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| IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TUNIS AGENDA FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND FURTHER STEPS TO IMPROVE INTERNET GOVERNANCE | |
| **Purpose**  The purpose of this contribution is to facilitate discussions within the Council Working Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues (CWG-Internet) regarding the implementation of the Tunis Agenda’s provisions on Internet governance. It aims to address challenges concerning the reliability and stability of the global Internet, while gathering feedback, considerations, and proposals from Member States on how to overcome these issues. This includes mitigating risks to critical infrastructure system operators and exploring ways to improve the international Internet governance system. Additionally, the contribution seeks to expand the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) role in Internet governance, strengthen the role of states in ensuring the Internet's integrity, sustainability, and stability, and encourage the development of appropriate regulatory legal frameworks to support these objectives.  **Action required**  CWG-Internet is invited to **consider** the proposals contained in the contribution and **decide** on initiating a discussion regarding the progress of implementing the objectives outlined in the Tunis Agenda on international Internet governance. This discussion would also address further steps to enhance Internet governance, with a particular focus on the internationalization of the Internet governance system.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [*Tunis Agenda for the Information Society*](https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/6rev1.html)*;* [*Resolution 1305 of the ITU Council*](https://www.itu.int/md/S19-CL-C-0136/en) | |

# 1 General Information

Internet regulation is an emerging area of global politics, whose significance grows each year as the number of users, and the commercial, political, and cultural potential of the worldwide Internet expands. At the same time, new geopolitical challenges and conflicts are also arising.

The Internet, as a complex and diverse macrosystem, connects a vast number of interlinked information networks, service platforms, and data repositories, spread across various jurisdictions worldwide. This development has led to the creation of a global, supranational information space, making the Internet a key factor in the evolving global political landscape.

Given the increasing influence of digital technologies, Internet governance should receive as much attention as critical issues like climate change or energy security.

We consider that Internet governance should be organized through an open, democratic process grounded in universally recognized principles and international law, with a focus on serving the needs of people and protecting their rights and freedoms, particularly in terms of personal information security. The management of global critical infrastructure should be neutral, equitable, and shielded from geopolitical pressures. However, the current Internet governance system fails to meet these criteria. We believes that the existing model for managing critical Internet resources is insufficient and that governments should take a more active role in the process.

# 2 Rationale

The pivotal event in the development of the Internet governance system was the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). During its Tunis phase, two key documents were adopted by consensus: the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society. Of particular importance were the 53 paragraphs of the Tunis Agenda dedicated to Internet governance, which outlined general agreements and affirmed that all governments should have an equal role and responsibility in Internet governance, especially concerning information security and network stability. The Tunis Agenda also emphasized the existence of numerous cross-cutting international public policy issues that require attention and are not adequately addressed by the current mechanisms. It called for further institutionalization of the Internet governance system, advocating for the equal participation of all stakeholders, including governments, alongside the technical community, businesses, civil society, and academia. The multi-stakeholder approach was recommended for implementation at all levels, wherever possible.

However, the past nineteen years have exposed significant and unresolved contradictions within the international Internet governance framework that existed at the time of the Tunis meeting, and these challenges remain today. These issues have been further exacerbated by new geopolitical challenges. Despite the endorsement of a multi-stakeholder model, governments have largely been excluded from international Internet governance processes. In fact, a practical international Internet governance system is still absent. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) serves as a discussion platform but lacks the mandate to issue recommendations and/or final decisions, and thus cannot be considered a political platform for effective Internet governance. Notably, it does not even have a dedicated government track for discussing issues of international public policy. Similarly, meetings organized by ICANN or regional Internet registries (RIRs) focus on practical, operational matters. Within the UN, there is no distinct political platform designed for discussing and making decisions on international Internet governance. Furthermore, the dedicated WG of the ITU Council has been stalled for years, failing to consider state policies or prepare any meaningful recommendations. Tunis Agenda repeatedly stress the need for the involvement of all stakeholders in Internet governance, according to their roles and responsibilities. Yet, in the nineteen years since 2005, no progress has been made in defining or formalizing these roles and responsibilities. This leads to a critical question: through what mechanisms and frameworks can States meaningfully participate in Internet governance, and in which international document are their roles and responsibilities outlined? To date, legal relations concerning the Internet remain largely unregulated at the international level, and no universal international legal treaty exists to address Internet governance issues comprehensively.

Internet governance system should be designed to prevent unilateral political restrictions or commercial interests from influencing it, while ensuring global security, integrity, continuity, stability, sustainability, and protection of critical infrastructure. Furthermore, this system should be equitable, granting all Member States equal rights. However, with many key issues in Internet governance left unresolved, dangerous precedents have emerged, threatening the principles of unity and inclusiveness of the Internet. One such example is the ICANN New gTLD Program, where direct control over certain processes is exercised by a single national Administration. The Applicant Support Program explicitly states that "Applicant agrees to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those economic, financial, and trade restrictions imposed, administered or enforced by the U.S. government, including but not limited to those administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury ("Economic Sanctions")". This effectively undermines the principles of equal participation in Internet governance, allowing the decisions of one national Administration to potentially limit or affect the availability of Internet services in other countries. While the Internet's importance and scale have multiplied, its governance system remains rooted in the structures of the 1990s.

Also emphasizes that, as stated in the Tunis Agenda, Internet governance includes more than Internet naming and addressing. It also encompasses critical public policy areas such as the management of key Internet resources, Internet safety and security, as well as development and usage-related issues.

The role of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in their follow-up and review processes, is outlined in Resolution 140 of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (Rev. Bucharest, 2022).

CWG-Internet is required to identify, study and develop matters related to international Internet-related public policy issues. Resolution 1305 of the ITU Council specifies the issues of public policy for CWG-Internet, contains the issue "The security, safety, continuity, sustainability and robustness of the Internet".

Given this, CWG-Internet stands as the suitable political and intergovernmental platform for addressing international public policy issues concerning the Internet. It offers a forum for the exchange of opinions, best practices, and preparation for work on other specialized platforms, ensuring the international community can work collectively on these challenges.

# 3 Proposal

The transnational nature of the Internet necessitates international regulation. In this context, under the theme "The security, safety, continuity, sustainability and robustness of the Internet", it is proposed that:

1 CWG-Internet conducts a discussion during the 20th meeting on the existing Internet governance model. This includes analyzing the implementation of the provisions of the Tunis Agenda related to Internet governance, as well as assessing the challenges to the reliability and stability of the global Internet.

2 Member States present their perspectives on the risks associated with the current Internet governance model at the 20th meeting of CWG-Internet.

3 At the 20th meeting, Member States should also share their insights on potential solutions for overcoming existing challenges, mitigating risks to the operation of critical infrastructure systems, and offer proposals for organizing an international Internet governance system.

4 The Secretariat summarizes the considerations, comments, and views of Member States presented at the 20th CWG-Internet meeting. These findings should be further studied during the intersessional period. If necessary, recommendations will be prepared for the ITU Council at the 21st CWG-Internet meeting. This work should focus on improving the Internet governance system, expanding the competence of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the field of Internet governance, and strengthening the role of Member States in ensuring the Internet's continuity, robustness, and stability. The development of relevant regulatory legal frameworks for these purposes should continue, including through work at other specialized platforms.

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