

# Council Working Group on international Internet-related public policy issues

Third meeting – Geneva, 11-12 November 2013

---



**Document WG-Internet-3/7-E**  
**5 November 2013**  
**English only**

## **Saudi Arabia**

### **CONTRIBUTION ON THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTS IN INTERNET GOVERNANCE**

The Tunis Agenda (Art. 35, 69) is very clear about the role of governments in the multi-stakeholder process of Internet governance: they have rights and responsibilities, on an equal footing, for international public policy related to the Internet, though not in day-to-day technical and operational matters. Such public policy needs to be developed in consultation with all stakeholders. The role of governments was reaffirmed most recently in UNGA Resolution 67/195.

The fact is that governments have been unable to undertake their agreed role. This is primarily due to the fact that the mechanism needed to enable this role, defined in the Tunis Agenda as “enhanced cooperation”, has never been operationalized. Enhanced cooperation has been blocked by those who either benefit from the status quo or who have some misguided belief that full engagement by all governments somehow equates to government control, while ignoring the effective unilateral control that is currently in place. Many of these entities also argue the need for an open and inclusive multi-stakeholder model, apparently forgetting that WSIS agreed that the Internet governance multi-stakeholder model comprises all stakeholders, including governments, in their respective roles as agreed in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda. This situation represents a deliberate obstruction to operationalizing international Internet governance as per the WSIS outcome and this behavior should no longer be tolerated.

Saudi Arabia encourages all governments to undertake their full responsibilities as part of the multi-stakeholder model, in all forums and processes, and we strongly encourage the CSTD Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation to develop sound recommendations on operationalization enhanced cooperation for international public policy development pertaining to the Internet. The urgency of enhanced cooperation was also reiterated in UNGA Resolution 67/195.

There is a policy vacuum in most areas of Internet governance, highlighting the need for governments to step up and perform their full role. There is absolutely no mandate and no intention to attempt international government control over the Internet. In fact, the Tunis Agenda is clear that governments have no role in technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. But there is a real need for high-level public policy guidance to help those institutions responsible for technical and operational matters to move the Internet in directions

that will benefit all members of global society. And there is a real need for better international cooperation in legal and enforcement issues related to criminal activity and other abuses of the Internet.

Recent events have also underscored how inappropriate and even dangerous it is for the world to just stand by, accepting the status quo, without taking the practical steps needed to address current issues through implementing what has been agreed in WSIS. This will not be achieved unless enhanced cooperation is operationalized, through an intergovernmental entity under the UN system.