

Internet Governance Forum

Hyderabad, India

Opening Ceremony

3 December 2008

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>>MARKUS KUMMER: I am now honored to ask Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram to address the audience on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

>>MR. JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Kummer.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, on behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to express my condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

I ask all of you to stand up and commemorate the victims.

Please be seated. Thank you very much.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of who you are with us in Hyderabad today in solidarity with the people and government of India. I am delighted to be here with you in Hyderabad. My deep thanks go to the government of India for hosting the third meeting of the Internet Governance Forum.

India is a very appropriate venue for this meeting. In the words of the undersecretary-General for economic and social affairs, India provides a practical example of how tremendous economic growth can be achieved through harnessing the tools which the Internet has placed at our disposal. Here, in India's silicon plateau, we see it firsthand, how well the savvy application of information and communication technologies has accelerated the nation's development.

The Internet has become the backbone of our globalized world. Today some 1.5 billion people, a little over half of -- over a fifth of humanity, use the Internet.

That total has grown by half a billion people since the IGF held its first meeting in Athens two years ago.

Since the year 2000, the total number of Internet users has grown at an annual rate of nearly 15%, and that growth has been accelerating.

The Internet is transforming our lives and so it behooves us all to take an interest in how it is run and managed. That is very much the spirit of the Internet Governance Forum, created by the World Summit on the Information Society in the year 2005 with an initial mandate of five years.

The forum brings together all major stakeholder groups -- governments, the private sector, civil society, and the academic and technical communities -- to debate on an equal footing Internet governance and related public-policy issues, exchange information, as well as share good practices.

The IGF is not a new organization or agency, and rather than being a decision-making body, the IGF is a space, a platform, for frank and enlightened debate. The forum provides a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to foster innovative dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations.

The forum shapes and informs the decision-making processes of other institutions and governments and prepares the ground for negotiations that will take place in intergovernmental as well as other forums.

The forum is a place to launch ideas, trial balloons, perhaps, that can serve as the basis of broader agreement on concrete ways and means to shape and govern the Internet. It fosters dynamic coalitions through which ideas can gather strength and support to influence policy outcomes related to the Internet. Such dynamic coalitions already include valuable initiatives on issues such as the Internet's impact on climate change, on child safety, freedom of expression, on an Internet bill of rights, access to knowledge, accessibility in remote areas, and linguistic diversity.

Around the world, multistakeholder coalitions, woven together by the Internet, have been dramatically sewing the course of political outcomes, not least of elections. The forum can certainly do the same for governance of the Internet.

The evolution of the IGF, from the first meeting held in Athens in the year 2006, to the second meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 2007, to the present meeting in Hyderabad, has shown that the IGF has become a valuable melting pot for forging a common understanding of complex Internet issues from diverse points of view.

The year 2010 will represent a turning point for the forum, when the General Assembly will decide on whether or not to extend the initial five-year mandate of the IGF, based on the review of its work as well as its achievements. It is now time to reflect on how this review process should be conducted.

The session this week on taking stock of the work of the IGF so far and suggesting the way forward will provide the first opportunity for an exchange of ideas. As a result of this consultative review process, the Secretary-General will make his recommendations to enable the General Assembly to take a decision on the IGF at its session in the year 2010.

Whatever may happen after that year and the ultimate decision on the future of the IGF belongs to the member states, it is my pleasure to announce that we already have a host country and a venue for the 2010 meeting. The 2010 meeting will take place in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania.

[Applause]

>>MR. JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM: I would like to thank the government of Lithuania for its generous offer, and at the same time, express my gratitude to the government of Azerbaijan, which has also made a bid for the 2010 meeting.

Allow me to encourage the government of Azerbaijan to make a new bid, should the IGF mandate be extended.

This year's meeting program shows once again a wide variety of events with multistakeholder involvement. The overall theme, Internet for all, points the way to the future. We are not there yet, but we are on the way to a not-too-distant future when the next billion people will have access to the Internet. Providing access alone, however, is not enough. The access needs to take into account the diversity of the world's population, the diversity of languages, but also the diversity of people of different abilities. To provide access to people with disabilities is a strong focus of this year's meeting, and rightly so. A society is evaluated by how it deals with its weakest members. That also applies to the Internet.

