

Civil Society Internet Governance Caucus's Inputs for the Open IGF Consultations, Geneva, 26th February, 2008

Statement III:

Renewal / Restructuring of Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group

At the outset of this statement on renewal and restructuring of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, the Civil Society IG Caucus will like to appeal to all stakeholders that we should all use the full term "multi-stakeholder advisory group" or MAG, at least for official purposes, because multi-stakeholderism is the most important aspect of the IGF.

MAG is the driving seat of the IGF, and restructuring MAG is basic to making IGF more effective and productive. We very much appreciate the new measures of transparency taken with respect to MAG's working. We are of the view that MAG should work through two e-lists - one open and the other closed. Since MAG discusses issues of public importance, normally discussions should be open to public scrutiny. However we do understand that there can be some circumstances that require closed discussions. All discussions taken to the closed list should be listed, and summaries of them provided, as appropriate. By the same rule, transcripts should be provided for all face-to-face meetings of the MAG, unless some topics are expressly chosen to be dealt in a closed manner, in which case such topics should be listed, and summary of discussions provided, as appropriate.

Membership of the MAG

- The MAG should be large enough so that its members bring the required balance of stakeholder interests, diversity and experience, but not so large as to cause the group to be ineffective. In the present circumstances, we think that 40 is a good number for MAG members. One third of MAG members should be rotated every year.
- In the interest of transparency and understanding the responsibilities of MAG members, when making appointments to the MAG we request the Secretary General to explain which interested group that person is associated with. The rules for membership of the MAG should be clearly established, and made open along with due justifications.
- Civil society has been under represented in the multi-stakeholder advisory groups appointed in 2006 and 2007, this anomaly should be corrected in this round of rotation and a fair balance of members among all stakeholders assured. Fair civil society representation is necessary to ensure legitimacy for this new experiment in global governance.
- We agree that the organizations having an important role in Internet administration and the development of Internet-related technical standards should

continue to be represented in the MAG. However, their representation should not be at the expense of civil society participation.

- Stakeholder representatives should be chosen based on appropriate processes of self-selection by stakeholder groups. We do appreciate that it is difficult to recognize any one stakeholder entity, or even a given set of them, as completely representing the whole of that particular stakeholder group. This complicates the process of selection, especially in the case of civil society and business sectors, and provides scope for the final selecting authority exercising a degree of judgment. This, however, should be done in a completely transparent manner. Deviations from the self-selection processes of stakeholder groups should be kept to the minimum.
- When recommending members of the MAG all stakeholders should ensure diversity in terms of gender, geography, and, where applicable, special interest groups.

Role and Structure of the MAG

With the experience of two years of the IGF, it is also the right time to revisit the role and the structure of the MAG. To start with, it will be useful to list out the functions that MAG is expected to perform.

- One function is of course to make all necessary arrangements for the annual IGF meetings. We must reviews MAG's experience with carrying out this function. What more needs to be done by MAG to further improve the effectiveness of the IGF? We are of the opinion that MAG must review its decision making processes to make them more effective. These are especially important if IGF is to evolve into something more than what it is today, to enable it to fulfill all aspects of its mandate.
- It will be very useful for the MAG to work through working groups (WGs). These WGs should prepare for each main session and the set of workshops connected to this main session. WGs can also be used for managing internal tasks of the MAG more effectively.
- We also seek greater clarity at this point about whether the MAG has any substantive identity other than advising the UN Secretary General. For instance, to carry out some part of the mandate which requires 'interfacing', 'advising', 'identifying issues', 'giving recommendations' etc, MAG, in some form or the other, needs to be able to represent the IGF. It looks highly impractical that these tasks can cohere in the UN Secretary General.
- MAG should prepare an annual report for the IGF. This report should mention IGF activities and performance for the year against relevant parts of the Tunis Agenda which lays out its mandate, and also outline plans for the year ahead. We

suggest that this report, once adopted by the Secretary General, would also satisfy the requirements of paragraph 75 of the Tunis Agenda and prepare for discussion about the desirability of continuing the Forum beyond 2010.

- IGF should actively encourage regional and national level IGFs, which should be truly multi-stakeholder. A specific plan should be drawn out for this purpose, possibly using a MAG working group. Such a need is also expressed in the paragraph 80 of Tunis Agenda.

Funding of IGF, and Issues of Participation

The United Nations needs to recognise that the IGF is the outcome of a UN process and should ensure that it has the resources it needs to fulfill its mandate as defined at the Tunis Summit in 2005. We express our great respect and appreciation for the work of the IGF Secretariat. While severely under-funded it has still been responsible for many of the IGF's successes. The Secretariat should be provided with resources needed to perform its role effectively.

In addition, a fund should be established to support the participation of people from developing and least developed countries in the IGF annual meetings and the IGF preparatory consultations.

Special Advisors and Chair

The need for Special Advisors, their role in the MAG, and criteria for their selection should be clarified. Considerations of diversity, as mentioned above in case of MAG members, must also be kept in mind for the selection of Special Advisors. The number of Special Advisors should be kept within a reasonable limit.

We are of the opinion that in keeping with the multi-stakeholder nature of the MAG, there should only be one chair, nominated by the UN Secretary General. The host country should be able to nominate a deputy chair, an arrangement that would be helpful regarding logistical issues for the annual IGF meetings. In any case, we will like to understand the division of work and responsibility between the two chairs in the present arrangement? It may be too late to move over to the suggested new arrangement of one chair, plus a host country deputy chair, for the Hyderabad meeting, especially if the Indian government representative has already taken over as the co-chair, but we can take a decision now about the post-Hyderabad phase.

And lastly, the IG Caucus supports the continuation of the present Chair, Nitin Desai, as the Chair of the MAG. We recognize and commend the role that he has played in guiding the MAG and the IGF through difficult formative times.