

## **Statement by Wolfgang Kleinwächter, University of Aarhus, at the IGF Consultations**

*Geneva, February, 16, 2006*

Thank you Mr. Chairman

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) enters new and unknown territory. The cyberspace is still a "terra incognita". A lot of new things remain to be discovered and more will come.

The list of issues which needs clarification is growing. Ten years ago the United Nations had no idea that Domain Names, Spam or WiMax in Africa are issues for public policy discussion. And what we know today about the agenda of the years 2010 or 2015? Probably only little.

Innovations with regard to the use of the Internet will produce new problems. Take, as only one example, the challenges of "Video over IP", which will be much bigger than "Voice over IP" and will go even beyond IPTV, Internet Television. Millions of private and public Video Clips and Photos will be in the Internet, a great challenge for search engines like Google or the new European project Quarro, which have started to develop search capabilities for voice and video recognition.

One of the consequences of such a development could be that biometrical data of individuals could become a public resource for search on the Internet. What happens now on airports could take place anywhere in your home. I take the biometrical data from a photo of my friend, start a search and will find all the photos and videos of him available on the Internet. Probably this could become a problem

Such issues needs broader public discussion and should not be discussed in small technical circles or closed governmental negotiations group. The Forum could become the ideal place where the consequences of such new developments are discussed. The Forum could write Internet history by functioning as a laboratory and as an early warning system. It would miss an opportunity and will fail, if it would restart the battles of yesterday.

This is certainly a challenge for all stakeholders, governments, private sector and civil society. But it is particular a challenge for the global research community.

Academicians and technicians have been involved in the development of the Internet from the very early days. And they will have to play an even more important role in the future.

May I use this opportunity here to inform you that a group of academic researches has started a process - which we have called "enhanced communication" - to improve the networking and collaboration among existing academic research institutions on the globe. The vision is to develop a global decentralized network of researches which would improve the flow of Internet related research results both among the researchers themselves and among academic researchers and the main stakeholders. Such a network could produce "food for thought" for governments, private sector and civil society. It could become something like a flexible and decentralized think tank behind the Forum. If the Forum is designed as a bottom up policy development project, the chance to find the right answers to the new challenges will be higher. More knowledge will probably help to create more wisdom.

A groundwork was done just last week in a very inspiring conference which was organized by the Diplo Foundation in Malta. The results of this meeting has been distributed here during the Forum. And let me inform you also that the International Association of Communication (ICA) and the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), two global organisations representing more than 10 000 academic researchers from around the globe, will organize another small joint symposium this year in Dresden where we want to develop a more concrete framework for such a new process of "enhanced communication". Hopefully we will produce already some results for the planned Forum in Athens, in October 2006.