



1st meeting – Geneva, 8-11 June 2012

Contribution from Saudi Arabia to the Council Working Group on Internet-related Public Policy Issues

Impact of Resolution 102 (mod. PP-10) and Council Resolution 1336 (2011) on the Council Working Group and open consultations with stakeholders

1. Background

PP-10 recognized the importance of the work of the Dedicated Group on International Internet-related Public Policy Issues. Resolution 102 (mod. PP-10, Guadalajara) instructed the Council “to revise its appropriate resolutions to make the Dedicated Group into a Council Working Group (CWG), limited to Member States, with open consultation to all stakeholders.”

Council Resolution 1336 (2011) made the Dedicated Group a Council Working Group, autonomous from WG-WSIS and no longer an integral part of it. The Terms of Reference of the CWG include: “as appropriate...initiate and conduct open consultations with all stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner; and the output of the open consultations will be presented for consideration in the deliberations of the Council Working Group.”

Resolution 1336 also recognized “that the goal and intent of open consultations is to bring in unique perspectives that various stakeholder groups may have on aspects of certain topics, bearing in mind the sovereign right of states on public policy issues.”

Council Resolution 1305 (2009) recognized a number of Internet-related public policy issues which are within the scope of ITU.

2. WSIS statements related to public policy and stakeholders

§ 35 of the Tunis Agenda recognizes that policy authority for Internet-related public policy issues is the sovereign right of states. This is the reason that Resolution 75 (WTSA-08), Resolution 102 (mod. PP-10) and Council Resolution 1336 (2011) limit the Dedicated Group/Council Working Group to Member States. Other stakeholders are defined in §§ 35-36 as the private sector, civil society, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations, and the academic and technical communities. § 68 recognizes the need for development of public policy by governments in consultation with all stakeholders.

3. Some alternatives regarding open consultation

With respect to the workings of the CWG, it is important to facilitate the widest possible representation from governments in the spirit of WSIS. Some alternatives for increasing representation in the CWG include the following:

- Send a notice to all Member States approximately three months before each meeting encouraging their participation and/or written contributions;
- Encourage less developed regions to nominate regional representatives;
- Subsidize the attendance of representatives from less developed countries and regions via applicable ITU or UN funds;
- Arrange for remote participation capability when requested by less developed countries or regions.

Consultation with stakeholders should be managed in a manner that facilitates wide representation but with reasonable interaction with the activities of the CWG. This might be accomplished, for example, by:

- limiting consultation to those entities recognized by WSIS as stakeholders (since in their respective roles they represent all segments of the general population and all expert contributors in the field of Internet-related public policy);
- Ensuring that the CWG initiates the consultations with stakeholders and that inputs to the CWG are not random.

There are two key stages in the consideration of an issue at which consultation with stakeholders is commonly held. The first is a request for general input in the early stage of an issue under consideration. The second is a request for comments on a relatively mature proposed statement of policy. The most common method of engaging in open consultation at each of these stages is via written contributions as this reaches the widest group of stakeholders and provides a complete record.

4. Proposal

It is proposed that the General Secretariat conduct a feasibility study and prepare specific recommendations, for the next meeting of the CWG, regarding implementation of alternatives for increasing government representation in the CWG and how to encourage other stakeholders to submit their written contributions during open consultation. The feasibility study would focus on how the written contributions would be analyzed and summarized in a fair and balanced manner and in such a way as for consideration by the CWG in its deliberations.