THE INTERNET SOCIETY’S VIEWS ON WSIS+10

Purpose of the WSIS+10 Review

In accordance with the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the WSIS+10 Review should assess "the multi-stakeholder implementation at the international level (...) taking into account the themes and action lines in the Geneva Plan of Action". The review process should focus on the implementation of existing goals. WSIS+10 should also reaffirm the principles and commitments made in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005 and emphasize the importance of the multi-stakeholder approach at all levels.

The review could benefit from looking at areas where progress has been achieved and analyzing the underlying causes for success. It could also identify areas where implementation was not as successful as had been hoped for and further investigate the challenging factors that led to such a result. Looking at reasons why a policy was not successful can teach valuable lessons; best practices seeking to improve information of all stakeholders involved could be identified; sharing best practices could provide guidance and set benchmarks. This process has the advantage of being able to evolve as improvements are emerging. One of the significant advantages of identifying best practices is that they can be based on self-assessment or benchmarking.

Theme of the Review

Given the importance of the Internet as a driver of economic growth, social change and political development, we propose looking at the key characteristics of the Internet that enable it to be the backbone of our globalized world. The open and interoperable nature of the Internet has fostered innovation in an unprecedented way – these key characteristics will need to be preserved to allow future generations of users to benefit from the Internet.

The Internet Society would therefore like to suggest that the overall theme of the Review to focus on “The Open Internet”. The following tracks could be explored:

1 Paragraph 108 of the Tunis Agenda.
1. **Open** Standards: The Internet is built on open standards – they are a key enabler of opportunities and put the power of innovation in the hands of all users.

2. **Open** to Everyone: The open Internet enables everyone “to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”, as it is set out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). People choose the services they need, create their own content in the language they want, and share it with others. By empowering people, the Internet contributes to “the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief”, which, according to the Preamble of the UDHR, is “the highest aspiration of the common people”.

3. **Open** for Business: The Internet is an extraordinary platform for existing and new business opportunities – enabling commerce to flow between all parties in dynamic ways, opening new territories, encouraging competition, expanding market presence, and creating new business models. It is a key driver of economic growth.

4. **Open** Governance: The Internet’s open, inclusive, transparent policy and standards developing processes are contingent on its underlying architecture. They bring business, civil society, the technical community, governments, and policy makers together to participate in the multi-stakeholder dialogue necessary to meet the challenges of an ever more complex world.

“The Open Internet” is a timeless theme. “The Open Internet” would give a useful framework to the analysis of the implementation of WSIS outcomes, as well as to the identification of recent trends and of forward-looking themes and ideas for the future. It is also very much in phase with the Action Lines UNESCO has direct responsibility for such as “The Ethical Dimension of the Information Society” (C10).

**Format of the preparatory process leading to the Review**

We believe strong participation in the WSIS process is a condition to its success and that the preparatory process should be as inclusive and multi-stakeholder as possible, in line with the Tunis Agenda. All preparatory meetings and related events should follow the multistakeholder model and be open and inclusive.

In keeping with the essence of WSIS, an informal group, gathering stakeholders from governments, international organizations, business, civil society and the technical and academic communities should be established to assist UNESCO and the ITU to develop the agenda. This group would be critical in engaging and raising awareness at all ends of the Internet ecosystem.

In order to enhance participation in the preparatory process, we would strongly suggest that the majority of the preparatory meetings be done on-line (having regular conference calls, creating mailing lists on various action lines, etc.) or on the side of major conferences such as the seventh annual meeting of the IGF, in November 2012, in Baku.
Finally, we recommend that the Review includes a discussion on how to improve the annual follow-up of the WSIS evaluation. The review should, among other things, focus on the concrete assessment of the implementation of the summit’s outcomes. In this context, we recognize the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) as one of the most successful outcomes of the WSIS and note the contribution it has made to the growing endorsement and acceptance of the multistakeholder model by triggering national and regional IGF type initiatives across the globe. We therefore recommend strengthening the IGF as a significant contribution to the implementation of WSIS. To this end, we suggest examining ways to strengthen linkages between the IGF and the annual follow-up to the WSIS evaluation as well as the UN Commission on Science and Technology Development (CSTD), while maintaining the IGF’s multi-stakeholder nature.

**About the Internet Society**

The Internet Society is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992. It is the world’s trusted independent source of information on Internet policy, technology standards and future development.

The Internet Society was accredited to the WSIS during its first phase and participated actively in the entire preparatory process and in the Geneva and Tunis Summits themselves. Since the Tunis Summit, the Internet Society and the global network of its members have been actively involved in support of implementing the targets, recommendations, and commitments of the WSIS as they pertain to the Internet, and to Internet Governance.