Government of Canada
Response to Questionnaire on Convening the Internet Governance Forum
Ottawa, February 6, 2006

Questionnaire on the Convening the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

1   The Tunis Agenda sets out various functions for the forum. Paragraph 72 (g) indicates that a possible outcome of its meetings could be recommendations ("where appropriate"). Paragraph 72 (l) asks the IGF to produce a report ("to publish its proceedings") as its output.

   (a)   What outcome would you expect from an IGF meeting?
   (b)   Should there be any other output apart from the report?

Canada believes the IGF is to provide a platform for policy discussion, not for the development of policy. As indicated in paragraph 72 d) of the *Tunis Agenda*, the IGF is to, "facilitate the exchange of information and best practices". Compilations of best practices and materials such as tool kits, would be appropriate outputs. Such materials can contribute to the effective development of national policies and frameworks for Internet governance and, as appropriate, to enhanced international cooperation. It is most important that the first IGF meeting produce concrete, useful outputs, rather than focussing on organizational/administrative matters. Efforts must be made to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and benefit to set the tone for the future work of the Forum.

2   The Tunis Agenda describes the IGF as "multilateral, multi-stakeholder, democratic and transparent" (para 73) and sets out many functions it should assume (see paras 72 and 77). However, it leaves open questions of participation as well as periodicity, duration and type of IGF meetings, including on-line aspects and virtual collaboration and participation. Several delegations endorsed the proposal contained in the WGIG Report, i.e. to create a Forum that should be modelled on the WGIG open consultations, where all stakeholders participated on an equal footing.

   (a)   Could the WGIG open consultations constitute a possible model for the IGF?
   (b)   How often should the Forum meet?
   (c)   How long should its meetings be?
   (d)   Should meetings be considered subject to UN rules, such as accreditation, rules of procedure or languages?
   (e)   How could the IGF make best possible use of ICTs and promote virtual interaction?

The WGIG involved all stakeholders in a democratic and transparent manner, and to that extent should constitute a model. Canada continues to strongly support this open and inclusive approach and would support the creation of a similar, very light but effective, secretariat to support the work of the IGF.

The IGF could meet once or twice a year and last for 2-3 days.

Canada considers multi-stakeholder participation crucial – as defined in the WSIS context, multistakeholder includes, "governments, business entities, civil society and inter-governmental organizations". [paragraph 73 (a), *Tunis Agenda*] For Canada, it is vital that all stakeholders be able to participate in the Internet Governance Forum as outlined in the WSIS document.

The IGF should attract the best thinkers in the topic areas it is discussing, at any particular meeting. This implies a shifting group of participants. Institutional arrangements around the IGF should be sufficiently flexible and inclusive to support this vision. During the WSIS, strict reliance on UN rules and accreditation procedures at times served to restrict participation and to exclude participants. It is our view that in a non-treaty entity such as the IGF, such strict parameters are neither desirable nor necessary. In addition, adherence to UN rules brings significant costs, an important factor as the IGF seeks to find finding for its operations.

The WGIG process successfully utilised its website, where virtual interaction allowed for greater transparency and access for a wider group of online stakeholders to participate.

3   The Tunis Agenda has a strong development focus. It raises questions related to access to the Internet (para 72(e)) as well as to developing country participation in Internet Governance mechanisms (para 72 (f)). It also emphasizes that the IGF needs "to contribute to capacity-building for Internet Governance in developing countries, drawing fully on local sources of knowledge and expertise" (para 72 (h)).

(a)   How should the IGF approach access issues ("availability and affordability of the Internet")?
(b)   Para 72 (f) indicates that special measures ought to be taken to facilitate developing country participation in the IGF itself. What should be done?
(c)   What should be the focus of capacity-building initiatives?

