

Australia

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Australia supports many of the principles in the Declaration and welcomes the opportunity to comment further.

In formulating the Declaration and the Action Plan the WSIS Secretariat should have regard to the usual conventions concerning language used in UN documentation.

Section I

B. WE DECLARE OUR COMMON VISION OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY:

In respect of para 10 on “*The essential requirements for the development of and equitable Information Society include:*” Australia notes that the declaration mentions the importance of privacy but that it is not expanded on further. Considering the importance of the privacy issue, the declaration may need to elaborate on this issue.

C. INFORMATION SOCIETY FOR ALL: KEY PRINCIPLES

1) Information and communication infrastructure

20. Measuring and mapping the Information Society

The identified targets and benchmarks may not be achievable, especially considering the different stages of progress in developing countries. Australia suggests that communities should be allowed to set targets and benchmarks appropriate to their current stage of development and capacity rather than imposing a global set of benchmarks.

2) Access to information and knowledge

26. Information flows

This paragraph requires clarification.

Interoperability (new)

Australia supports the Joint Ministerial Declaration on ‘Electronic Commerce for Development’ at the Joint UNCTAD-UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Conference held in November

2002, in particular the need for international interoperability standards to ensure effective global e-commerce systems. The following words on Interoperability are suggested:

“Working towards open and flexible interoperability standards is an important issue for all countries. This is an essential element in promoting widespread online trade by reducing technology lock-in and by better integrating emerging and established technologies. The net effect is to reduce the cost and complexity of e-commerce to SMEs.”

Role of Volunteers (new)

Observers comments note the importance of volunteers and highlights their importance to different parts of society. Australia supports the inclusion of contribution 26A from Section II of the Civil Society observers’ contribution to the Declaration of Principles.

3) The role of governments, the business sector and civil society in the promotion of ICTs for development

28. ICTs manufacturing capabilities

The emphasis on governments creating national and regional ICT production facilities may not be possible or even desirable for many nations. Australia suggests that this paragraph be excluded from the declaration.

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

34.

Australia suggests adding the following sentence:

“Information security and protection of privacy are essential in building trust in ICTs and thereby promoting their use.”

36. Role of Stakeholders:

Australia suggests altering the paragraph to read:

“In order to build confidence and trust in the use of ICTs and the Information Society, governments in co-operation with the private sector and civil society must promote awareness in their societies of trust enhancing measures and cyber security risks. Governments must seek to strengthen co-operation with the private sector and civil society to prevent the use of information resources or technologies for criminal or terrorist purposes.”

37. International cooperation:

Australia recommends adding the word confidence to the following sentence, to read:

“International, regional and national efforts to improve ICT confidence and security, in both civil and military fields, must be coordinated, taking into consideration the importance of secure infrastructure and data flow, in concordance with international standards and guidelines.”

6) Enabling environment

38.

Australia suggests altering the following sentence to read:

“The existence of a supportive and predictable policy, legal and regulatory framework, developed through participation and input from all organisational and individual levels of society, is an important prerequisite for enhancing trust in the development of the Information Society.”

40. Market environment:

Australia recommends modifying the following sentence to read:

“To maximise the economic and social benefits of the Information Society, governments need to create a trustworthy, transparent, and non-discriminatory legal, regulatory and policy environment, capable of promoting technological innovation and competition and supporting consumer confidence and protection of privacy, thus favouring investment in the deployment of infrastructures and development of new services.”

44. Management of Internet names and addresses

Australia supports the concept that *Internet governance must be multilateral, democratic and transparent, taking into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society, and respecting multilingualism.*

- The Australian Government participates in the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of ICANN and Australia supports ICANN as the appropriate entity to co-ordinate the Domain Names System, including root server operations and IP addressing.
- The ITU has previously expressed interest in developing a greater role in the administration of IP addresses and the Domain Name space. Australia supports the ITU as the appropriate entity for the administration of the telephony system on an International level and, given this role, welcomes the ITU's participation in ICANN and the GAC.
- Australia believes it is appropriate that administrative and coordination activities related to the Internet remain the responsibility of an organization with broad stakeholder input.

Australia suggests altering the paragraph to read:

“Internet governance must be multilateral, democratic and transparent, taking into account the needs of the public and private sectors as well as those of the civil society, and respecting multilingualism. The coordination responsibility at the global level for root servers, domain names and Internet Protocol (IP) address assignment should rest with a suitable international organisation which represents and is accountable to all stakeholders, and which has clear mechanisms for governmental input on issues of public policy. While the policy authority for country code top level domain names (ccTLDs) should be the sovereign right of countries, there should be appropriate co-ordination in an international forum on common ccTLD issues so as to ensure the stability of the domain name system.”

- Australia supports the concept that *"The policy authority for country code top-level-domain names (ccTLDs) should be the sovereign right of countries"*, however also recognises the need for a broad, international, cooperative approach to ensure ccTLDs remain a stable and secure element of the DNS.

Consumer protection (new)

A vital aspect of securing consumer confidence in electronic commerce is to ensure that consumer transactions occur within a sound legal framework. To this end, consumers using electronic commerce should be provided with protection that is at least equivalent to that provided to consumers using other forms of commerce.

Spam (Unsolicited email) (new)

Australia suggests the following text to be included in the Declaration:

“Spam is a significant and growing problem – not just for individuals but for networks and the Internet as a whole. Spam refers to an electronic mail message that is transmitted to a large number of recipients and most or all of the recipients have not requested those messages.

Spam raises key issues that need to be addressed and these include privacy, illicit content, misleading and deceptive trade practices and network issues.

- *Privacy: issues surrounding the manner with which personal information such as email addresses is collected and handled - address collectors harvest email addresses off the Internet or even buy and sell them in bulk without the consent of the owner.*
- *Illicit content: most promotes scams, pornography, illegal online gambling services, medical cures, get rich quick schemes or misleading and deceptive trade practices.*
- *Network issues: The cost of spam is born by the recipient in the form of higher cost Internet subscriptions due to larger downloads. The increased volume of e-mail can significantly slow Internet speeds and could threaten the viability of the entire network. In addition, there is some evidence that spam is being used deliberately in Denial of Service (DoS) attacks.*

Section II

C. KEY PRINCIPLES

5) Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs

[35] & [36] & [52C]

Australia endorses the attempts to reinsert privacy as an explicit undertaking.