The dramatic growth of the Internet, whose total of worldwide users has tripled from half a billion people in the year 2000, to nearly a billion and a half people in the year 2008, must tremendous interregional and national inequalities in usage that make up the digital divide. Some 39.5% of all users are now in Asia, although the continent is home to 66% of the world's population, some 26.3% of users reside in Europe, which has 12% of the world's population. And 17% in North America, with 5% of the world's population.

However, Africa, with 14% of the world's population, has only 3.5% of its users. Clearly, the IGF has much work ahead of it in terms of suggesting further ways to bridge the digital divide, particularly through dynamic coalitions to foster an inclusive governance and evolution of the Internet.

The IGF will continue to accompany the evolution of the Internet. It will certainly provide useful counsel to decision-makers and policymakers on the further deployment and equitable development of the Internet and how best to use it, while coping with abuse as well as threats to its security.

Furthermore, the IGF will both build bridges between the various actors involved and deepen the understanding of how the Internet works and is governed.

I wish you all a productive and successful meeting, and look forward to the IGF review process.

I trust you will all engage actively in this process and let us know your views on the IGF as a worthwhile experiment in multistakeholder cooperation.

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>>MARKUS KUMMER: Thank you, Mr. Jomo Sundaram, for your statement.

The next speaker is Mr. Nitin Desai, special advisor to the Secretary-General for Internet governance and chairman of the multistakeholder Advisory Group.

Please, Mr. Desai.

>>MR. NITIN DESAI: Chairman, Mr. Raja, Minister Damodar Reddy, Assistant Secretary-General Jomo, and my friends on the dais, it's a pleasure for me to be here at this third IGF. And I would also accord the sentiments expressed by assistant Secretary-General Jomo on behalf of the U.N. condemning barbaric acts of terrorism which took place in Bombay a few days ago.

Mr. Chairman, the third IGF is a rather special event for me, because I'm here as the special advisor to the U.N., but I happen to be a national of this country, so it's a particular pleasure for me to welcome you all to Hyderabad, this wonderful city, to thank the -- my government for the efforts that it has put in, the wonderful efforts that it has put in to make this meeting a success.

Let me just repeat two points which I have been making earlier in the past for this audience.

First, that the origins of this dialogue on Internet governance do not lie in any unhappiness with the past. It is not a reflection of any unhappiness with the way in which the Internet has been managed in the past. After all, we are users and we are all fairly effective users of the Internet. We believe that it runs reasonably well.

The real challenge for Internet governance which has led to the formation of this forum is the future.

A piece of infrastructure which arose essentially as a form of cooperation between scientists is today much more than that. It is central to the economy. It is central to politics, it is central to society, with all of these social networking sites. Incidentally, I should mention that when the events happened in Bombay, the blogs and the social networking sites played a major role in keeping people informed.

It's also different in terms of where it is expanding. Much of the expansion is taking place in developing countries, taking place in countries where English is not a language of choice, where Latin is not the preferred script. And that is why I would urge you to see this more in terms of the challenges of the future.

And it's for this reason that we framed the slogan of this meeting as Internet for all. And as somebody pointed out today quite correctly, this does not mean you worry just about the next billion, because the next billion the market will take care of. That you should start worrying about the last billion, the people who you have to reach who will not be reached by the market.

And that day of reaching everybody with the Internet may come sooner than we think with the spread of mobile phone technology with the possibilities of the voice web. It's for that reason that the focus of this meeting is so much on the whole idea of this Internet of the future. What is it going to be like? What will it be like when everybody has access to the Internet? Will our present systems of managing the Internet and the governance structure, if you like, at every level, global, national, will it work?

This third IGF has learned some lessons from the earlier IGFs, the two that we had, in Athens and Rio, and some changes have been made in the way in which it has been structured. We begin each day with a series of panel discussions on the themes for the day, and then we have an afternoon of open dialogue. The open dialogue is for everybody. There are no set speakers in the open dialogue. The whole idea there is to encourage a conversation.

The Internet itself is a bottom-up process. And we must make this IGF also a process like that so that everybody who is here feels that in some form they contributed to the outcome of this meeting, not an outcome in the formal sense, but an outcome in terms of what, individually, people take away from here.

So I would urge you to participate fully. And most important of all, on the last day, we will have a session on taking stock and looking ahead.

And I would like to you participate in that and give us your candid views on how well this new structure worked.

