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|  | **Document CWG-Internet-19/7** |
| **12 March 2024** |
| **English only** |
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| Contribution by the Chair of CWG-Internet | |
| REPORT OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING OF THE  COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL INTERNET-RELATED PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES (CWG-INTERNET) | |
| **Purpose**  This is the report of the nineteenth meeting of CWG-Internet, held on 31 January – 1 February 2024.  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy issues is invited to **approve** this report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [CWG-Internet website](https://www.itu.int/en/council/cwg-internet/Pages/default.aspx) | |

1. **Introduction**

**1.1.** The nineteenth meeting of the CWG-Internet was held on 31 January and 1 February 2024.

**1.2** Mr. Mario Maniewicz, Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau, welcomed participants to the nineteenth meeting of CWG-Internet. He highlighted the upcoming significant milestones at the UN, including discussions on Our Common Agenda, the Global Digital Compact, and the Summit of the Future in 2024, followed by the 20-year review of WSIS in 2025, stressing the opportunity they provide to assess progress and foster cooperation among stakeholders. The Director encouraged members to leverage the rich repository of stakeholder perspectives gathered through the open consultations in their engagement with these different processes and invited them to attend the WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event that is being held alongside the AI for Good Summit in May 2024 in Geneva.

**1.3** The Chair thanked the BR Director for his presence and support for the meeting. He emphasized the importance of reaching an agreement on a topic for open consultation and urged members to engage in the deliberations of the meeting with a spirit of consensus and collaboration.

**2.** **CWG-Internet-19/1 (Rev. 1): Agenda of the meeting**

The Chair presented the Agenda (CWG-Internet-19/1 (Rev. 1)). The Agenda was adopted.

**3.** [**CWG-Internet-19/2**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-RCLINTPOL19-C-0002/en)**: Secretariat report on ITU Internet Activities: Resolutions 101, 102, 133, 180 and 206**

**3.1** This report summarizes ITU’s activities related to Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) Resolution 101 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), “Internet Protocol-based networks”; Resolution 102 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), “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. Bucharest, 2022), “Roles of administrations of Member States in the management of Internationalized (multilingual) domain names”; Resolution 180 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022), “Promoting deployment of Internet Protocol version 6” and Resolution 206 (Dubai, 2018), “OTTs”.

**3.2** One member enquired whether the Internet activities reports presented to the Group will also be submitted to the WSIS High-Level Forum in May 2024 or to upcoming UN processes and events such as the Global Digital Compact, Summit of the Future and the Internet Governance Forum.

**3.3** A member requested for more information regarding ITU’s activities on PP Res. 133 (Bucharest, Rev. 2022) while another member emphasized the need for more information regarding ITU’s activities on cybersecurity.

**3.4** A member commended the capacity development activities that are set out in the Report, as well as the efforts made by ITU to continue to collaborate with other organizations such as IGF and ICANN.

**3.5** The Chair asked the Secretariat to take the comments into consideration in preparation of future versions of the Report. The Group noted the Internet Activities Report.

**4. Introduction/Discussion of Contributions**

The Chair invited each of the contributors (in the order listed in the Agenda) to briefly present their proposals to the Group. The CWG examined the various contributions, 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:

**4.1** [**CWG-Internet-19/3**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-RCLINTPOL19-C-0003/en)**: Contribution by Chair, CWG-Internet**

**4.1.1 Summary**

This contribution presents the draft report of the eighteenth meeting of CWG-Internet, held on 18 October 2023. The Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy issues is invited to approve this report.

**4.1.2 Discussions**

The Chair presented the draft report of the eighteenth meeting of CWG-Internet. The meeting report was approved.

**4.2** [**CWG-Internet-19/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-RCLINTPOL19-C-0004/en)**: Contribution by India**

**4.2.1 Summary**

Multilingualism on the internet has become a pivotal aspect of our interconnected world, reflecting the diverse linguistic tapestry of global communication. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, accommodating multiple languages has become imperative for fostering inclusivity, breaking down linguistic barriers, and ensuring equitable access to information.