The IGF should not look at financing infrastructure or providing funds to address costs associated with Internet access, nor should it duplicate the discussions of access issues, such as availability and affordability, now taking place in other forums. In fact, the *Tunis Agenda* assigns specific responsibility for issues of access in paragraphs 27(c)(ii) and 50. The IGF could direct those interested to other organisations working on access issues.

Rather than starting its own work on those topics, the IGF must strive to ensure that questions such as access and developing country participation are mainstreamed into discussion of public policy issues related to the Internet. In that regard, the IGF could draw upon the expertise of existing forums to enhance policy discussion within the IGF, while taking care to avoid any duplication. The IGF should fully include participants from developing countries. Its policy discussions should be aimed at capacity-building. This would permit all countries and stakeholders to participate more effectively in existing Internet governance organizations and processes, and

enable the effective development of national policies and frameworks for Internet governance.

Effective inclusion will be one of the major challenges for the IGF, as a major effort will be required to provide sufficient resources for the effort to be effective. Thus, the IGF must pay particular attention to maximizing the use of electronic communications tools such as listservs and webcasting to ensure inclusion.

4   Para 78 (b) calls on the Secretary-General to "establish an effective and cost-efficient bureau to support the IGF, ensuring multi-stakeholder participation".

    (a)   *Does this para refer to a bureau as it is normally used in an intergovernmental context, such as the WSIS bureau?*

    (b)   *Would it be a bureau to deal with organizational issues and prepare agenda and programme of the IGF meetings?*

    (c)   *If so, how should it be composed?*

    (d)   *Alternatively, could it be a high-level senior advisory body to provide overall direction and shape to the IGF meetings?*

    (e)   *If so, how should it be composed?*

In addition to the separate creation of a secretariat function, Canada could support the formation of a high-level committee of experts, drawn from all stakeholder groups, to prepare the agenda and programme for the IGF. This should not be a "bureau" in the sense that term usually has in the UN context. Instead it should be an IGF Program Committee. The question of its composition is a difficult one. One possibility would be for the program committee to be constituted on the basis of all relevant stakeholders putting forward nominations of an appropriate number of members, perhaps four from each identified group. The Program Committee should be co-chaired by two of the stakeholder groups, at any given time, and would rotate among all stakeholder groups on an annual basis. This model would have the advantage of being self-selecting and thus representative to the satisfaction of each stakeholder group. By rotating and establishing a co-chairmanship, it would be possible to avoid dominance of any one stakeholder.

5   Para 78 (b) can also be interpreted as referring to a secretariat function.

    (a)   *Could this function be assumed by existing institutions, which could take turns in providing the secretariat for the IGF?*

    (b)   *Alternatively, is there need for an independent secretariat?*

    (c)   *If a secretariat is established,*

        (i)   *Where should it be based?*

        (ii)   *What should be its linkage to the United Nations Secretary-General?*

Canada would have reservations regarding any one UN agency or UN organization playing an exclusive lead role in providing a secretariat to the IGF. The secretariat should be independent, light and effective. Canada would welcome proposals to invite an existing non-governmental, not-for-profit organization to provide logistical support to the IGF.

Basing the Head of the Secretariat in Geneva could be beneficial, as the UN community in Geneva is well-acquainted with Internet governance issues, and a network of interested parties has been created through the WGIG process. Canada believes paragraphs 75 and 76 of the *Tunis Agenda* outline the extent of the role of the UN Secretary General, once the first meeting of the Forum has been convened.

6   Para 73 addresses aspects related to the structure of the IGF, which should be "lightweight and decentralised" and build on "existing structures of Internet governance, with special emphasis on the complementarity between all stakeholders involved in this process".

What does this mean in practice?
> *(a)   Does the decentralized structure refer to a support structure (secretariat) or the Forum itself, or both?*
> *(b)   Does it point to additional expert meetings and / or programme committees, which could report back to the IGF and help prepare its meetings? Should possible sub-structures be supported by organizations with the relevant expertise?*

Canada understands "decentralised" to refer to the Forum, itself.

