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| **Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues** **Seventeenth meeting – Virtual Meeting, 19 – 20 January 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-Internet-17/6-E** |
| **24 January 2022** |
| **English only** |
| REPORT OF THE Seventeenth meeting of the  COuncil working group on international Internet-related public policy issues (cwg-internet) | |

1. **Introduction**

**1.1.** The seventeenth meeting of the CWG-Internet was held on 19 January and 20 January 2022. As the Chair of CWG-Internet, H.E. Majed AlMazyed, was unable to join this meeting, the Vice-Chair of the Americas Region, Mr. Cesar Martinez, chaired this meeting.

**1.2.**  ITU Secretary-General Mr. Houlin Zhao welcomed participants to the meeting. He commended the members for their commitment to the Group, particularly over the past two years, and the successful outcome of the tenth open consultation on “*The environmental impacts and benefits of the Internet”.* He noted that the policy issues highlighted in the consultation are critical to address current challenges such as climate change, reiterating also that the work of this Group will serve as an important basis for the discussions at the next Plenipotentiary Conference set to take place in Bucharest, Romania, between 26 September and 14 October 2022 (PP Conference).

**1.3** The Chairman thanked the ITU Secretary-General, Mr. Houlin Zhao, for his presence and support for the meeting and opened the meeting, encouraging members to approach the deliberations of the Group with a spirit of consensus and collaboration to reach a successful outcome.

**2.** [**CWG-Internet-17/1**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLINTPOL17-C-0001/en)**: Agenda of the meeting**

The Chairman presented the agenda (CWG-Internet-17/1 (Rev.1)) which was adopted.

**3. Secretariat documents:**

**3.1** [**CWG-Internet 17/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLINTPOL17-C-0002/en)**: Secretariat report on ITU Internet Activities: Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206**

3.1.1 This report summarizes ITU’s activities related to Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) Resolution 101 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), “*Internet Protocol-based networks*”; Resolution 102 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), “*ITU’s role with regard to international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet and the management of Internet resources, including domain names and addresses*”; Resolution 133 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), “*Roles of administrations of Member States in the management of Internationalized (multilingual) domain names*”; Resolution 180 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), “*Facilitating the transition from IPv4 to IPv6*” and Resolution 206 (Dubai, 2018), “*OTTs*”.

**Discussions**

3.1.2 The Group noted the Internet Activities Report. In addition, the meeting suggested that Secretariat present more ITU activities related to Resolution 133 (Rev. Dubai, 2018), “*Roles of administrations of Member States in the management of Internationalized (multilingual) domain names*” in the future editions of the Report, including the upcoming Report to Council 2022. Some members also commended the scope of multi-stakeholder collaborations that ITU is engaged in with respect its activities on Internet, and encouraged Secretariat to continue to work closely with other stakeholders and international organizations in the respect.

**4.** **Discussion on the Open Consultation**

4.1 [**Brief summary of the online open consultation and virtual meeting – physical open consultation**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-OPCWGINT10-C-0003/en) **(OPCWGINT10/3 (Rev. 1))**

4.1.1 The CWG examined the summary of the online open consultation and virtual meeting - physical open consultation held on 11 January 2022.

**Discussions**

4.1.2 The Group thanked all stakeholders for their active participation in the online and virtual meeting - physical open consultation on “*The environmental impacts and benefits of the Internet*

* *What effects does the Internet have on the environment and vice-versa?*
* *How can we improve the impact the Internet has on the environment and take advantage of its potential to help address climate-related issues?*
* *What role should stakeholders play in shaping the environmental impacts and benefits of the Internet?*
* *What are the policy, regulatory and other relevant matters associated with the environmental impacts and benefits of the Internet?”.*

4.1.3 Noting the substantive output from the open consultation, several members expressed support for the contributions received from stakeholders for the open consultation and urged ITU to consider the output in its work. In addition, they commended the diversity of experts who contributed to and participated in the consultations, reinforcing the importance of multistakeholder collaboration and partnerships to address complex and emerging questions related to international Internet-related public policy issues.

4.1.4 A statement, as set out in Annex 1, was also presented on behalf of the EU and its Member States on their activities with respect to the topic of the consultation.

