

Mr. Nitin Desai's invitation to comment asks stakeholders to reflect 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.

Government of Canada response

February 28, 2006

In addition to the separate creation of a secretariat to support the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Canada supports the formation of a high-level committee of experts, a Program Committee, drawn from all stakeholder groups. For the first meeting of the IGF, the United Nations Secretary-General should determine one or two issues to be discussed. Given the importance of the first meeting, the nature of the issues selected should be amenable to achieving a positive and productive outcome, as outlined in Canada's recent response to the IGF Consultation Questionnaire. The Program Committee would then be charged with elaborating the agenda. In Canada's view, there is no need for a "bureau" in the sense that term usually has in the UN context.

The program committee should be constituted on the basis of all relevant stakeholder groups putting forward nominations of an appropriate number of members. Canada believes that the program committee should be balanced but also light-weight.

For Canada, it is vital that all stakeholder groups be represented in the IGF Program Committee, as outlined in the WSIS documents, and consistent with the Secretary-General's approach when naming membership of the Working Group on Internet Governance. Canada notes paragraph 50 of the WSIS *Geneva Declaration of Principles*, "...the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries, involving relevant intergovernmental and international organizations and forums...", as well as paragraph 49 b), "The private sector has had and should continue to have an important role in the development of the Internet, both in the technical and economic fields;". Canada would support special efforts being made to include representatives from the academic/scientific/technical community, in order to be consistent with paragraphs 36 and 72(d) of the WSIS *Tunis Agenda*.

If government representation is based on the 5 geographic regions, with one government representative from each region, then there should be an equal number of representatives from each of the additional identified stakeholder groups.

Canada wishes to highlight the specific roles of stakeholders in relation to the Program Committee. The Program Committee should be co-chaired by two of the stakeholder groups, with governments holding only one of the chairs, at any given time. The position of government chair would rotate among the 5 geographical regions, on an annual basis. The remaining non-government chair would rotate among the other stakeholder groups, on an annual basis. Canada does not believe it appropriate for intergovernmental organisations to hold a chairmanship. Through rotation, and by establishing a co-

chairmanship, it would be possible to avoid dominance of any one stakeholder. This model would also have the advantage of being self-selecting.

To accomplish the necessary work of developing the agenda and related materials for IGF meetings, additional expert meetings and/or working committees could be formed, with the approval of the Program Committee. Such expert meetings and/or working committees could also be created by the Program Committee, as required and as resources permit, but should not become permanent structures. Any inter-sessional work should be forward-looking and focus on developing the agenda and supporting materials, drawing on existing expertise.