I mention this because, in many ways, this IGF is a forum which is very different from the usual U.N. meetings. I actually do not wish to go much further in terms of taking up your time, but simply to give you a sense of what is it that we are trying to do.

In many ways, the IGF is a multistakeholder forum, multistakeholder in the sense that governments, the corporate sector, civil society, the Internet technical community, academics, researchers, all are here on an equal footing. There are no privileged participants here. The group which organizes this IGF, which I have the privilege of chairing, what we call the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, also has all of these elements represented in it. And I want to take this opportunity of thanking all of the members of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, who give of their time voluntarily in the effort, the very great effort, that goes into organizing this meeting and assisting the secretariat so ably headed by Markus Kummer.

[Applause]

>>MR. NITIN DESAI: I spoke of a multistakeholder and mentioned many stakeholders. But underlying this, essentially, this is a dialogue between two groups of people. On the one hand -- and we must face up to that reality. On the one hand, we have a group of people who feel that the present modalities of management of the Internet are working, will work, even in the future, who are afraid that any major change in the way in which these arrangements are set up would compromise the Internet in some form. And on the other hand, we have a lot of people who are dependent on the Internet for their activities, for the economic, social, political, whatever, who feel that they have to have a say in the public policy issues which affect how the Net runs in this manner. These are essentially the two groups who are in dialogue here. And the purpose of the IGF is, in fact, to get these two groups who do not normally meet in the various foras that we have to come together and listen to each other. And I think we have succeeded. I think we have succeeded in Athens and in Rio. And I believe we will succeed here also.

And that is the primary purpose of this.

My friends, you will forgive me if I continue with my running metaphor of -- which perhaps is very appropriate with this audience -- I described this sort of encounter, if you like between people in these two groups a bit like the way we arrange marriages in our country, where the boy and the girl meet. And I described the first meeting in Rio as one where it's the first meeting between the boy and the girl. They are scoping each other out, finding out whether they're really worth pursuing the dialogue further or not. And they came to the conclusion, yes.

The second meeting, in Rio, they continued the dialogue and we started talking about difficult things, like critical Internet resources. And again they found, yes, it's working. It's useful. It's constructive. And, therefore, all of these people have also turned up here for the third meeting.

But like in every meeting when we arrange a marriage, you always expect some little further progress at every session. So let's ask ourselves, what is it that the boy and the girl are going to do this time? Just hold hands? Maybe go a little bit further? But certainly the parents, who have encouraged these two to meet, are now looking for some answers. And I think we should start thinking about these answers as we move ahead.

So this is the challenge that we have for this meeting, to continue the dialogue of trust and confidence that has been engendered by this process. The forms of voluntary cooperation, which Mr. Jomo mentioned, in the form of the dynamic coalitions, the learning which takes place in the panel discussions and the workshops, and to really see that at the end of this, we go away with a sense of having gotten something out of this which will allow us as people involved, as users, as service providers, as managers of the Internet, to do our job a little bit better. This is my hope. And I look forward to the deliberations of this meeting.

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>>MARKUS KUMMER: Thank you, Mr. Desai, for your statement. The next speaker is His Excellency, Mr. Damodar Reddy, minister for IT, government of Andhra Pradesh.

>>MR. DAMODAR REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Jomo Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-general for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Andimuthu Raja, Union Cabinet Minister for Communication and Information Technology, Mr. Nitin Desai, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General for Internet Governance, Mister Jainder Singh, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, and Mr. Markus Kummer, Coordinator, IGF, and dignitaries and delegates and media, good evening.

It is, indeed, my great privilege to be with all of you in the opening ceremony of the third meeting of the Internet Governance Forum here in the pearl city of Hyderabad, from 3rd to 6th December 2008. I am glad to know that, having organized the previous two meetings of Brazil and Athens, U.N. has selected India as the host country, Hyderabad as the place of venue for holding this meeting through the ministry of information technology, government of India. I thank the Secretary-General of the U.N. for this.

It is great that 1200 delegates from over 70 member U.N. countries are in the IGF here, and I extend a warm welcome to one and all for their comfortable deliberations during these four days.

The remarkable good of information technology and Internet has transformed business, commerce, economic activities, education, health care, entertainment, and other services.

I understand the IGF during this meeting has the mandate for discussing public-policy issues relating to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability, and development of the Internet.

