ISOC Contribution to World Telecommunication Policy Forum:

Comments on the Secretary General's Report and the Draft Opinions

22 April 2009

Following the last meeting of the World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF) Informal Expert Group held on the 24th of June, we have prepared additional comments on the Secretary General's Report, and on the Opinions that are presented in its annexes.

As a member of the Informal Expert Group to the WTPF, the Internet Society has been actively engaged[1] in the past year in preparations for this multi-stakeholder event. As a preliminary remark, we would like to emphasize that following the ITU Secretariat General's request in June 2008, ISOC submitted a proposal of a selected topic related to Convergence and Emerging policy issues. ISOC wished on that occasion to voice support for the direction of many comments made several times in the development of the drafts of the Secretary General's Report and subsequent discussion: specifically that the WTPF would have been more useful and effective if it had narrowed its focus to one or two pressing issues being faced by the world community.

ISOC supported focusing on Green ICT or ICT and Public Safety, and this proposal was developed with supporting material. We welcome that one of the proposed Opinions addresses specifically "ICT and the Environment", however we regret that none of the Working Groups of the Forum will be exclusively focusing on this critical and emerging issue.

Ultimately, it was decided that the WTPF would focus on a broad range of topics that require solid technical expertise, such as Convergence including Internet-related public policy matters, Emerging Telecommunication policy and regulatory

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[1] http://www.isoc.org/pubpolpillar/community/wtpf.shtml

issues, Next Generation Networks (NGNs) and International Telecommunication Regulations.

In this challenging context, ISOC values the opportunity for a multi-stakeholder dialogue, within the IEG and at the upcoming Forum, and the opportunity to provide factual and technical information in the hope that the discussions in Lisbon will be constructive, and informed.

The Internet Society takes note of the Opinions that now form a part of the Secretary-General's Report to the WTPF, and looks forward to the opportunity to engage in fuller discussion of these matters during the Lisbon event. As a general comment on the Opinions, **we would like to stress the importance of respecting and protecting the Internet model** which continues to underpin the Internet's contribution to innovation and creativity. The Internet Model is based on widely supported key principles, such as the "end-to-end principle," which supports the global deployment of innovative, and often surprising applications. The openness and transparency of the Internet's technical development, along with its associated policy development and management processes, are intrinsic to the success of the Internet itself, and to maintaining the global Internet.

The Internet's development has always depended upon openness to broad and diverse inputs. This is essential, as the Internet is a platform on which organizations and all types of users themselves build the infrastructure, software and services that then become globally accessible. As the Internet grows and continues to spur economic and social development around the world, the policies and practices of tomorrow must grow from the shared principles and the shared vision that gave us the Internet.

This global platform has enabled an unprecedented scale of human communications, revolutionized how we express ourselves and collaborate, and in so doing has already contributed unimaginably to the well being of citizens around the world. However, for ICT to continue to contribute to the wellbeing of all citizens around the world, we all must work to ensure that people have unfettered, affordable access to the network, whether from PC's, phones or other devices, and can choose from a diversity of suppliers, services, applications, and products. **The communications environment must not be encumbered by excessive governmental or private controls**. The services and applications on the Internet must be trusted, reliable, and stable, and the user's identity must be sacrosanct.

Effectively, the Internet thrives, and its contribution to society is greatest, when conditions ensure that users have the ability to freely connect, to communicate, to innovate, to share, to choose and to trust. To understand why these abilities are so important, we must recognize that technologies and infrastructure are required for progress, but do not drive progress. People drive progress. Their needs and the opportunities they see, drive applications, solutions and innovations.

It is easy to make the mistake of talking about how the Internet *was* developed. **The Internet *is still* developing. It is essential to heed the lessons of its short history.** The Internet's future development should be restricted only by our imaginations. The genius of the Internet is that its decentralized architecture maximizes the power of individual users to choose (or create) the hardware, software, and services that best meet their needs. If the Internet is to continue to be a platform for innovation and creativity, its open, globally addressable, decentralized nature must be preserved.

The deliberations that we look forward to in Lisbon take place in a challenging economic environment. To address those challenges, it is vital to preserve the conditions that sustain Internet development. Only in that way can the Internet continue to help sustain the world's progress and development.

To promote understanding of these key points, the Internet Society submitted information documents on "**The Internet Ecosystem**" and "**Preserving the User Centric Internet**". We also provided fact sheets on "**IPv6 Address Allocation**", "**The Internet and Standards**" and "**NGN and the Internet**" as official background papers to the 2009 World Telecommunication Policy Forum. These factual papers have been elaborated by the Internet Society's Standards and Technology department. We hope that the information provided in these documents will be used by delegations to inform discussions in Lisbon.

Finally, we'd like to thank the ITU for inviting sector member to participate to the discussions of the World Telecommunication Policy Forum. We would like to encourage the ITU Secretariat General to continue opening its conferences to all interested stakeholders, and broadening participation, beyond its Member States and Sector Members, to the Civil Society, the Internet community and the research community. We strongly believe there is an overarching need to develop appropriate multi-stakeholder forums that involve knowledgeable, interested and capable people in crafting solutions that enhance the strength of the Internet as a vital tool for communication and innovation.

We look forward discussing these comments at the World Telecommunication Policy Forum in Lisbon.

About the Internet Society
The Internet Society (ISOC) is an independent international nonprofit organization with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland and Reston, Virginia, USA. ISOC acts as a global clearinghouse for technically-sound, unbiased information about the Internet, as a provider of education, and also as a facilitator and coordinator of Internet-related initiatives around the world. It provides the organizational home for the IETF, IAB and IRTF.

ISOC was founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet related standards, education, and policy. It is supported by an active, global network of members who help promote and pursue the ISOC mission in all parts of the Internet community and all parts of the world. The Society has more than 80 organizational and more than 28,000 individual members in over 80 chapters who contribute to regionalizing the scope of ISOC technical, educational and policy initiatives. ISOC is a Sector Member of ITU–T (Standards) and ITU-D (Development) since 1995. The website is: http://www.isoc.org.