

## **Preliminary Reaction to the Questionnaire on the Convening of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**

**Source: ITU Secretariat, 6 February 2006**

This document presents a preliminary reaction of the ITU Secretariat to the Questionnaire on the Convening of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF). Considering the short time frame for replies to the questionnaire, this document is a Secretariat document and does not necessarily reflect the views of either the ITU or of its members.

The questions contained in the Questionnaire are indented and shown in *italics*, the replies are not indented and in normal font.

*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?*

The IGF’s first focus should be on (1) developing a clearer understanding of the primary role of the IGF (which, inferring from paragraphs 77 and 72(a)-(g), suggests an exchange information role), (2) the development and/or adoption of rules of procedures to support this role of the IGF and (3) the development and/or adoption of rules of procedures which reinforce its neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding relationship with other organizations. See also response under (b) below.

*(b) Should there be any other output apart from the report?*

Yes. Since paragraph 71(c) says that the IGF’s mandate is to “interface with appropriate inter-governmental organizations and other institutions on matters under their purview”, the IGF should (1) send liaison statements requesting inputs from IGOs and other institutions and (2) report back, via liaisons statements, to those IGOs and other institutions with respect to the IGF’s work.

*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?*

Open consultations are an important part of facilitating discourse on topics under consideration by the IGF. However, these consultations represent just one component of the necessary development and/or adoption of rules of procedures for the IGF to be able to efficiently function.

In this regard, Paragraph 78(a) of the Tunis Declaration states that, in the context of the IGF, the UN Secretary-General should “draw upon any appropriate resources from all interested stakeholders, including the proven expertise of ITU, as demonstrated during the WSIS process”.

Consideration could be given to the notion that the WSIS rules of procedures themselves could be considered as the starting point for the IGF processes and procedures, and that the proven expertise of ITU should be drawn upon.

*(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?*

For b) and c), no comment. With regard to d), see response above with regard to 2 (a). e) suggests the IGF should adopt online internet-based tools that facilitate remote participation.

*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”)?*

Paragraph 77 of the Tunis Agenda states that the IGF “would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, but would involve them and take advantage of their expertise. It would be constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process”.

A number of organizations have extensive agendas related to ICTs that the IGF might wish to consider. For example, ITU has extensive programs and initiatives, and conduct extensive studies, related to the availability and affordability of certain aspects of the Internet. The IGF should not attempt to duplicate work in those areas. In this context, please see two documents input to the ITU Council Working Group on WSIS by, respectively, the Directors of BDT and TSB, which outline ITU activities related to the WSIS output documents:

- [http://www.itu.int/council/wsis/Working\\_Group\\_on\\_WSIS/Feb-2006/docs/D06-DAP1.1.1-C-0017!!MSW-E.doc](http://www.itu.int/council/wsis/Working_Group_on_WSIS/Feb-2006/docs/D06-DAP1.1.1-C-0017!!MSW-E.doc)
- [http://www.itu.int/council/wsis/Working\\_Group\\_on\\_WSIS/Feb-2006/docs/Council%20WG%20on%20WSIS-TSB.doc](http://www.itu.int/council/wsis/Working_Group_on_WSIS/Feb-2006/docs/Council%20WG%20on%20WSIS-TSB.doc)

*(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?*

A number of organizations have extensive development agendas related to ICTs that it would be impossible for the IGF to duplicate. For example, ITU has extensive programs and initiatives related to capacity building as described in the reference above. The participation of developing country representatives in meetings of the IGF would be facilitated by adoption of the recommendation in 73 c) that “IGF meetings, in principle, may be held in parallel with major relevant UN conferences, *inter alia*, to use logistical support”.

*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?

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

No comments as to an interpretation of “bureau” although a secretariat function is required and intersects with the functions described in (b) above. Again, reference to paragraph 78(a) suggests that WSIS may provide an appropriate model for the secretariat. Note that this statement is not intended to pre-judge the decision of which body or bodies should provide institutional support for the secretariat.

- (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?

See comments above.

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?

Many relevant issues are identified, and discussed, in the ITU publication “A Handbook on Internet Protocol (IP)-Based Networks and Related Topics and Issues”, available in six languages at:

- <http://www.itu.int/ITU-T/special-projects/ip-policy/final/index.html>
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