4.1.5 Some members noted that this virtual meeting – physical open consultation was held in parallel with the Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (CWG-FHR) and suggested that the Secretariat try to such scheduling conflicts in the future.

4.1.6 The Chairman invited the Group to consider the output from the consultation in its deliberations.

**5. Introduction and Discussion of Contributions from Member States**

The CWG examined the various contributions (in the order listed in the agenda), which were noted by the Group. The summaries of the contributions (as submitted by the authors of the documents) and the corresponding discussions are provided below:

5.1[**CWG-Internet-17/3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLINTPOL17-C-0003/en)**: Contribution by the Russian Federation – Proposals to discuss the challenges and lack of operational activity organizations/operators of critical Internet infrastructure (first phase)**

**Summary**

The Russian Federation proposes to discuss during CWG-Internet meetings critical issues related to challenges in the system of international Internet governance. Contribution contains concerns about the lack of reliable guarantees for the work of regional organizations responsible for operation of critical Internet resources аnd negative examples of blocking its activity by national administrations. The Russian Federation highlights two main dangerous issues for operation of the critical Internet resources:

* firstly, the dependence of organization/operators of critical Internet infrastructure providing over national functions on the decisions of one national administration has turned from a potential threat into a real fact;
* secondly, the growth of autonomous, unsynchronized national initiatives on Internet regulation, while mandatory for the cross-border application.

In this regard, within the framework of the topic "The security, safety, continuity, sustainability, and robustness of the Internet", established by Resolution 1305, Russian Federation proposes to discuss between Member States following issues:

* risks for reliability and stability of existing model of the operational activities organization/operators of critical Internet infrastructure;
* Member States’ inputs and proposals on possible ways to overcome existing challenges and neutralize risks for operational activity organizations/operators of critical Internet infrastructure;
* what international structures and procedures can overcome the existing challenges and risks.

5.2[**CWG-Internet-17/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLINTPOL17-C-0004/en)**: Contribution by the Russian Federation – Proposals on the topic for next open consultations**

**Summary**

The Russian Federation has been consistently proposing for discussion during CWG-Internet meetings critical issues related to challenges in the system of international Internet governance, especially fragmentation of the global network. Taking into account the importance of inputs from representatives of all interested parties and open inclusive dialog, the Russian Federation proposes to hold each open consultations related to the main discussion between Members States at the CWG-Internet session.

In advance to the 18th meeting of CWG-Internet, for which the same topic for discussion between Member States is proposed, the Russian Federation proposes to hold next open consultations on the topic: "Reliability and stability of the operational activity organizations/operators of critical Internet infrastructure: key and challenges of their operating activities, in particular the risks of being in national jurisdictions."

5.3[**CWG-Internet-17/5**](https://www.itu.int/md/S22-RCLINTPOL17-C-0005/en)**: Contribution by the United Kingdom and Canada – Topic proposal for the next Council Working Group Open Consultation**

**Summary**

The United Kingdom and Canada are pleased to submit this contribution to the Council Working Group (Internet). We welcome the opportunity the Group provides to identify, study and develop international Internet-related public policy issues. For the next open consultation, we invite the Council Working Group to consider the following topic “Advancing and Enhancing a true multilingual Internet.

The UK noted that their proposal with Canada seeks a dialogue on multilingualism on the Internet and the challenges there are in ensuring all Internet users (no matter what language or scripts they use) can have access to the services and content which we take for granted;

Clearly, while having access to Internet services is crucial, and much progress has been  access itself is not sufficient if some services are not accessible; A key issue that has been addressed, but still a significant problem is Universal Acceptance; essentially the ability of all users to be able to access the Internet though their own scripts and identifiers;

Universal Acceptance is a fundamental requirement for a truly multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet. It ensures that all domain names, including new (and often longer) Top Level Domains (TLDs) and International Domain Names (IDNs), and email addresses are treated equally and can be used by all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

The UK noted that while progress is being made - not least through the ICANN initiative referred to in Paper - there is a lot more to do, not least by governments in provision of their own provision of public services and through procurement practises.

