



**United States Department of State**  
*Washington, D.C. 20520*

10 May 2012

Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré  
Secretary-General  
International Telecommunication Union  
Place des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

Ref: DM-12/1003: Planning schedule for the fifth World  
Telecommunication/Information and Communication Policy  
Forum on Internet-related public policy issues

Dear Dr. Touré:

The United States of America welcomes the opportunity to participate in the fifth World Telecommunication/Information and Communication Technology Policy Forum (WTPF) to discuss the issues raised in Resolutions 101, 103 and 133 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010). We would note that in accordance with Resolution 2 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010), "the themes of the fifth WTPF shall continue to be based on a report by the Secretary-General, including input from any conference, assembly or meeting of the Union, and on contributions from Member States and Sector Members."

We believe that Resolutions 101, 103 and 133 speak to the fundamental value of the Internet as a platform for innovation, democracy, access to information and scientific progress. The value of the Internet is owed to the historical fact that the Internet grew within an environment facilitated by voluntary, decentralized and consensus-based processes. The Internet, as a decentralized and open system, must be permitted to enable the world's citizens to freely connect and express themselves consistent with the fundamental principle of freedom of speech.

Internet institutions such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) have been essential to the Internet's growth. These organizations operate consistent with the multi-stakeholder model, thus assuring that all who have an interest in the Internet

can have a voice in its operation. These organizations reflect the collaborative and enterprising spirit of the Internet, which President Obama referred to in the International Strategy for Cyberspace as “one of the finest examples of a community self-organizing.” Their transparency and flexibility have enabled the Internet to scale up from a small academic network to a growing global infrastructure.

Colleagues have contributed suggestions for themes or opinions that the fifth WTPF should consider. In this context, we note the contributions from the governments of Costa Rica, Saudi Arabia, and Montenegro, and the United Kingdom. We also acknowledge the contributions from the Internet Society and the Caribbean Telecommunications Union. In these contributions, colleagues offered subjects or themes for the fifth WTPF to consider. As Costa Rica has stated, the WTPF offers an opportunity for dialogue on policy issues of importance and for sharing and disseminating information on best practices (“appropriate solutions”) within each of our countries.

The United States has reviewed the possible list of topics found in the Annex attached to the “First Draft of the Secretary-General’s Report” (the “Report”). Paragraph 1.1.6 of the Report states that there is “the need to avoid a contradiction between the themes and the discussions at WTPF and ongoing activities undertaken as part of ITU’s mandate under the aforementioned Plenipotentiary (and other decisions of ITU Conferences and Assemblies) and the terms of reference of CWG-Internet.” In addition, the Report refers to ITU work related to the Internet Resolutions that is being done “within the framework of its Strategic, Operational and Financial Plans (1.1.4).” The Council Working Group on International Internet-Related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) is also mentioned for its activities involving Resolution 102 and pursuant to Council Decision 1305 (2009). We appreciate the list of subjects included in the Report, but, ultimately, it will be Member States and Sector Members who will offer topics for the fifth WTPF to consider. We, therefore, question whether there is a need to include the Annex in future drafts of the Secretary-General’s Report.

As a result of this review, and considering all references to ongoing work related to the Internet Resolutions (Guadalajara, 2010), the United States proposes that the principal theme of the fifth WTPF concern “Development and Diffusion of Information and Communication Technology Globally.” This theme can be seen in a number of activities already underway at the ITU. It would offer Members an opportunity to share experiences, to report on progress, and to contribute to a wide-ranging dialogue during the Experts Group discussions and at the WTPF. The United States would also request that the Secretary-General, in accordance with Resolutions 101, 102, 133 (Rev. Guadalajara, 2010) invite relevant organizations involved in the development of IP-based networks and the future Internet to participate in the Informal Experts Group in advance of the WTPF. As found in the pertinent footnote to these Resolutions, these organizations include, but not limited to, ICANN, regional Internet registries (RIRs), the IETF, the Internet Society and the W3C.

The United States looks forward to presenting this theme at the Informal Experts Group meeting in June and at subsequent opportunities. We very much look forward to our upcoming discussions with colleague related to this theme and to the fifth WTPF in general.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard C. Beard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard C. Beard  
Senior Deputy U.S. Coordinator for International  
Communications and Information Policy