UK STATEMENT FOR ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATIONS/ICT POLICY FORUM

GENEVA, 14 MAY 2013

Thank you very much, Chair, for the opportunity as Head of the United Kingdom delegation to make a short statement.

WTPF 13 is an important global forum for discussing and exchanging views and information on a range of important issues relating to international Internet public policy. We appreciate very much the work by the Secretary General in preparing his report and the ITU Secretariat in convening this Forum.

In addition to my colleagues from my ministry, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the UK delegation at this Forum comprises stakeholders from the private sector, our technical community, the UK's independent regulator, Ofcom, and from civil society. That is highly appropriate in view of the issues we are going to discuss. We need the diverse community of experts to be present here to ensure that our discussions are fully informed. The Forum would not succeed without their contributions and I am especially pleased to see here today high level representation from ICANN, the Regional Internet Registries, the Internet Society and other key bodies.

I also want to commend the Informal Experts Group for all its hard work in preparing the Opinions which will provide the basis for our discussions. The UK Government representative on the IEG was pleased to work alongside so many policy experts from across the world in developing these Opinions.

We are grateful to Petko Kantchev for chairing the IEG. This kind of process with such a wide and diverse group is not always easy - but the multi-stakeholder composition of the IEG was essential to ensure that the Opinions would be coherent, well-founded and supported by all stakeholder communities in developed and developing economies. The UK fully supports

the Opinions and hopes that the Forum after due consideration will proceed to endorse them.

Furthermore, the WTPF is being held at a critically important time with the WSIS plus 10 review process now under way. The UK Government looks forward to contributing actively to all the milestone events of the Review.

The ITU has an important role to play - in coordination with other international organisations active in managing and developing the Internet's infrastructure.

We can expect the discussions this week relating to fostering an enabling environment for greater broadband connectivity, to underscore the ITU's pivotal role, firstly, in developing the infrastructure that will ensure the benefits of the global information economy are fully realised by all states; and secondly in fostering competitive, well-regulated telecommunications markets.

I have emphasised the importance of engaging all stakeholders in this process. The contributions of stakeholders from business, civil society, government policymakers and parliamentarians, the technical community, the next generation of users and innovators, will be vitally important for ensuring that the Internet continues to serve the best interests of all communities.

As the Tunis Agenda from the World Summit on the Information Society makes clear, the development and expansion of the Internet is essentially market-led and has been driven by both private and government initiatives. This is essential for ensuring the Internet remains a driver for economic growth and freedom of expression.

Governments and inter-governmental organisations must come together with industry, the technical community, civil society and academia, to ensure that the opportunities and challenges created by the global information economy, are addressed in such a way that

preserves the Internet's openness, dynamism and innovation that has created so many opportunities for our citizens.

As the Secretary-General's Report states, the multi-stakeholder model was recognised by the WSIS as the global model for Internet governance. This paved the way for the establishment of the annual Internet Governance Forum – the IGF – which will be convened for the 8th time in Bali in October. The UK fully supports the IGF and its progress in building on success and enhancing its impact in promoting and sharing best practice and technology solutions. We look to the IGF discussions with expert participation, to help define the key issues, be they opportunities for capacity building and contributing to economic growth and development – or addressing challenges like the transition to IPv6 – or problems like spam and their impact on network efficiency and the welfare of Internet users.

Furthermore, we have seen the multi-stakeholder model translated at the national and regional level with the proliferation of national and regional IGFs, and in the emergence of new government policy-making frameworks which directly involve the private sector, the technical community, academia and civil society. We very much welcome this trend. The UK was one of the first countries to establish a national IGF and for developing our contributions for the WSIS plus 10 review, the UK government has set up a multi-stakeholder advisory group – members of which are here as partners in our UK delegation.

The Internet emerged rapidly as a unique global phenomenon that brings together peoples, enhances economic and social welfare, creates greater efficiencies in the delivery of government functions and services, and promotes individual cultures and diversity. However, the landscape of Internet governance is a complex one with several key organisations with distinct but sometimes overlapping roles all contributing to the Internet's evolution and expansion. It is essential given this complexity that all stakeholders – including governments and international organisations - foster an environment of cooperation.

This was envisaged by the WSIS in 2005 and the UK believes that this necessary spirit of open cooperation is firmly embedded in many of the programmes, initiatives and projects which the key Internet players undertake.

As the WSIS plus 10 review progresses, it is timely to take stock of all this activity and undertake some analysis of the overall direction. The UK supports, therefore, the Working Group on Enhanced cooperation which the Commission on Science and Technology for Development - the CSTD - has established in order to undertake this vital work of mapping activities, analysing areas of successful cooperation and determining if there are gaps or opportunities for improving and ensuring closer cooperation.

The discussions here in Geneva this week therefore provide a valuable opportunity for governments, international organisations and experts from stakeholder communities to discuss these issues based on the vital preparatory work of the multi-stakeholder IEG. Our delegation looks forward to participating in these discussions and contributing to the exchanges of information and ideas based on the Opinions.

Thank you very much.