I hope the IGF will focus on issues like the challenge of universal and equitable access to Internet for all and for the benefits of the common man and people living in the remote, rural areas.

Andhra Pradesh is a state that provides the right climate for the growth of I.T. business and is now one of the most preferred destinations in the country. Hyderabad is a present home for many I.T., ITS, and Fortune 500 countries. The I.T. sector in our state has been performing excellently. The contribution from the state in the I.T. exports IT in the -- went from 8.62% in 2003 and 2004, to 15% in 2007/2008. In 2007/2008, the state has recorded a growth rate of 41%, with exports of over 5.2 billion U.S. dollars. The I.T. and ITS sector (inaudible) following is a Plug N' Play and (inaudible) way of working and wiring. To meet this requirement, the state government has erected the strategy of promotion of individual satellite IT townships in various places.

Keeping this in view, the state is encouraging setting up of I.T. ITS special economic zones in various parts of the state by private developments. Further, we are also planning to set up an information technology infrastructure region for promotion and growth of the I.T. clusters in a planned manner.

Though Internet is used by more than 14 billion people, the same is not accessible to 78 percent of all population at present. I therefore fully agree and endorse the theme of this forum that is "Internet for All" and the significance of the meet.

Our government is committed to improve the quality of life of the common man. By liberating IT2's which include Internet also, our government plans to use I.T. and Internet to change the face of the role. Citizens of business centers. Implemented with our government will provide multiple processes by using Internet technologies to people living in the remote areas. This forum to discuss in detail how the Internet can be of more use to the regions and the farmers in the countryside and be in effect a tool to bridge the digital divide.

I wish all the delegates, officials from United Nations and other government institutions, from countries abroad and from India a pleasant and a comfortable stay in this historical city of Hyderabad.

I'm sure all of you will enjoy the Hyderabad with its rich tradition and culture, and you will enjoy your visit here.

I wish the best for IGF to successfully conduct the discussions on the Internet for this forum.

Thank you.

[Applause]

>>MARKUS KUMMER: Thank you, Minister Reddy.

The next speaker is His Excellency Minister Andimuthu Raja, Union Cabinet Minister for Communications and Information Technology of the government of India.

>>H.E. MR. ANDIMUTHU RAJA: Good afternoon. Welcome to the Third Internet Governance Forum.

At the outset, all of us stand connected to condemn the acts of terror that happened in Mumbai.

At the outset, let me extend my hearty greetings to Mr. K.S. Jomo, the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations organization; Dr. Damodar Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh; Mr. Nitin Desai, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General for Internet; and Mr. Markus Kummer, Executive Secretary of the IGF.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to India and to this vibrant city of Hyderabad to attend this third meeting of the Internet Governance Forum.

The Internet is the most revolutionary and significant invention of recent times. It has been the most effective instrument in connecting the globe and bringing progress all around.

The government of India feels honored to host this third Internet Governance Forum, the IGF.

We are happy to welcome you all to this modern city with a rich heritage, a city now identified with technology as much as it is with culture and cuisine.

People from all over the world are here to discuss and exchange their views and experiences on policy issues relating to the Internet.

This forum, organized by the United Nations, is a continuation of the two World Summits on the Information Society, held in Geneva and Tunis, where India was an active participant. The Internet can be an effective tool for strengthening the principles and executing the commitments of the Tunis Agenda, to build up an Information Society which is inclusive, human centered, and geared to development. Internet has tremendous potential for promoting global partnership for development as advocated in the Millennium Development Goals.

I am pleased to see this large gathering of all stakeholders. In a way, it testifies to the innovative character of the Internet. It has started enhancing the quality of our day-to-day activities and communications and also reshaping our way of thinking and social behavior.

Today we are in the global knowledge society. India's software and services industry has given India a formidable brand equity in the global market. ICT is the key enabler to move forward to bring about an equitable society in the country. In India, information technology and Internet development have made remarkable progress, thanks to strong public-private partnership.

The government of India recognized that provision of world class telecommunications and I.T. infrastructure is the key to rapid economic and social development of the country. The Indian telecom sector has achieved remarkable growth in the recent past. The efforts made by the industry coupled with the proactive policies of the government has fueled the growth of the telecom sector in a big way.