The internet serves as a melting pot of cultures and languages, where users from different corners of the globe can connect, share ideas, and collaborate. Multilingualism facilitates cross-cultural communication, allowing individuals to express themselves in their native languages and engage in meaningful conversations. Social media platforms, online forums, and communication apps have adapted by providing multilingual support, enabling users to navigate content in their preferred language.

Search engines have also played a crucial role in promoting multilingualism, offering results in various languages and enhancing the discoverability of diverse content. Machine translation technologies have seen significant advancements, enabling automatic translation of web pages and breaking down language barriers in real-time communication.

However, challenges such as ensuring accurate translations, preserving cultural nuances, and addressing linguistic biases persist. Efforts to enhance multilingualism on the internet must prioritize linguistic diversity, technological innovation, and cultural sensitivity to create a truly inclusive digital space where people from different linguistic backgrounds can participate and contribute. The ongoing evolution of multilingualism on the internet reflects a commitment to building a more interconnected and accessible global community. Therefore it is quintessential to include multilinguism in internet as a priority area.

**4.2.2 Discussions**

Members welcomed the contribution, noting that it is well aligned with the other two contributions submitted to the meeting as well. The contribution was noted.

**4.3 CWG-Internet-19/5: Multi-country Contribution by Saudi Arabia , Algeria , Bahrain , China , Cuba , Egypt , Kuwait , Morocco , Russian Federation , South Africa , Tunisia , Uganda , United Arab Emirates**

**4.3.1 Summary**

For the next open consultation, the Council Working Group was invited to consider the topic: “The developmental aspects of the Internet to strengthen the resilience of the Internet”

The Document clarifies the importance of the developmental aspects of the Internet and the major role it plays in the development of societies and economies around the world. focusing on Internet resources, connectivity, security, Capacity building and international public policy issues. A well-developed and affordable ICT infrastructure is deemed crucial for accelerating social and economic progress. The importance of internationalized domain names (IDNs) to accommodate linguistic diversity is underscored, along with challenges in IPv6 deployment such as investment, skills shortages, governance, security, and sustainability.

Despite global progress in ICT connectivity, digital divides persist, both between countries and genders. The text notes that 67% of the world's population (5.4 billion people) is using the internet, leaving 2.6 billion people offline, particularly in least developed and landlocked countries. The need for affordable access is highlighted, and satellite communication is proposed as a complementary solution for rapid deployment, especially in disaster-stricken areas.

Addressing the expanding cyber threat landscape, the document emphasizes the challenges faced by developing countries in adopting affordable tools and infrastructure for securing internet access and digital services. Cybercrime is identified as a growing problem, requiring attention at national and international levels. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, particularly through International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), is seen as imperative for enhancing cybersecurity.

Capacity building is deemed to bridge the internet resource management gap, requiring strategic planning, long-term investment, and inter-state exchanges.Top of Form

The following questions were proposed in the Document:

* How to utilize the WSIS+20 review process and the ongoing global digital compact (GDC) negotiations to address aspects related to Internet development, particularly in the areas of Internet resources, connectivity, security, and international public policy issues?
* What are the good practices to incentivize governments and other stakeholders to invest more in internet infrastructure, including IPv6, IDNs, and satellite communication, towards improving the affordability and accessibility of the Internet?
* What are the key challenges and opportunities in building a resilient and secure internet? And what will be the ways and tools that can be used to mitigate cybercrime risks?
* What could governments and other stakeholders do more to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population?
* How can governments and policymakers in developing countries create a more favorable policy environment for sustainable development of internet resources, in order to strengthen cooperation? Additionally, how can we promote international cooperation on public policy issues that are focused on promoting the developmental aspects of the internet, such as capacity building?

