

Internet Governance Forum Input Statement of the Multistakeholder Modalities Working Group (MMWG)

28 February 2006

Dear Mr. Kummer,

The Multistakeholder Modalities Working Group (MMWG) is a discussion group that was initiated by members of the WSIS civil society Internet Governance Caucus, with a mandate:

- a. to develop and propose generalizable modalities for the conduct of post-WSIS multistakeholder follow-up and implementation activities, including in the field of Internet governance;
- b. and facilitate discussion and interaction among individuals from governments, private sector and civil society on these matters.

The MMWG would like to offer the following input into the preparations of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in accordance with your request for comments following the 16-17 February 2006 Consultations on the Establishment of the IGF:

1. The MMWG strongly believe that the IGF should be an ongoing process of dialogue, analysis, and capacity building in which the annual events are embedded, rather than be restricted to the annual events alone. As the WGIG report has stated, there is “a vacuum” in the global discussion process with regard to Internet governance, and this cannot be filled solely by a three or four day meeting held once per year.

2. The institutional framework for the IGF should be developed on a bottom up basis with the full and equal participation of governments, private sector and civil society. In this context we note paragraph 72 d of the Tunis Agenda and strongly support the full inclusion of the academic, scientific and technical communities in all aspects of the IGF. Formal institutional arrangements typical of other United Nations activities should be kept to the minimum required to make the IGF a success. We oppose the establishment of potentially “heavy” top-down structures like a “Bureau” or a “Council”, as these could bureaucratize the IGF process and reduce its flexibility and efficiency. The development and operation of any such arrangements should be fully compliant with the WSIS principles.

3. Members of the MMG believe that a lightweight Programme Committee would be sufficient to kick-start the process. In light of the experiences gained in the preparatory process it might prove advisable, at a later stage, to consider whether an additional body would be needed to facilitate the process of discussion and the interaction among stakeholders between the annual forums.

4. The composition of the “Programme Committee”, like any other body that may emerge from the IGF process, should reflect the multistakeholder nature of the Internet Governance. It must also reflect the principle of geographical, cultural, linguistic and gender balance as well as human rights and developmental perspectives. The MMWG proposes that the IGF starts with a small “Programme Committee” representing all stakeholders on an equal footing. Programme Committee members should participate on an equal, peer-level basis. It may be advisable to consider whether the Programme Committee should be replenished with new members on an annual basis. If so, the Committee and the Secretariat could devise a procedure for this task, to be approved by the annual meeting.

5. Acting in close consultation with the IGF Secretariat and individual experts, the Programme Committee should publish as soon as possible a “Call for Proposals” (CFP) soliciting input on priority issues to be considered at the first annual meeting in Greece. The Programme Committee should establish transparent procedures for the consideration of these inputs, as well as criteria for the selection of topics, speakers, and so on. The Committee would then be responsible for making the final decision on these matters in accordance with the agreed procedures and criteria.

6. The Programme Committee should facilitate the bottom up formation of “Discussion Groups on Internet Governance” (DGIGs) on various aspects of Internet governance, in particular with regard to the issues listed in Section V of the WGIG Report. The Programme Committee should establish transparent procedures and criteria for the formation and recognition of any of such groups or initiatives stakeholders may wish to organize on relevant topics. All stakeholders should be able to propose groups on a bottom-up basis. Any such groups should be open to all stakeholders that may wish to participate, transparent, and based primarily on virtual collaboration. They could engage in a range of activities, e.g. inclusive dialogue, monitoring and

analysis of trends, conducting studies, and developing recommendations for action. Furthermore the Program Committee should also define transparent procedures and criteria according to which such groups could propose any results of their activities as possible inputs for consideration in the annual meetings.

7. The MMWG will continue its discussion with regard to the second call of the IGF Secretariat related to content and substantial issues. We will provide another input before the dateline of March, 30, 2006.

Jacqueline Morris, MMWG Co-Chair
Wolfgang Kleinwächter, MMWG Co-Chair