16th October, 2014

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Advisory on Developments within the United Nations General Assembly Second Committee Meeting of the

United Nations General Assembly in New York on Agenda Item 16 ICT for Development, 13th October, 2014

Two days ago, the United Nations General Assembly Second Committee convened in New York to discuss several matters within their Agenda. Of interest to us were a few matters on the Agenda but of most importance was Agenda Item Number 16 on Information Communication Technology for Development, that is ICT for Development (ICT4D).

Globally, there has been much controversy over the last several years over various issues related to ICT for development from a Trade in Services perspective, continuous demands by some countries for the further globalization of IANA and ICANN that they be independent where more governments can participate on an equal basis.

Countries had the unique opportunity to share information about developments in their countries and relay their positions and statements on the Report by UNCTAD on the Progress made in the implementation of and follow up to the outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) at regional and international levels as per Document **A/69/65-E/2014/12**. The links to country statements are provided later in this document.

The following is a report of what countries shared during the debate and dialogue on Agenda (16). The meeting is important because it helps stakeholders within the ICT Ecosystem to know where countries are at. There are also some clear political differences with approach to governance aspects, methodologies, procedures and also forum for review. In a nutshell, these are:-

1. Multilateral versus Multistakeholder
2. WSIS +10 Review being facilitated by the CSTD Working Group versus being facilitated by an Intergovernmental negotiation process
3. Expansion of Tunis Outcomes versus Non Expansion
4. Making ICANN independent versus continued US oversight

These debates have been stewing for several years which climaxed at the NETMundial meeting in Brazil earlier this year. The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2014 which will be held in Busan, Korea between 20th October and 7th November will also see several discussions and debates on resolutions that affect some of these controversies.

Below is a summary of the discussions.

Greater Integration within the UN Systems

China stated that there are many UN entities including specialized agencies that have made enormous contributions to ICT for development and that the UN should further leverage their expertise and unique roles. China called for enhanced coordination and optimizing relevant mechanisms.

Support for Linkage between ICT and Development

There was unanimous support for the complex interlinkages between ICT and development (Trinidad & Tobago) and the need for bridging the digital divide. The G77 and China of raised the need to reduce the cost of broadband access. Sri Lanka noted the central role that ICT plays in development as per MDG8 and says that ICT should be central in the post 2015 Development Agenda. Similar sentiments were raised by Zimbabwe.

Thailand mentioned that it was pleased with the Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG on SDGs) that was adopted in September, 2014 addressed the issue of Technology in the targets under proposed Goal 17 on the means of implementation. Thailand also mentioned their willingness to share their experiences with others in relation to the use of ICT in the area of food security and disaster risk management.

China stated that since officially gaining access to the Internet twenty years ago, its internet connectivity has grown exponentially with over 600 million internet users and 3 million websites. China's e-commerce sales in the first 6 months of the years reached 5.66 trillion RMB yuan representing an annual increase of 30.1%. It hosts 4 of the world's top ten internet companies and the Internet industry continues to grow and an annual rate of 30%.

China also advised that it has developed an effective approach towards the relationships between freedom and order, development and security as well as international public order and the need to respect laws of other countries. China stated that it was willing to share its experience and collaborate with other countries.

Digital Divide

Sri Lanka said that despite positive trends in ICT connectivity and affordability, there is a continuing digital divide and gap in broadband access between developed and developing countries. One of the main challenges is to mobilise resources for investment in ICT diffusion.

Sri Lanka remarked how their national broadband policy is helping to narrow the digital divide. India shared global statistics about the digital divide and also remarked that the gender disparity in access is still a challenge. India shared how enabling women to harness technology to its full potential can be a game changer.

Zimbabwe expressed deep concern that the digital divide between developed and developing countries remains wide particularly in terms of the availability, affordability, quality of access and broadband connectivity. Zimbabwe calls for more international cooperation to close the digital divide.

Calls for Full and Effective Implementation of the Outcome of the Geneva and Tunis

The G77 and China, Israel also placed great importance on the full and effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the WSIS including provisions on Internet Governance. The CELAC emphasized the need for

the entire UN System to implement the WSIS outcomes and advised that there was a need to increase determination to fulfil outcomes from the Geneva and Tunis outcomes. Israel mentioned that the outcome documents and follow-up processes are critically important in facilitating global cooperation in the promotion and development of ICTs in developing countries.

US reaffirmed its commitment to the Tunis Agenda. India remarked that it is committed to the free growth of the internet.

The Need for an Equal role for Governments in Internet Governance

The G77 and China shared that in an increasingly interdependent world, it is important to allow all governments to have an equal role and responsibility for International Internet Governance in ensuring stability, security and continuity of the Internet. Brazil mentioned that there is a need to bridge the two views of Internet Governance saying that the differences are not insurmountable.

