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| Contribution by the United States of America | |
| COMMON THEMES OF OPEN CONSULTATION ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS | |
| **Purpose**  With thanks to the many contributors to the Open Consultation of the CWG-Internet on “The developmental aspects to strengthen the Internet,” this contribution seeks to provide a summary of common themes that emerged in the written contributions. This document is intended to guide discussions on the value of public open consultations held by the Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues.  **Action required**  The Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues is invited to **note** this document for discussion. | |

The United States thanks the Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues (CWG-Internet) for holding a public open consultation, the ITU Secretariat for coordinating the process, and the many contributors to the open consultation. We are pleased to see the active participation in this process by a wide range of stakeholders, and we encourage all Member States to review the many valuable contributions made.

In our review of the written contributions, we identified several common themes. These themes will be discussed at length on 3 October during the physical public open consultation, but we also encourage the Member States to acknowledge the value of this process and the importance of these themes during the 4 October twentieth meeting of the CWG-Internet.

Common themes

**The importance and success of the multistakeholder system of Internet governance:** Many of the contributions echoed the importance of the Internet itself, its vast capacity to change lives, drive innovation, and enable sustainable economic growth. The successes of the Internet, including its ability to scale and evolve over the past decades, are the direct result of the multistakeholder system and inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making processes, according to many of the contributions. The importance of including and consulting with the technical community to understand the potential impact of policies related to the Internet was especially emphasized. A key element of the multistakeholder system is its ability to place all participants on equal footing, a fact that was repeated across many of the contributions. Higher quality outcomes emerge from the multistakeholder system, and multistakeholder processes generate buy-in for those outcomes across the Internet community. Many of the contributions emphasized that it is crucial to leverage and strengthen existing multistakeholder processes and structures, including through ongoing multilateral and multi-stakeholder processes such as the UN’s September 2024 Summit of the Future, the WSIS+20 review, and the IGF.

**Ideas to enable meaningful multistakeholder systems and processes:** A very valuable outcome of the open consultation is the wealth of ideas for how to improve multistakeholder participation and enable meaningful engagement by all stakeholders. A wide range of good practices for multistakeholder participation are outlined, including several references to the [Sao Paulo Guidelines for multistakeholder collaboration](https://netmundial.br/pdf/NETmundial10-MultistakeholderStatement-2024.pdf) adopted at the NetMundial+10 conference in 2024. Other proposed ideas were:

– Supplying financial support to enable participation by LDCs, SIDs, and LLDCs in multistakeholder processes.

– Using ISOC’s Internet-Impact Assessment Toolkit.

– Ensuring multistakeholder processes are consistently inclusive at all levels, accountable and transparent.

– Allocating experts and ensuring wide participation of stakeholders with different backgrounds.

– Organizing regional meetings or online open houses to lower barriers to participation.

– Offering free education resources (RIPE NCC Academy, for example) to close the technical skills gap and raise the quality of inputs into multistakeholder processes.

– Calling on the ITU to support multistakeholder mechanisms and deploy them where possible.

**The Internet’s benefits have not been equally distributed, and more work is needed:** Several contributions focused on the pervasive digital divide and the importance of including marginalized groups in global digital governance efforts. To that end, contributions noted the importance of enhancing knowledge sharing and ensuring inclusive multistakeholder platforms that enable marginalized or underrepresented groups to articulate their needs and influence outcomes. The need for community-centered connectivity initiatives, especially to address rural areas, was raised by a number of contributions. While some contributors expressed an interest in accelerating work to prevent online harms, other contributions cautioned against disproportionate interventions at the technical level of the Internet where changes could have unintended or far-reaching implications, including for human rights.

**Crucial role of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF):** One of the most common refrains across the contributions was the crucial mechanism the IGF plays as a pioneering example and an enabler of bottom-up discussions among all stakeholders. There were calls to focus WSIS+20 engagement on extending the mandate of the IGF and its associated regional and national initiatives. There was broad recognition of the IGF’s unique convening role as a central asset to be leveraged in addressing developmental aspects of the Internet. The IGF has played a role in building community, improving technical knowledge, bringing in the youth perspective, and illustrating the value of a forum where stakeholders participate on equal footing. According to several contributions, the IGF exemplifies a multistakeholder process and enables policies reflective of the diverse needs of the global community. There was a suggestion that the continuous nature of the IGF also allows ongoing dialogue that enables stakeholders to hold each other accountable to commitments made across both multilateral and multistakeholder processes.

**Promoting Internet Multilingualism:** The United States was also pleased to see discussion of Internet multilingualism raised across multiple contributions. Internationalized Domain Names and Universal Acceptance represent an example of a technical solution that emerged from the multistakeholder system of Internet governance. Progress toward Internet multilingualism reflects the value of multistakeholder processes. The topic of Internet multilingualism provides a strong example of an issue that will require cooperation between all stakeholders. One contribution also highlighted the many challenges ahead on this topic, including the work that remains to ensure the world’s many non-ASCII scripts and languages (i.e., those that do not use A-Z) can be used to navigate the Internet.

Next steps on Internet multilingualism

During IGF2024 in December, the United States is co-organizing an Open Forum on the steps governments are taking to implement Universal Acceptance and build a multilingual Internet. We invite all CWG-Internet participants to join us there. We also look forward to the CWG‑Internet's next open consultation on “the role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the Internet” that will take place October 2024 through January 2025.

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