Policy Statement for WSIS+10 High-Level Event
11 June 2014
Just Net Coalition

3-minute oral Statement[1]

I'm speaking on behalf of the *Just Net Coalition which* was formed at a meeting in Delhi in February 2014. It comprises several dozen organisations and individuals from different regions globally concerned with internet governance, human rights and social justice, and the relationship between them.

The Internet has become a vitally important social infrastructure that profoundly impacts our societies. We are all citizens of an Internet-mediated world whether as the minority who uses it or the majority who does not. *The Internet must advance human rights and social justice. Internet governance must be truly democratic.*

The Internet is reorganising public institutions, including those related to governance, welfare, health, and education, as well as key sectors such as media, communications, transport and finance. It has transformed the way we do many things but the benefits promised for all have not been adequately realized. On the contrary - we have seen mass surveillance, abusive use of personal data and their use as a means of social and political control; the monopolization, commodification and monetisation of information and knowledge; inequitable flows of finances between poor and rich countries; and erosion of cultural diversity. Many technical, and thus purportedly 'neutral', decisions have in reality led to social injustice as technology architectures, often developed to promote vested interests, increasingly determine social, economic, cultural and political relationships and processes.

Opportunities for the many to participate in the very real benefits of the Internet, and to fully realize its enormous potential, are being thwarted by growing control of the Internet by those with power - large corporations and certain national governments. They use their central positions of influence to consolidate power and to establish a new global regime of control and exploitation; under the guise of favouring liberalization, they are in reality reinforcing the dominance and profitability of major corporations at the expense of the public interest, and the overarching position of certain national interests at the expense of global interests and well being.

Existing governance arrangements for the global Internet are inadequate. They suffer from a lack of democracy; an absence of legitimacy, accountability and transparency; excessive corporate influence and regulatory capture; and too few opportunities for effective participation by people, especially from developing countries. The situation can be

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[1] To be delivered by JNC co-convenor Norbert Bollow <nb@bollow.ch>

remedied only through fundamental changes to the current governance arrangements.

The governance of the Internet must proceed from the position that inter-connectivity cannot serve human rights and social justice unless it leads to and supports distributed power, particularly to the grassroots but also across the various Internet divides—social, economic, political. Ensuring that the Internet does not in fact lead to greater centralisation of power will therefore require appropriate interventions at all levels of Internet governance. Building an effective framework to achieve these objectives is the greatest challenge today in terms of global governance of the Internet.

In this light, we propose a number of overall principles and a roadmap, in order to underpin the emergence of an Internet that advances human rights and social justice globally, and the reconfiguration of Internet governance into a truly democratic space.

This proposed roadmap and the principles are available in the full version of our statement, which is posted on the official webpage of this event.