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Contribution from Internet Society (ISOC)

The Internet Society (ISOC) thanks the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the opportunity to provide our views to the Fifth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF). We welcome the open availability of the six draft Opinions to be discussed at WTPF 2013 and look forward to taking part in discussions of these and all stakeholders’ views during the Forum. While we remain disappointed that the Secretary General’s Report did not take a more forward-looking approach, we note that there are many positive aspects of the draft Opinions. Our submission is intended to address some specific points in the draft Opinions and to highlight additional resources which may be helpful to Member States, Sector Members and all others participating in the WTPF. In three annexes to this contribution, the Internet Society provides more detail about IXP development and Internet numbering resources. This contribution should be read in the context of ISOC’s [comments](http://www.itu.int/md/S13-WTPF13IEG3-C-0030/en) on the Fourth Secretary-General’s report on the 2013 WTPF.

The Internet Society encourages the ITU and its Member States to take advantage of the WTPF to further a shared understanding of the complex issues associated with the overall theme of International Internet public policy. We also hope that, as a result of the dialogue at the WTPF, ITU Members will participate more actively in the broad range of community-based technical and public policy discussions within the various organizations responsible for the management and governance of the Internet. We hope that all stakeholders will embrace the Internet model of multistakeholder engagement as the best way to ensure the stability, security, and future growth of the Open Internet.

The draft WTPF-13 Opinions, focus discussion on three inter-related areas:

* the need to expand access to the Internet by creating an enabling environment, and role of Inter-Exchange Points (IXPs) as a specific means of enhancing connectivity;
* the need to evolve the numbering system of the Internet by promoting a timely implementation of the IPv6 protocol; and
* the underlying fundamentals of how the Internet is managed and governed and how all stakeholders from developed *and* developing countries can be engaged such that the Internet continues to grow and expand.

The following comments address each of these broad themes in turn.

**The need to expand access to the Internet**

As the Internet has grown around the world, the Internet Society has observed that legislative and regulatory mechanisms that emerge from multistakeholder engagement and support are the most productive in driving innovation and participation by the private sector, the technical community, and civil society. Experience shows that governments who engage their stakeholders and draw from a base of community expertise are most effective in creating the environment in which Internet access flourishes. In this respect, ISOC is broadly supportive of the views expressed in draft Opinion 2 (*Fostering an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity*). We believe that the emphasis on competition, investment, and regulatory transparency are extremely useful steps forward in the global dialogue about how to enable greater connectivity worldwide.

The Internet Society also supports the goals noted in Opinion 1 related to promoting Internetexchangepoints(IXPs)as a long term solution to advance connectivity, and the role that bottom-up multi-stakeholder collaboration has played in developing IXPs around the world. In particular, it is important to highlight the excellent, collaborative work done by Internet community experts, IXPs, and IXP associations around the world to develop IXPs and exchange best practices, all in the name of enhancing connectivity around the world.

In our work with a variety of stakeholders to develop IXPs (e.g., the African Union, PCH, the regional Internet registries, Euro-IX, ISOC Chapters, and local experts), we have seen firsthand the enormous benefit that bottom-up multi-stakeholder collaboration facilitates - from technical training in El Salvador to rejuvenating and IXP in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa). In 2012, we published an independent study that quantifies the benefits that IXPs have brought to countries in Africa, which we hope will help to focus and inform discussions of this important topic during the WTPF.[[1]](#footnote-1) This study underscores the fact that IXPs can be a fundamental element of an enabling environment but only if they emerge in a context of community support, competition, regulatory reforms, and multistakeholder action.

We are pleased that these two documents will be discussed in tandem during the WTPF. Considering the two draft Opinions together will underscore the point that IXPs are an important but partial contribution to the vital goal of fostering an enabling environment supportive of global Internet growth and broadband connectivity.

**Fostering the uptake of IPv6**

The Internet Society is a strong and active advocate for the deployment of IPv6. In the past two years, we have both led and supported collaborative activities such as World IPv6 Day and the World IPv6 Launch. Both activities offered an extraordinary example of how the Internet industry can come together to promote a technology vital to the future success of the global Internet.

The Internet technical community has also established programs designed to build capacity and to encourage enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders, each in their respective roles, to achieve a smooth deployment of IPv6. These organizations have developed a significant body of information and advice on the topic of Internet numbering and have made these resources available to the global community, including the ITU Group on IPv6. In 2011, ISOC launched the [Deploy360 Program](http://www.internetsociety.org/deploy360) to provide real-world deployment information for key Internet technologies such as IPv6.

At the global level, industry and the Internet technical community have demonstrated leadership in promoting deployment of IPv6, largely through industry-driven initiatives established by companies that recognize that deployment is critical for the long term health of the Internet and for their global business objectives. Many governments have also recognized that they have an important role to play in promoting adoption of IPv6. For instance, governments can lead by example by deploying IPv6 in their own networks and infrastructure. National strategies have been launched in a range of countries including Belgium, India, and Germany. The United States has taken an important step forward in demonstrating the importance of IPv6 by enabling IPv6 on the public websites of all federal agencies. And Brazil hosted World IPv6 week to raise local and regional awareness amongst ISPs about the importance of IPv6 adoption.

As our partners, the Regional Internet Registries (RIR) comprising the Number Resource Organization (NRO), explain in their contribution, significant efforts have been undertaken to establish regional policies for IPv6 that enjoy broad community support of many stakeholders, including governments. If governments, or any other stakeholder, have views or positions on these policies, it is vital that they activity participate in the RIR community processes so that the regional policies can take these important perspectives into account. In the WTPF discussions, the Internet Society encourages the ITU, its Member States, and other stakeholders to embrace and support activities that will contribute to a timely and well-executed deployment of IPv6 in the global Internet.

