PrepCom2

Speech on Internet Governance
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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the ITU, I would like to make some comments.

First, the ITU welcomes the efforts of the WSIS Preparatory Committee process for its significant work, particularly in addressing Internet governance. We appreciate the efforts of the Working Group on Internet Governance as well as the efforts of the WGIG Chairman and Secretariat. The ITU would like to also note that we have been pleased to contribute to the WGIG's work and look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

Internet Protocol or IP-based networks and services (popularly known as "the Internet") have today become a large-scale publicly available and commercial infrastructure, or according to the written contribution made by Norway last week that the Internet has now become an integrated and vital part of the basic infrastructure in most nations and also part of a new global public infrastructure. It goes without saying that for such an important platform, we need and require multilateral and transparent cooperation.

There is a widespread myth that the ITU had little to do with the Internet's success. This couldn't be further from the truth. Work done at the ITU through its membership has been vital and essential to the successful development of the Internet and its growth as a global phenomenon. It is many of our technical standards that have created the underlying platform for the Internet. For example, ITU broadband standards released over the last five years have brought high speed Internet access to more than 100 million new users.

We are also proud that ITU has been widely called upon by industry, both service providers and equipment manufacturers, to develop the new standards that will form the basis of the ongoing convergence of the Internet with telephone, mobile and broadcast networks, otherwise known as Next Generation Networks or NGN.

Aside from this technical work, ITU has also played an increasing policy role. This began during the 1980's with our special User and Legal Symposia and these activities have continued to grow. In the recent past, there have been ITU events on topics ranging from IP telephony to cybersecurity to internationalized and country code domain names to spam and Internet governance. One thing particularly worth citing is the ITU's Global Symposium for Regulators, which has the goal of fostering the international exchange of government perspectives on policy and regulatory frameworks. At the recent Global Symposium for Regulators, held in December 2004 in Geneva, a report was issued on "Best Practice Guidelines for the Promotion of Low-Cost Broadband and Internet Connectivity". This is yet another example of how we are not only engaging the international community on important technical issues but also increasingly regulatory and policy considerations.

There was unanimous agreement in WSIS process, that governments should play an appropriate role in Internet governance, at international and national levels. There is an emerging consensus that there is a need to improve the current Internet international coordination arrangements.

As a specialized agency of the UN dealing with telecommunications and therefore more broadly, ICT issues, ITU is very well positioned and willing to work with others to consider the many technical and policy aspects of Internet governance issues. We are very aware of the need to continuously adapt to changing circumstances – something we have had to do numerous times since the ITU's founding in 1865 ITU supports to look beyond "binary solutions" and look for a way of collaboration where governments cooperate on the broad national and international policy frameworks for Internet governance yet allow the private sector to continue its activities where it excels in technical, business or operational expertise.

To conclude, the ITU wishes success to the WGIG and WSIS in its consideration of Internet governance issues and we can assure you that we stand ready to contribute effectively wherever we can.

Thank you for your kind attention.