Calls for Inclusion in Open, Participatory, Multilateral, Multisectoral Dialogue

The States within the Latin American and Caribbean Communities (CELAC) reiterated its commitment to involve civil society, private sector and scientific and technical communities in open, participatory, multilateral, multisectoral dialogue in accordance with principles laid down at WSIS.

India also stated that in the true spirit of the vision outlined in the Tunis Agenda, that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic.

India remarked that cyber space is a global common and as such should not be managed only as private property and that the governance and architecture of the internet should reflect its global and democratic nature. Zimbabwe remarked that the UN system and multilateral development agencies have a critical role to enhance capacities of Governments and the private sector in developing countries to develop information technology industries that can produce affordable IT products and services and to provide financial and technical support to help expand and maintain their ICT infrastructure.

Benefits of the Multistakeholder Model

Israel said that there are benefits of the multistakeholder model that should be continuously enhanced to maintain the security, stability and resilience of the internet to maintain consumer needs and expectations openness of the Internet. Israel suggested that the incredible rate of mobile communications services use around the world reflects the remarkable success of the multistakeholder approach to fulfilling WSIS Goals.

The US advised that governments, private sector, the technical community and civil society should all be involved in ensuring that all people have access to ICTs and information online; that costs for these technologies continues to decrease and that investments in networks and technologies are redoubled and that efforts to promote innovation, growth and universal values of freedom of speech and expression are promoted.

The US noted that the multistakeholder process presents new challenges but that these are relative to the opportunities provided for dealing effectively with the dynamic nature of the Internet.

Calls for an Open Internet

US and Israel made calls for an open internet with the US saying that erection of new barriers, fragmenting the global Internet and restricting the free flow of information would not be conducive for an open internet.

Calls for the Globalization of ICANN

The G77 and China made references were made to the NETMundial Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance in Brazil 23-24 April, 2014 as the International Community reiterated the urgency to speed up the process of globalizing ICANN so that it has an independent status from the US Government and Department of Commerce and IANA and to have clear accountability mechanisms. The G77 and China also made references to the transition of the stewardship of IANA functions and made calls to strengthen internet governance in a transparent and accountable manner.

Support for Internet Governance Forums

The European Union expressed its support for Internet Governance Forums (IGF) saying that it continues to grow from strength to strength each year. The US is committed to the continuing success of the IGF and believes that the multistakeholder nature of the IGF underpins its unique ability to have open and candid conversations about difficult issues and provide timely directions on best practices, without the need for negotiated outcome documents.

There were many important contributions and a priority would be utilizing ICT to advance sustainable development and achieve a pro-developmental global agenda beyond 2015.

The US also encouraged the renewal of the IGF mandate and encouraged potential donors to the IGF Trust Fund.

Protection of Human Rights Whilst Countering Terrorism

CELAC stated their concern over state surveillance and also extra-territorial surveillance and the impact on human rights and says that there should be strict observation of international laws, international human rights laws etc. CELAC further mentioned that actions taken outside the international legal frameworks are unjustifiable, illegal and unacceptable and recalls the General Assembly Resolution 68/178 on Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms whilst countering terrorism which was adopted by consensus on 10 December 2013.

Rights to Privacy

Several states highlighted the importance for protecting the rights to privacy which is essential to human dignity and a fundamental human right. CELAC called for the right to privacy to be adequately regulated by law, subject to effective oversight and to appropriate redress including judicial review or other means, to ensure measures are not arbitrary.

Illegal Use of ICT and violation of International Laws

States within the CELAC rejected the illegal use of ICT and the violation of international laws particularly where their states had been subjected to this.

Addressing the Knowledge Deficit

Israel mentioned how ICT is helping to address the "knowledge deficit" in the world. Sri Lanka shared how their Island-wide rural telecenter network called "Nenasala" or "wisdom outlets" of over 750 centers is a people centric ICT knowledge disseminating mechanism that mainstreams indigenous knowledge, content development, delivering e-Government services in the local languages based on public private partnerships works. Sri Lanka remarked how women and youth rural leaders are the backbone of this Network.

Fighting Ebola with ICT

The use of ICT to manage global Health Crisis is also gaining momentum. Israel mentioned how the Israeli App About Ebola has been downloaded over 5000 times in West Africa and is available in the Jola, Krio, Liberian English and Wolof languages.

Cyber Security

Several countries mentioned the need to protect cyber space. Israel advised that it participates in the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the field of Information and Telecommunications in the context of International Security and supports the recommendations of the 2012/2013 Group of Governmental Experts report. Countries noted the global challenges that arise with the malicious use of ICT and the wrongful acts in the cyber domain require joint efforts by the international community within the global frameworks and organisations. Israel emphasized its commitment to protecting cyberspace as an open space and as the basis for global growth.

