Rights and Principles. Parminder is on the advisory committee of the Web We Want initiative of WWW Foundation and others.

IT for Change has always taken a bottom-up and collective approach to developing and presenting its views on global Internet governance. To take just one illustrative instance, in the May of 2012, IT for Change did an important campaign for 'democratising global Internet governance'. This [campaign](#) was supported by [over 60 civil society organisations](#) and many more individuals, from across the world. This campaign also found a positive mention in the [joint press release](#) issued by UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression on the eve of the CSTD open consultations on 'Enhanced Cooperation'.

Within India, IT for Change, and Parminder, have been working with various civil society groups and grassroots communities to engage with issues of global governance. In this regard, he has worked closely with the Right to Information movement in India, the Free Software Movement, and various advocacy groups involved with right to food, women's rights, community media, educational reform, and so on. IT for Change's perspectives on global governance of the Internet take shape form our close and ongoing engagements with these groups and constituency.

Parminder is a member of the of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group of the recently formed India IGF. He is also involved in a national level process of developing Internet Principles.

Engagement with other stakeholders *(Illustrative: and, other than civil society groups and grassroots communities mentioned above)*
Parminder is often informally consulted by many global NGOs with a Southern politics, and by developing country governments, for Southern perspectives and articulation in global IG space. He has been called a few times by Geneva based South Centre to present such perspectives.

As an initiative of IT for Change and some of its partners, Parminder is right now involved in organizing a meeting of Indian Internet/ IT industry and Indian civil society groups to develop joint conceptions of the evolution of the Internet, and the needed public policies, that serves Indian social interests, as well as, that of the local industry.

As mentioned, Parminder also works closely with progressive technical communities involved in the area of FOSS and distributed Internet architecture and application. (His nomination is co-sponsored by Free Software Movement of India.)