
Document WSIS-II/PC-3/CONTR/034-E

17 August 2005

Original: English

GLOCOM on behalf of IGTF-J

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT OF THE WGIG

Introduction

Internet Governance Task Force of Japan (IGTF-J) would like to congratulate the successful outcome of the WGIG. We believe your hard work and spirit of cooperation are the essential basis of your success. We express our sincere thanks to all the members of the WGIG, in particular, Chairman Mr. Nitin Desai and Mr. Markus Kummer, and to the secretariat for their dedication and innovative approach.

In September last year at the preparatory consultation meeting, we suggested that WGIG “concentrate only on core and/or urgent issues that require international cooperative activities, and to be objective, rational and transparent”, thank you, the report reflects this request very well. We are also very grateful that you used real-time captioning and display during your consultations, it was a great help to non English-native speakers and provided a timely record for those who could not attend in person. Following WGIG’s example, we hope real-time captioning can be employed in other similar forums and venues in the future.

Following are our comments to the specific issues of our interest in the report.

1. Overall

IGTF recognizes that with the final report WGIG has faithfully fulfilled its mandate set forth by the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Actions of WSIS. In particular, we like to commend WGIG for its consistent working method to openly listen to all the stakeholders, governments, private sector, civil society and Internet Community. The high quality of the report is a reflection of the success of this open process and opportunity for non-WGIG members to share their opinions.

We welcome the broad working definition of Internet Governance, not restricted to narrow areas.

We also appreciate the assessment of current governance practices, in particular on IP Numbers, Domain Names, and Root zone files and servers, which include well-balanced, objective and historically precise description, both in the main report and the background report.

However, IGTF would like to express our concern on the general emphasis over the role of governments in Internet Governance, including the proposal of four models in the report. We believe that bottom-up, distributed open mechanisms have so far functioned well. We recognize there is a room for improvement, however we strongly believe it will be sufficient to encourage evolutionary change in existing mechanisms rather than try to create something new. When it comes to the international arena, we like to point out that just strengthening government's role without clearly articulating what that role is may result in excessive regulation and constraints that might hinder the sound and dynamic development of the Internet.

IGTF believes that when it comes to Internet Governance, it should be primarily handled by private sector cooperation, while the role of the government should remain as that of good collaborator with comprehensive understandings of the issues.

2. New Forum

As for the proposal for creating a new global forum in the report, IGTF believes that if a new forum is to be created, we must be very careful and creative in making this forum work and work meaningfully. To be more specific, if a new forum is to be established the following conditions should be applied.

- 1) Predefine the forum's mission and areas and issues clearly. A principle should be set that the forum should not deal with issues already handled by other bodies or issues which do not have explicit consensus to be handled by the forum.
- 2) The forum should remain as a space for exchanging views and opinions freely. It should not make any binding decisions.
- 3) Selection of participating actors and officers should be done in an open, transparent and democratic manner. It should ensure equal participation from government, private sector and civil society. Hence it should guarantee that the most relevant actors to the issues be involved.
- 4) Be sensitive to the cost performance. Not only the financial cost, but time cost and travel cost should also be taken in to full consideration for the operation of the forum.
- 5) Be considerate of languages. In global debate, giving priorities to a few languages will impose great burden to those who do not use these language in an everyday environment. When limiting its working languages, full consideration is desirable to ensure linguistic equality as much as possible by employing such innovative measure as simultaneous interpretation, document translation, real-time transcription and large-screen display, among others.
- 6) Participation from the developing parts of the world must be ensured. The new forum is expected to facilitate participation from the countries and economies where Internet development

is still less than ideal. This function would include identifying capacity building programs and best practices, identifying problem areas in developing economies.

3. About the Four Models in post 2006 situation

As for the Internet logical infrastructure of DNS, IP address and Root Server management currently handled by ICANN framework, in particular the post 2006 governmental oversight, IGTF would like to provide the following comments.

3-1 Changes should be made in an evolutionally manner

If we are to change the current framework, implementation should be done in a careful and step-by-step manner. We should avoid any sudden change that might risk damaging the operational stability of the Internet. We also request that thorough consideration be given to the potential implications of policy changes over technical and operational aspects by collecting opinions from the relevant people.

3-2 Oversight should be only limited to simple audit function

For the oversight to ICANN, we think “simple audit function” is the most appropriate function. In the future, it will be desirable to make a transition from current single-government oversight to the oversight based on the consensus of all stakeholders. In an emergency situation, for example if ICANN goes into bankruptcy, we expect the provision of financial support be included in the oversight responsibility. However, governmental oversight should stand aside from ICANN's daily operation.

3-3 ICANN's Government Advisory Committee (GAC) should stay under the current framework with possible improvement

The current GAC is designed as the part of ICANN's consensus development process and it has functioned well as a place for participants to exchange their opinions freely in the bottom-up organizational structure. We find great value in the current position of GAC, and oppose to give any stronger function or to be transformed to take on any oversight functions. We do not think any alternative body to GAC is necessary.

3-4 Conclusion: Add “Simple Audit Function” and “Host-country arrangement” onto Model 2

In conclusion, IGTF would like to propose adding “Simple Audit Function” and “Host-country arrangement” onto Model 2 as a pragmatic solution.

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Internet Governance Task Force of Japan

www.igtf.jp/e

Internet Governance Task Force of Japan is a joint group established in August 2004 by individuals and organizations from the Japanese Internet Community and Internet Industry to engage in the activities of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and to achieve safe and trusted global framework of Internet operation and application through maintaining and further developing private sector-led management.

Chairman: Prof. Shumpei Kumon (University of Tama)

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