In light of the above, the UK proposed the following questions for consultation:

●        *What more could governments and stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population?*

●        *What problems (if any) have ITU member countries and sector members experienced concerning the lack of Universal Acceptance?*

●        *What more could governments do to promote Universal Acceptance, both in public sector (such as in procurement practices and provision of public services) and in the private sector (in websites and other Internet services)?; and*

●        *How ITU, working with ICANN and other interested parties, might help promote Universal Acceptance?*

**Discussion**

5.4 The contributions were noted by the Group. Members expressed appreciation for the importance of the topics presented to the CWG-Internet for consideration.

5.5 With respect to the proposals made in documents 3 and 4, some members expressed the concern that aspects of it may fall outside the mandate of the Group, particularly noting that the Council Working Group (Internet) is not open to all stakeholders, while some members expressed strong support for its timeliness and relevance to the work of the Group.

5.6 With respect to the proposals made in document 5, some members were of the opinion that, while the topic is relevant, there is already work ongoing at ITU and in other fora on this subject and a consultation may lead to duplication of this work. Some members were of the opinion that the topic is most timely and applicable to the work of ITU as well as for all Member States.

5.7 Some members were of the opinion that if members do not have preference to choose one over the other, the Group could agree to use both topics for the next two rounds of open consultations.

5.8 Some members suggested that, as there is a lack on consensus on the proposed topics and given that the upcoming PP Conference in September 2022 may consider revisiting the role and mandate of the CWG-Internet, the Group could decide to avoid any decision-making at this point, including on choosing a topic for the open consultation, and defer such matters to its next meeting, as appropriate, post the PP Conference. They noted that the Group had followed a similar process just prior to PP18.

5.9 Some members further suggested that, if the Group agrees, the matter could be deferred until PP, and based on PP’s decision regarding the continuation of the role and activities of CWG-Internet vis a vis the open consultations, these two topics would be used for the next rounds of open consultation post PP.

5.10 Some members also suggested that in case the Group cannot decide on a topic by consensus, this decision could be made by Council 2022, considering that there is past precedence for such decisions.

5.11 It was agreed that given the lack of consensus on the topics proposed for open consultation at this meeting, the Group defers the matter of topics for future consultations to the next meeting of the CWG-Internet should the PP Conference 2022 decide on the continuation of open consultations.

5.12 The Russian Federation also presented a statement to the Group which is set out in Annex 2 to this Report.

5.13 The Vice-Chair, CEPT Region, further urged the Group to consider ways for strengthening the work and impact of the CWG-Internet and submit related proposals to the PP conference for their consideration.

**6.** **Actions**

6.1 Given the lack of consensus on the topics proposed for open consultation at this meeting, the Group defers the matter of topics for future consultations to the next meeting of the CWG-Internet should the PP Conference 2022 decide on the continuation of open consultations.

6.2 The summary of the tenth online consultation and the virtual meeting - physical consultation on “*The environmental impacts and benefits of the Internet*” will be submitted as part of the Chairman’s report to Council.

6.3 Directors of all the ITU bureaux are invited to consider the consultation responses in their work, as appropriate.

**7.**  **Closing of the Meeting**

7.1 The report of the seventeenth meeting of the CWG-Internet was approved by the CWG-Internet and was posted on the CWG-Internet website (<http://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet>).

7.2 In closing, the Chairman thanked all the ITU Member States who made contributions and participated in the work of the Group, the Vice-Chairmen, the ITU Elected Officials and the Secretariat for their efficient assistance during the meeting.

7.3 The Group thanked the Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and Secretariat for their effective organization and management of the Group. The Group also thanked the remote moderator.

**Mr. César Martínez (Paraguay)**

**Acting Chairman, CWG-Internet**

ANNEX 1

**“The Environmental Impacts and Benefits of the Internet “**

**Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States (27)**

The EU and its Member States welcome the opportunity of discussing such a timely and relevant topic, and sharing examples of the use of the internet and digital technologies for the benefit of the environment.

The **European Green Deal** aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. A smarter and greener use of digital technologies is a key part in achieving this ambitious goal.