**4.3.2 Discussions**

Some members supported this contribution noting that it draws from the topics set out in Council Res. 1305 (Mod. 2019) and contains several important aspects on which stakeholder inputs would be useful.

Some members were of the opinion that the scope of the contribution may be too broad for the purpose of the open consultation and suggested that a narrower focused topic may be more preferable.

**4.4** [**CWG-Internet-19/6**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-RCLINTPOL19-C-0006/en)**: Contribution by UK**

**4.4.1 Summary**

The UK introduced their proposal for a Public Consultation on Universal Acceptance of both e-mail addresses and domain names. They explained that their proposal had been influenced  through the discussion which took place on a similar proposal which the UK had submitted for the last Council Working Group in October 2023.  The UK thanked those countries which had worked with the UK at that meeting and subsequently in improving their proposal, including China.

In proposing a public consultation on Universal Acceptance, the UK explained the significant opportunities there were for a truly global multilingual Internet where all users could choose what languages or scripts they could use to identify themselves or the services they provided.  While Universal Acceptance is but one aspect of having universal connectivity; it is an essential one; and this the importance of enhancing understanding and appreciation of the issue which a public consultation would allow.

The UK noted that while extensive work had been taken forward by different entities and bodies; there was still significant work to do, not least by governments and businesses. Finally the UK noted they had updated the previous Paper to take account of the excellent work of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) and, not least, their initiative in organising a “UA Day”; the first one taking place in India last year.

**4.4.2 Discussions**

Members supported the importance of multilingualization of the Internet.

Some members were of the view that the topic proposed is key for most Member States and it would be of benefit to receive stakeholder inputs on it.

Some members were of the opinion that the proposed topic is focused on “Universal Acceptance” which is not mentioned in Council Res. 1305 (Mod. 2019).

**4.5 Actions**

It was agreed that two topics would be selected by the Group for the next two consultation cycles. Informal consultations were carried out and several proposals were discussed by the meeting.

The following topics and questions were agreed by the Group:

ITU Secretariat will launch the next round of Open Consultations (February 2024 – September 2024) on the topic:

*The developmental aspects to strengthen the Internet*

1. *How relevant multilateral and multi-stakeholder processes, including but not limited to UN-based processes such as Summit of the Future, WSIS+20 and the IGF, could address aspects related to Internet development?*
2. *What are the challenges and opportunities, good practices and favourable policy environments to strengthen the Internet, including in areas such as:*

* *fostering meaningful connectivity*
* *equitable access for all*
* *promoting a secure and resilient Internet*
* *achieving universal access*
* *the deployment of IPv6*
* *using satellite communication to reach remote and underserved remote areas*
* *ensuring services are affordable for people*
* *promoting digital inclusion and skills*
* *fostering multi-stakeholder participation and*
* *encouraging public and private sector investment in Internet infrastructure.*

1. *How can we promote international multistakeholder cooperation on public policy issues that are focused on promoting the development aspects of the Internet?*

ITU Secretariat will launch a subsequent round of Open Consultations (October 2024 – January 2025), on the topic:

*The role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet (after next cluster of CWGs:*

1. *What could ITU and its members and other stakeholders do to ensure that the Internet becomes more multilingual in nature and thus accessible for more of the global population?*
2. *What are the benefits and challenges of multilingualization of the Internet, including through universal acceptance of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), or the lack thereof, in terms of technical, economic, security, cultural and capacity-building?*

**5 Presentation of Chair’s Report**

The report of the nineteenth 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>).

**6 Any other business**

The Group thanked the Chair and Secretariat for their effective organization and management of the Group.

**7 Closing of the Meeting**

In closing, the Chair thanked all the ITU Member States who made contributions and participated in the work of the Group (including those who participated remotely), the Vice-Chairs, the ITU Elected Officials and the Secretariat for their efficient assistance during the meeting.

Mr. Wojciech Berezowski **(Poland), Chair, CWG-Internet**