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| **Council Working Group on InternationalInternet-related Public Policy IssuesThirteenth meeting – Geneva, 19-20 September 2019** |  |
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| United Kingdom |
| TOPICS FOR THE COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET-RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES |

**Introduction**

1. The United Kingdom submitted a contribution to the twelfth meeting of the Council Working Group (Internet) which proposed a number of topics for future meetings of the Group. The proposals received support from many colleagues as well as helpful comments and suggestions on how they could be refined and improved. We have now taken into account the comments that were made and revised our proposals.
2. We have continued to bear in mind Council Resolution 1336, which says that the Council Working Group should decide on the international Internet-related public policy issues for open consultation, drawing primarily from the topics in the annex to Council Resolution 1305.
3. In addition to our revised proposals, we continue to support a topic on “*“International public policy related to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries”.* This is based on a proposal made by the Russian Federation and nearly all Member States were able to reach consensus on it at the twelfth meeting of the Group.
4. We invite the Council Working Group to consider the following revised proposals.

**Proposals for topics**

1. We propose four topics for the coming four meetings, as follows:
	* 1. **The role of small and non-profit community operators in Internet connectivity**

The topic of “community networks” was widely discussed at the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018. Many countries described from their own experience how they provide great opportunities to promote internet connectivity, particularly in remote areas, and they were keen to share success stories and best practice.

There was concern at the twelfth Council Working Group (Internet) meeting that the definition of “community networks” was not clear. We propose instead to use language from ITU-D Recommendation 19, which says:

“*it is important to consider small and non-profit community operators, through appropriate regulatory measures that allow them to access basic infrastructure on fair terms, in order to provide broadband connectivity to users in rural and remote areas, taking advantage of technological advances*”[[1]](#footnote-1).

A discussion in the Council Working Group would be an excellent opportunity to promote better understanding of the potential of community operators, share best practice and address some of the issues involved. A consultation on this topic would address a number of issues in the Annex to Council resolution 1305, including international internet connectivity, availability, affordability, reliability, and quality of service, especially in the developing world and the developmental aspects of the Internet.

We propose the following questions for consultation:

* *How can small and non-profit community operators help connect the unconnected?*
* *What are the challenges in promoting small and non-profit community operators and how can they be overcome?*
* *What role can governments play to promote Internet connectivity through small and non-profit community operators?*
	+ 1. **Addressing the challenges and opportunities regarding IPv6**

IPv6 was a key topic of consideration at the Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018. Resolution 180 of that Conference was strengthened, recognising the importance of this topic, and many Member States spoke of the pressing need for increased efforts to promote IPv6, including the need to encourage manufacturers to supply to the market fully-featured customer premises equipment that supports IPv6 in addition to IPv4.

The Council Working Group (Internet) can provide an important platform to develop this topic, to learn more about the perspectives of different stakeholders and to raise awareness of the challenges and possible solutions. The topic is directly relevant to international Internet connectivity and to international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet and the management of Internet resources, including domain names and addresses, as set out in the annex to resolution 1305.

This proposal was widely accepted at the twelfth Council Working Group (Internet) meeting. We now propose the following questions for consultation:

* *What are the challenges and opportunities with regard to IPv6?*
* *What can governments do to help overcome the challenges and realise the opportunities?*
* *What can other stakeholders do to help overcome the challenges and realise the opportunities?*
	+ 1. **Internet connectivity for land-locked developing countries**

Land-locked developing countries face particular challenges in securing affordable Internet access because they do not have access to submarine cable landing stations. There are more than forty land-locked countries that face these issues and most of them are developing countries.

This topic is highlighted in Resolution 23 of the World Telecommunication Development Conference in 2017 but it has not been addressed by the Council Working Group (Internet) and the ITU has not consulted stakeholders on this issue. The Council Working Group (Internet) can provide an important platform to develop this topic, to learn more about the perspectives of different stakeholders and to raise awareness of the challenges and possible solutions.

The topic is directly relevant to international Internet connectivity and to availability, affordability, reliability, and quality of service, especially in the developing world, as set out in the annex to resolution 1305.

 We propose the following questions for consultation:

* *What challenges do land-locked developing countries face in securing affordable international Internet connectivity?*
* *What can governments do to overcome these challenges?*
* *What can other stakeholders do to overcome these challenges?*

 **iv. The development of local and regional Internet Governance Forums**

Since the first meeting of the United Nations’ Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in 2006, more than 110 IGF national, regional and youth IGF initiatives have been established, located in all five UN regions. These provide a critical opportunity for multi-stakeholder dialogue on important Internet issues and they have developed a wealth of knowledge, expertise and good ideas.

The Council Working Group can provide an important platform for stakeholders to share their experience and identify good practice and for governments in particular to consider the role that they can play. IGFs discuss all of the issues set out in the annex to Council Resolution 1305, and this topic is particularly relevant to contributing to capacity building for Internet governance in developing countries.

We propose the following questions for consultation:

* *What are the opportunities offered by national and regional IGF initiatives?*
* *What challenges do national and regional IGF initiatives face and how can they be overcome?*
* *How can governments benefit from national and regional IGF initiatives?*

**Summary of proposals**

1. In summary we propose that:
	1. The fourteenth meeting of the Council Working Group (Internet) should discuss “**The role of small and non-profit community operators in Internet connectivity”.**
	2. The fifteenth meeting of the Council Working Group (Internet) should discuss “**Addressing the challenges and opportunities regarding IPv6”**
	3. The sixteenth meeting of the Council Working Group (Internet) should discuss “**Internet connectivity for land-locked developing countries”**
	4. The seventeenth meeting of the Council Working Group (Internet) should discuss “**The development of local and regional Internet Governance Forums”**

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1. Final Report of WTDC-17, p.634 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)