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Switzerland

Switzerland's comments on the WGIG report on internet governance

Switzerland welcomes the report drawn up by the working group.

It considers that this represents a solid basis for discussion of the continuation of the work.

Switzerland appreciates the “multistakeholder” approach which is recommended in this report.

It notes that there is a will to find a solution to the question of internationalisation of internet governance. This will have to be implemented without prejudicing the internet system, notably in terms of its stability, continuity and security.

The numerous problems rightly raised in the report demand solutions which have been subjected to mature reflection. It will not be possible to solve all these at the Tunis Summit in November 2005.

The establishment of a forum as proposed by the group constitutes a first stage in facilitating dialogue, examining the fundamental issues and ensuring liaison between the different partners, in particular with intergovernmental bodies. However, as far as the “public policy” questions are concerned, we think that all the possibilities offered by the existing institutions should be exploited before setting up new bodies, which can involve a long and costly process. The international organisations in the UN system certainly have a role to play here, all the more so as these organisations have already initiated work on these topics. The Tunis summit should be able to provide clear orientations on these questions.

We have taken note of the report's proposals concerning the allocation of roles and responsibilities among the various parties involved.

In these recommendations we appreciate the highlighting of the principles of transparency, of participation open to all the parties involved and of fostering the capacity building in the developing countries.

The question of simple and effective multilateral oversight concerning the “public policy issues” aspects is important in our view; the summit in Tunis should provide clear indications on the path to be taken.

We are also concerned about connection charges for the developing countries and hope that solutions can be found: these should be oriented towards public-private partnerships.

In another context, we support the initiatives which are intended to preserve freedom of expression and the protection of privacy. We are of the opinion that greater consideration should be given to consumer protection in the very distinct cross-border context of information society services on the internet.

Finally, we are not forgetting the different cultural approaches in the world and consider that the solutions which will be adopted in future should take this aspect into account. We believe that it is necessary to encourage the creation of local content, which is a very important element for the developing countries, as well as multilingualism.

On the basis of these few orientations, we are ready to contribute to the search for a solution which is acceptable to all.