Now India has become the second largest wireless network in the world after China with over 300 million mobile connections. It also has a unique distinction of being the fastest growing telecom sector in the world with an addition of over 8 million subscribers every month on a sustainable basis.

With this growth trajectory, we are poised to surpass our target of 500 million connections well before the year 2010.

We have also focused on introduction of modern tolls with an emphasis on improving rural connectivity. For our society to grow quickly and for reaping the consequent economic opportunities, the spread of broadband has also been accorded the highest priority by the government. e-education, tele-medicine, e-governance are all part of the government's vision for rural India. To achieve these objectives, we have set an ambitious target of providing 20 million broadband connections by 2010. This will include broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats, or village councils, all government higher secondary schools and coverage of all public health centers under the rural broadband project in a progressive manner.

In order to provide educational and other services and access through Internet, government of India has embarked on a national e-governance plan to make available all government services to citizens through common service centers. Under the plan, 100,000 village Internet kiosks or common service centers will be set up that will provide access to 600,000 villages. Presently, over 20,000 such centers are already in place and we expect the rest of them to be operational by the second half of 2009.

At the local government level, the services provided relate to road transport, land records, commercial taxes, employment exchanges, agriculture, civil supplies, treasuries, land registration, policy and education, while at the federal government level, they will cover areas such as insurance, central excise, national ID, pensions, e-posts, banking, passport, visa and income tax.

Government, through the National Knowledge Network, is setting up a high-speed digital broadband network with adequate capabilities and access speed to encourage sharing of resources and collaborative research. The primary objective of the proposed integrated national knowledge network is to provide gigabit range broadband connectivity to all institutions of higher learning and research in the country.

India is a multilingual and multi-script country. There is, therefore, a need to provide user friendly and cost-effective tools, applications, and content that enable access to ICT infrastructure in Indian languages.

The Department of I.T. is addressing issues relating to linguistic data resource, content creation, language processing tools and such technologies as optical character recognition, text-to-speech, speech

recognition, cross-lingual information retrieval, and machine translation in multi-lingual environment. To make available the fruits of I.T. development to the common man in all Indian languages, the department has launched a process of dedicating in phased manner the tools and fonts for public use in Indian languages. As a step in this direction, software tools and fonts for ten Indian languages -- namely, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Assamese, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, and Urdu languages were released in public domain for free use.

Information is considered a public resource, which is often collected and preserved by the government in trust for the benefit of the people. Access to information by the people not only helps in strengthening democracy by ensuring transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government but also enhances the quality of participation of the citizens in the governing process.

Without appropriate information, people cannot adequately exercise their rights as citizens or make informed choices. The Indian parliament has enacted the right to information act in 2005 with a view to making the governance more transparent and accountable to the public.

The act lays down a practical regime of right to information for citizens to ensure access to information under the control of public authorities, in order to promote transparency and accountability, in the working of every public authority. The act also stipulates the time limit within which the information sought has to be provided to an applicant with stiff penalties on individual officials for default or failure to provide the information sought.

The operational stability and security of critical information infrastructure is vital for the economic security of the country. The information technology act 2000 was enacted primarily to create an enabling environment for e-governance and to boost e-commerce in the country. The act provides a legal framework for transactions carried out electronically, creating trust in the electronic environment. The I.T. act, amendment, bill 2006 was drafted making new legislative provisions that address new types of cyber crimes, strengthen the existing legal framework and cover various other issues.

May I urge all the distinguished delegates here as well as remote participants to promote cooperation and collaboration among ourselves to realize the WSIS mission of promoting a multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent Information Society.

I have the proud privilege to declare open this August assembly of world citizens.

Thank you.

[Applause]

>>MARKUS KUMMER: Thank you, Minister Raja for your statement. This concludes the statements of the opening ceremony of the third meeting of the IGF.

>> In accordance with the tradition of the Internet Governance Forum and on behalf of the IGF participants, I would now like to invite the Minister of the host country, His Excellency Thiru Andimuthu

Raja, Union Cabinet Minister for Communications and Information Technology, to assume the chairmanship of the meeting by acclamation.

[Applause]

>>MARKUS KUMMER: This concludes the opening ceremony. We will resume in a couple of minutes to resume the opening session of the IGF meeting while we are rearranging the podium. So we request the participants to remain in the room. Thank you.