Digital technologies can **help cut global emissions by 15%**, if applied systematically across a wide range of sectors,[[1]](#footnote-2) while minimizing the rebound effect. For example: digital twin of a building can reduce energy use by up to 17% and cut costs by 15-25%; smart farming using sensors, AI and robotics to monitor fields can help reduce the need for chemical pesticides or fertilizers. E-meeting and smart-mobility applications also show great prospects of emission savings from commuting.

Digital technologies also play a vital role in the area of climate adaptation and disaster risk management. The EU’s **Earth Observation programme Copernicus** provides data on a free, full and open access basis from satellites and sensors to enable constant monitoring of the planet and development of a range of environmental terrestrial applications. In autumn 2021 the European Commission launched a new crosscutting initiative **Destination Earth (DestinE)[[2]](#footnote-3)** that aims to develop a digital twin of the Earth, to anticipate, monitor, better understand, and react to the climate change challenges ahead of us.

The EU is also working with international partners, including the ITU, on the development of the **Digital Product passport** that can improve the circularity and sustainability of electronics, and accelerate the transition to circular economy.

In March 2021, by signing the [**Green Digital Transformation declaration**](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/eu-countries-commit-leading-green-digital-transformation) the EU Member States committed to maximize the benefits of **the digital and green twin transition**. At the same time, major ICT companies formed a[**European Green Digital Coalition**](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-green-digital-coalition)**[[3]](#footnote-4)** with commitments to invest in development of green digital solutions that have positive environmental impact.

However, the ICT sector faces its own green challenge. In Europe, it accounts for 8-10% of the European electricity consumption and around 3% of its carbon emissions.[[4]](#footnote-5) It is therefore equally important to **“green” the digital sector itself**.

This year, the Commission will present a **circular electronics initiative**, to ensure that devices are designed for durability, reuse and recycling and including a right to repair or upgrade to extend the lifecycle of electronic devices. The EU goal is also to achieve **climate-neutral, highly energy-efficient and sustainable data centers** by no later than 2030[[5]](#footnote-6).

Finally, **standards** play an important role in terms of fostering energy and material efficiency (recyclability and durability) of digital technologies at global level. **ITU’s cooperation with EU SDOs** has delivered important results, such as the joined ETSI/ITU standard (ITU-T L.1410 and ETSI ES 203 199) that is also referred to in the EU taxonomy.

We would therefore **encourage the ITU to continue, in the framework of its mandate, working closely with EU SDOs** as well as with other standardization organizations such as ISO/IEC JTC-1, and incorporating sustainability to the greatest extent possible in standards-making.

At this occasion, we would also like to recall our long-standing proposal to **open this Group to all stakeholders**, in support of improving the transparency and openness of activities in this Council Working Group and to involve all available expertise, including for **exchange of eco-responsible practices** in the various digital segments.

ANNEX 2

**Statement of the Russian Federation**

* The Russian Federation notes the ongoing process of fragmentation of the Internet and the degradation of the common digital space and expresses its concern at the lack of a substantive discussion on the issue of maintaining the unified global network and the lack of practical steps to prevent fragmentation of the Internet.
* The Russian Federation considers it necessary to organize the governance of the Internet in the form of an open democratic process, which is based on the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, focused on the needs of people, protecting their rights and freedoms, including ensuring the personal information security.
* The Russian Federation calls for the transformation of the existing Internet governance system in order to exclude the influence of any unilateral political restrictions or commercial interests on it and ensure the safety, integrity, continuity, stability, sustainability and security of the global critical infrastructure.
* The Russian Federation recognizes the need for further cooperation at the national, regional and international levels to resolve issue mentioned above and is open to constructive dialogue and the development of practical solutions to prevent the complete fragmentation of the Internet and encourages Member States to actively participate in such a dialogue within the ITU.
* The Russian Federation considers it important to continue the work of the CWG-Internet in the next period in accordance with Resolution 102 of the Plenipotentiary Conference.

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1. [World Economic Forum](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/why-digitalization-is-the-key-to-exponential-climate-action/), 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/destination-earth> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-green-digital-coalition> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [The real climate and transformative impact of ICT:](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666389921001884?via%3Dihub) A critique of estimates, trends, and regulations, Science Direct, Volume 2, Issue 9, 10 September 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Commission’s communication “Shaping Europe’s Digital Future”, February 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)