Calls for Preparatory Process for WSIS +10 Review

The G77 and China called for an appropriate preparatory process to be launched for the WSIS+10 Review. The CELAC attached importance to the WSIS +10 Review that would take place in the UN General Assembly in 2015. The CELAC considers the work of the UNCSTD Working Group on enhanced cooperation as important contribution for the WSIS +10 Review.

The US strongly supports the important ten year review of the WSIS in 2015 and believe that the review of the WSIS outcomes have helped foster ICT development for the past decade. Israel said that the potential for ICT for Development must be fully considered as the General Assembly is setting the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Thailand is pleased about the WSIS +10 Review and that it would address the complex interlinkages to ensure rights based development, job creation, entrepreneurial opportunities, improving education, empowering women and other key benefits would be realized.

The US maintains that the WSIS review should include comprehensive and objective analyses of WSIS outcomes as well as practical measures to realize WSIS goals and should not be an attempt to renegotiate WSIS outcomes. The US affirmed it support for the CSTD to provide an objective, evidence-base, and data driven review. What was notable was the US's preference for the CSTD under UNCTAD instead of ITU and UNESCO. See excerpt below:

> "
> We support the critical work of all stakeholders who have already contributed to the review process, including the important work of the ITU and UNESCO for hosting numerous review events, and the CSTD for coordinating the results of this process as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up to WSIS. The CSTD is well-placed to provide an objective, evidence-based, and data-driven review, and we look forward to the report from the CSTD after its 18th session in 2015. "

India stated its eager anticipation in commencing the actual review in June next year under the aegis of the UN General Assembly. On the review, India stated that the resolution adopted by the General Assembly unambiguously reaffirmed the centrality and supremacy of the UN General Assembly and mandates the overall review as an "intergovernmental negotiation process" (underlining is mine) which takes into account inputs from member states, observer states, observers and all relevant WSIS stakeholders. India further stated that the resolution ensures that our leaders will meet 'at the highest possible level' at the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly in December 2015 to adopt the outcome of our intergovernmental negotiations.

ENDS

UN General Assembly Second Committee Agenda 16 on ICT for Development in New York
13th October, 2014

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ABOUT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

The Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee), is chaired by **His Excellency Mr. Sebastiano Cardi of Italy**. During this session, it dealt with issues relating to economic growth and development such as macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system, and external debt sustainability), financing for development, sustainable development, human settlements, poverty eradication, globalization and interdependence, operational activities for development, and information and communication technologies for development.

The Second Committee considers issues relating to Groups of Countries in special situations - such as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). It will also consider the item on permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

At the sixty-eighth session, the Second Committee took action on 44 draft proposals. Notably, Agenda Item 16 which is on ICT for Development falls within the remit of the Second Committee.

RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS IN AGENDA 16 ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Opening Statements

UNCTAD
 Ms. Dong Wu, Chief of Science and Technology Section, UNCTAD and the Commission of Science and Technology for Development presented the 2013 Report of Secretary General on the Progress made on the implementation of and follow up of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at Regional and International Levels. View Ms. Dong Wu's Speech.

UNESCO
Mr. Ricardo de Guimaraes delivered an introductory statement. View Mr Guimaraes Speech.

COUNTRY POSITIONS

- Ambassador Mr. Sasha Llorenti **BOLIVIA** on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, View Speech
- Statement by **COSTA RICA** on behalf of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (**CELAC**). View Statement
- Statement by **ISRAEL**. View Statement.
- Statement by the **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**. View Statement.
- Statement by the **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**. View Statement.
- Statement by **SRI LANKA**. View Statement.
- Statement by **BELARUS**. View Statement.
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- Statement by **ZIMBABWE**. View Statement.
- Statement by **THAILAND**. View Statement.
- Statement by **MOROCCO**. View Statement.
- Statement by **BAHRAIN**. View Statement.
- Statement by **CHINA**. View Statement.
- Statement by **COTE D'IVORE**. View Statement.
- Statement by **IRAN**. View Statement.
- Statement by the **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**. View Statement.

Closing Statements

ITU

Mr. Gary Fowlie made brief remarks and issued a closing statement as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Liaison Office to the United Nations. View **Speech**.

FAO

Ms. Sharon Brennen-Haylock, Director Food and Agriculture Organization Liaison Office to the United Nations shared the outcomes of the XIII UN Round Table on Communication for Development, Rome 16-18 September, 2014 and issued a closing statement. View **Speech**.