**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE -- INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM (IGF)**

**FURTHER INPUT - 3 MARCH 2006**

**GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRALIA**
_____

In response to Mr Desai's request for further views on the need for a multistakeholder group to assist the Secretary-General in convening the IGF, what the mandate of this group should be and how it should be formed, the Australian Government is pleased to offer the following comments. These comments build on our previous input on this matter and take into account subsequent contributions and discussions. Our previous comments stand except to the extent they are superseded by this document.

Need for a program committee
- An effective program committee can play an important role in ensuring the IGF is positive and productive as it needs to be if it is to earn broad and ongoing support.

Overall character of the committee
- The committee should be a group of individuals well-regarded in the Internet space and which collectively reflects the range of Internet interests and viewpoints and reflects a geographical, stakeholder and gender balance.

Structure
- A single multistakeholder body is essential to give effect to the open, transparent multistakeholder character intended for the IGF as a whole.

Functions
- Committee should provide advice to the Secretary-General and/or secretariat as appropriate on establishment and operation of the IGF.
- This advice should be organisational and operational in nature and not relate to substantive policy issues.
- Committee advice should cover such matters as appropriate forum topics or themes, approaches to themes, meeting formats, expert contributors and speakers, the use of ICTs to maximise participation, ways of maximising developing country participation and more difficult logistical issues.
- The committee would not prepare substantive inputs to the IGF itself, but would identify and invite people to do so and perhaps organise peer reviews of voluntary or invited contributions.

Size
- Preferably the committee should be kept to a manageable size, say, around, 10-15 people.

Eligibility and selection
- Members should have demonstrated expertise in Internet issues, seniority, networks they can draw upon and be well regarded by stakeholders generally.
- Given the need to appropriately balance the committee, the compositional complexities, and the likelihood that some individuals will be able to reflect a range of perspectives, the Secretary-General may need to have flexibility in selecting the committee, as was the case with the Working Group on Internet Governance.

Composition
- The committee should have the optimal mix of government, private sector, civil society, Internet community, technical community, academic and international organisation members needed to do its job effectively.
- The committee overall, however, should have a sound geographical balance.
- ISOC and the OECD should be strongly considered as committee members.
- Development-orientation can (and should) be reflected in the committee's overall membership, without rigid sub-quotas.

Committee's lifespan
- In the first instance the committee should be established for the Athens IGF on a trial basis. Prior to continuation, its effectiveness should be assessed through an open, multistakeholder consultation process. If the consensus is it has proven effective, it could then be continued with such improvements as required.
- In all events, committee members should be 'refreshed' every year or two, but reappointment as a member should be possible.

Mode of operation
- Remote participation (online or by teleconference) should be possible to maximise the range of people prepared to accept nomination on the basis they will be able to participate without travel.
- The committee should undertake open consultations on key issues as necessary.
- Committee members should use their networks to draw in external views on an informal basis as appropriate.
- For organisational purposes, the Secretary-General or the committee itself could appoint 3 co-chairs (or a chair and 2 vice-chairs), drawn from each of the key stakeholder groups.
- The default should be that 'executive' offices are rotated annually amongst the stakeholder and geographical groupings; however, reappointment should be possible if there is a strong consensus to that an incumbent warrants re-appointment.
- Decisions should be by consensus.
- Committee considerations should be fully transparent to the public. If practical, committee meetings should be open. Meeting minutes should be kept and published online promptly.
- Members should generally meet their own costs of participation.
- The committee should be supported by the IGF secretariat.
- Committee should make extensive use of online tools, including internally and for communications with external stakeholders.

------------------------------------------------