DYNAMIC COALITION ON INTERNET AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DCICC*)

Statement

On

Climate Change and the Internet

The Internet has undergone explosive growth in recent years and plays a critical role in all phases of economic and social activity. Increased access to ICT is a global success story, as there are more than 4.6 billion subscriptions to mobile phones and 1.5 billion Internet users.

The ICT Footprint. Due to this growth, ICTs currently contribute 2-3% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and this figure is expected to rise. In response, the Internet community is endeavoring to mitigate its own carbon footprint through new energy-efficient data centers, servers, applications and networks, and through the increased use of renewable energy supplies to power the Internet infrastructure.
A future high-bandwidth, lower-carbon society potentially offers a platform for economic, social and cultural development that is sustainable.

The Enabling Effect. It is estimated that ICTs can reduce emissions in other sectors by at least 15%, making them a significant enabling technology to combat climate change and the Internet can play a key role to enable the use of ICTs to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors. For example, the Internet facilitates the use of ICTs to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors through videoconferencing, tele-working, e- commerce, and intelligent transport systems. It is vital to set priority areas for action in using ICTs in other sectors; these may include smart buildings, smart electric grids, dematerialization and sustainable procurement. Governments, the private sector, and the user community, each have their role to play in deploying ICTs in other sectors to maximum effect and to promote sustainable development.

Internet Governance. It is of the utmost importance that policymakers, stakeholders and governance of the Internet at all levels, national, regional and international; take full account of the need for sustainable growth of the Internet. Every effort must be made so that the Internet evolves in a manner that respects the need to control its carbon footprint. In particular, the IGF process, including at the regional level, should highlight to a much greater extent the importance of including climate change as a key factor in any and all policies and frameworks that will shape the future growth of the Internet.

Adaptation and Developing countries. Given the special characteristics and needs of developing countries, urgent action must be taken to assist them to adapt to climate change. Most developing countries are only minor contributors to GHG emissions, but

they are often victims of extreme weather events and other negative impacts of climate change, such as rising oceans, changes in rainfall, species migration, harm to farmers, degradation of the rainforest, melting of glaciers, and human displacement. For these countries, the Internet and ICTs can serve as a critical enabling tool to mitigate climate change and adapt to it, e.g. through climate monitoring and data collection, which can assist agriculture and other sectors, and in the predicting natural disasters and ensuring a rapid response when disasters strike.

Role of the Private Sector. Corporate commitments by Internet companies to reduce their energy consumption and GHG emissions should be encouraged. Increased use of renewable energy supplies and green purchasing policies are essential parts of the solution. Global standards, including agreed methodologies to measure the impact of ICTs on climate change, can promote more energy efficient ICT products and services to drive the growth of the Internet. Current efforts to develop, adopt and use such standards are encouraged.

Access to ICTs. Bridging the Digital Divide and bringing the benefits of the Internet to all citizens is fundamental to tackling climate change. Providing equitable and affordable access to broadband connectivity to schools, rural communities, health facilities, etc. are vital to economic development and to making effective use of ICTs to combat climate change.

Lifecycle of ICTs. E-waste from the Internet and ICTs is a growing problem. Efforts must be made to dispose Internet access devices (mobile phones, computers, etc.) and servers in an environmentally-friendly manner, to reduce and avoid the use of toxic materials and to promote the use of designs and materials that facilitate recycling. The reuse of ICTs also needs to be encouraged as well as efforts to extend their useful life through improved design.

Global Commitment. The successful outcome of the pending talks on new global agreements on climate change is of great importance. There is a critical need in any future agreement to fully recognize the importance of the Internet and the significant contribution that ICTs can make in tackling climate change

We, the 30 members of the DCICC pledge to promote and publicize the importance of the Internet in combating climate change to all relevant actors: governments, citizens, and business; to establish collaborative partnerships; to recognize the contribution of research and educational bodies, and to raise awareness of the urgency of this issue in the Internet community and the ICT sector.