

Dynamic Coalition on Internet and Climate Change

Statement on Internet and Climate Change

The rapid growth of the Internet makes it vitally important that its impact on climate change be carefully considered by policymakers so that future growth can occur in an environmentally-friendly manner.

There are a number of different causes of climate change, many of which are naturally generated (e.g., variations in solar radiation, volcanic activity etc). However, it is man-made climate change that is of major concern because it appears to be leading to a progressive and accelerating warming of the planet, as a result of the release of greenhouse gases (GHG), primarily carbon-based emissions. The work of the IPCC shows that global greenhouse gas emissions have risen by 70 per cent since 1970.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) contribute about 2-2.5 per cent of GHG emissions annually. The growth in the number of users of the Internet and more intense use of the Net leaves a significant carbon footprint, largely because servers in data centers, client PCs and network infrastructure run on electricity – electricity that is largely generated by burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Nonetheless, while the Internet contributes to GHG emissions, it can play an important role in reducing such emissions in other sectors.

All stakeholders must work together to address the issue of the Internet and Climate Change, and to bring it to the attention of policymakers, relevant organizations and the general public. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) provides a platform for multistakeholder discussion, exchange of ideas, and sharing of best practices in order to reduce the Internet's impact on climate change.

The Dynamic Coalition on Internet and Climate Change (DCICC) was launched at the second IGF in Rio de Janeiro in 2007 and held its first meeting at the third IGF in Hyderabad in 2008. The Report of the meeting is attached to this statement.

The Coalition is an open body committed to moderating the environmental impact of the Internet. It is entrusted with seeking new ways to embrace the power of the Internet for reducing GHG emissions worldwide, and with enabling transformation in line with the objectives set and to be set under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Coalition currently has 20 members, including UN agencies, standards development organizations, NGOs, researchers, software vendors, network operators and other bodies. The importance and urgency of this matter is shown in the large number of high-level international conferences, symposia and workshops on the issue of ICTs and climate change that were held in 2008. A separate workshop on this topic was also held in Hyderabad.

The DCICC calls upon the IGF to recognize the importance of the Internet's impact on climate change and to address this issue as a high-priority task in 2009 and beyond. Climate change should be featured prominently in the program of the fourth IGF.

The DCICC further proposes that a representative from the Coalition serve as an Observer at MAG meetings in order to mainstream the issue of climate change in the work of the IGF and to provide relevant expertise.