Additional expert meetings and/or working committees could be formed and report back to the IGF, as required and as resources permit. Any inter-sessional work should be forward-looking and focus on developing the agenda and supporting materials, drawing on existing expertise.

Information technology should be used in support of any such efforts; virtual meetings and online correspondence would facilitate such work, particularly between annual IGF meetings.

Canada would have reservations regarding any one UN agency or UN organization playing an exclusive lead role in supporting possible sub-structures.

7   The Tunis Agenda does not elaborate on aspects related to the funding of the IGF.

How do you think the IGF should be financed?

Canada believes the IGF should be funded via voluntary contributions, welcoming contributions from all stakeholders.

8   Para 74 mentions the "proven competencies of all stakeholders in Internet governance and the need to ensure their full involvement".

What steps should be taken to identify and engage all stakeholders and what needs to be done to make best possible use of their competencies?

The tools of the information society should be used to their fullest -- both to inform on the activities of the IGF and to engage the competencies of all interested stakeholders.

9   Para 74 also encourages the Secretary-General "to examine a range of options for the convening of the Forum".

Are there any other options not addressed in the questions above? What are these options as you understand them?

Canada would welcome proposals to invite an existing, non-governmental not-for-profit organization to provide logistical support to the IGF, should they be forthcoming. In terms of issuing invitations to the IGF, the Secretary General should aim to be as inclusive as possible by, for example, issuing a general invitation to all interested parties.

10 Paragraph 72 (a) of the Tunis Agenda gives the IGF the mandate to "discuss public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet".

    (a)   What are these issues?
    (b)   Are they all the issues mentioned in the Chapter on Internet Governance in the Tunis Agenda?
    (c)   Which issues should be treated as priorities?
    (d)   Could these issues constitute a work programme for the coming years?

Canada believes that the IGF should begin its work in a positive manner by, "help[ing] to find solutions to the issues arising from the use and misuse of the Internet, of particular concern to everyday users" [paragraph 72 (k), *Tunis Agenda*]. Cyber-security issues and the challenge of SPAM, in particular, significantly impact the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet. If the IGF is successful, its outputs on these issues could contribute to a work programme for the coming years, within the appropriate organisations. Canada does not envisage the establishment of ongoing work programs for the IGF. Again, the IGF must also take care to be non-duplicative in its efforts. At least for the first few meetings, Canada believes it is essential to concentrate on issues where a positive outcome can be anticipated, rather than those known to be divisive. Again, no matter what the topic, the IGF should maintain a focus on capacity building to encourage informed participation in existing Internet governance organizations.

11 The first meeting of the Internet Governance Forum should take place "no later than 2006"

    (a)   When would be the best time for the meeting?
    (b)   What should be on its agenda?
    (c)   Should it focus on one or at the most two issues that would be dealt with in depth, or should it discuss a wide range of issues?
    (d)   How should its programme be designed (time-management plan, organizational aspects)?

Canada suggests November 2006 or later for the convening of the first IGF meeting. It should not be in conflict with other major international meetings. Of particular

relevance in this regard is the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference. There is undeniably a link between those parties interested in the ITU and those interested in Internet governance. For many, it would not be possible to prepare for both the Plenipotentiary and the first meeting of the IGF at the same time.

One issue related to cyber-security and the Internet could be identified for the first meeting. This would provide a positive focus to the policy discussion.

The IGF Secretariat should design the programme, drawing on the expertise of existing bodies.

12 Any other comments, suggestions or questions that should be addressed?

Please let us know your views on any other issues that ought to be addressed.

Canada would like to re-emphasise that the IGF is to provide a platform for policy discussion, not for the development of policy.

Special efforts should be made to make full use of the academic/scientific/technical community to be consistent with paragraphs 36 and 72(d) of the *Tunis Agenda*. This group played a very positive role during the WSIS. The IGF should endeavour to keep them engaged.