**Multistakeholder Internet Governance and Enhanced Cooperation.**

The openness and transparency of the Internet's technical development, along with its associated policy development and management processes, has always been intrinsic to the success of the open, global Internet. The effective management and governance of the Internet depends upon openness to broad and diverse inputs. This is essential, because the Internet is a platform on which organizations and all types of users can build infrastructure, software and services that then become globally accessible. As the Internet continues to grow 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.

Multistakeholder Internet governance was explicitly recognised by the world’s leaders in the Tunis Agenda as being fundamental to the way the Internet is managed and governed. The Internet technical community has long operated through multistakeholder engagement and the Internet Society is pleased to see other organizations taking significant steps to become more open to stakeholders. The ITU is becoming more inclusive by inviting other organizations from the technical community and civil society to take part in certain meetings such as the WTPF, and by encouraging governments and other organizations to be more inclusive in their domestic preparations for ITU meetings. Yet more remains to be done; for example, while some governments do hold open dialogues with all stakeholders in their communities, and sometimes even include non-government actors in national delegations, this practice is not yet universal. It is also the case that key aspects of ITU decision-making remain closed to governments only. We remain hopeful that the ITU will take additional steps in the future to continue to make its processes more transparent and more meaningfully inclusive.

According to the Tunis Agenda, enhanced cooperation needs to be accomplished within existing organizations. While it is important for enhanced cooperation to grow within the ITU, this must be within the bounds of the ITU’s roles and responsibilities. It is also vital that the ITU and its Member States work cooperatively and collaboratively within the organizations responsible for essential tasks associated with the Internet, rather than create duplicative or even competing efforts.

The Internet Society notes that some draft Opinions make particular reference to the role of governments at the national level in Internet governance, drawing on, *inter alia*, Tunis Agenda paragraphs 35, 47, and 54. The Internet Society clearly recognizes and supports the role of national governments with regard to Internet governance, particularly the Tunis Agenda’s encouragement of multistakeholder processes at the national, regional and international levels. At the same time, we believe it is similarly important to recall the Tunis Agenda’s affirmation that the Internet is a *global* facility. Regional and international coordination and cooperation among *all* stakeholders are necessary to ensure the continuing development of the Internet, as well as to deal with specific problems, such as cybersecurity, cybercrime, and spam.

The Internet Society believes that since the 2005 WSIS, enhanced cooperation has been realized in the field of Internet governance and international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. The Internet Society and other Internet organizations have responded to the call for enhanced cooperation by increasing our outreach to governments and other relevant stakeholders. These efforts take three forms.

**First**, we have taken steps to engage with governments and intergovernmental organizations, including official involvement with UN ECOSOC, ITU, UNESCO, several UN Economic Commissions, WIPO, OECD, APEC, the African Union, CITEL, and others. Indeed, we are pleased to participate as a member of the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation. We also strongly support the participation of new stakeholders in the multistakeholder processes. Our Internet Leadership program aims to enable greater participation and is an important way to nurture new Internet leaders throughout the Internet ecosystem.

**Second**, we have encouraged governments and intergovernmental organizations to become involved with the Internet Society and other Internet organizations where standards and policies relevant to Internet governance are developed. The Internet Society has a robust Fellowship program to the IETF that allows engineers and policymakers to attend IETF meetings and gain a stronger appreciation for the technical work and the principles that underpin Open Standards processes. To date, our program has facilitated participation of fellows from over 40 countries from around the world. We firmly believe that greater inclusion and understanding of various Internet technologies and processes enables stronger, more informed participation.

**Third,** we have a strong commitment to providing unbiased, technically sound information on a range of complex Internet public policy issues. The ISOC community actively works with local and national policymakers, industry and civil society groups around the world to help provide the tools needed to formulate open, transparent and sustainable Internet policy approaches. In our experience, this kind of training and local collaboration builds new Internet leaders who can spearhead Internet connectivity growth and sustainable Internet strategies in their communities. We would encourage the ITU, its Member States, and all other stakeholders to continue to strengthen partnerships and opportunities for the Internet to grow around the world.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Internet Society appreciates the opportunity to provide our views to the Fifth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum. We believe that the draft WTPF Opinions provide a good basis for constructive dialogue on a) how to create an enabling environment for connectivity and IXPs; b) how to spur further deployment of IPv6; c) how to enhance participation of stakeholders in the multistakeholder Internet governance processes. Fundamentally, we believe that the *multistakeholder model works* – not as an end in and of itself but because this model is at the heart of the Internet’s architectural foundation and also because it has proven to be the best way to ensure that the benefits of the Internet are available to everyone.

ISOC is pleased to join in discussion with the ITU Members and other stakeholders at the 2013 WTPF and welcomes the opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned from our twenty-one year long experience with the Internet and with Internet governance.

Annex 1: [Promoting the Use of Internet Exchange Points: A Guide to Policy, Management, and Technical Issues](http://www.itu.int/md/dologin_md.asp?lang=en&id=S13-WTPF13-C-0009!N1!PDF-E)

Annex 2: ISOC Briefing Paper (English and Spanish):[An Introduction to Internet Interconnection Concepts and Actors](http://www.itu.int/md/dologin_md.asp?lang=en&id=S13-WTPF13-C-0009!N2!PDF-E)

Annex 3: [A Fine Balance: Internet number resource distribution and de-centralisation](http://www.itu.int/md/dologin_md.asp?lang=en&id=S13-WTPF13-C-0009!N3!PDF-E)

1. http://www.internetsociety.org/news/new-study-reveals-how-internet-exchange-points-ixps-spur-internet-growth-emerging-markets [↑](#footnote-ref-1)