

Opening Speech

Dawit Bekele

Internet Society

Dear Mr. Mahmoud El-Gowini, advisor to the Minister of Communication and Information Technology distinguished ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure for me to be here in Egypt to address you at the INET conference. We believe that this INET will have a great contribution in the preparations of the Internet Governance Forum that will take place in Sharm El Sheik next November.

This INET is the successor of the legendary INETs that formed the first internet technologists around the world in general and in Africa in particular. Those technologists were instrumental in bringing the Internet to their countries and insure its development. We are proud that AfNOG which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year and the other regional Network Operating groups have followed on the footprints of the INETs and have created hundreds of network experts that form the backbones of the Internet throughout the world.

The Internet Society (ISOC) is a nonprofit organisation founded in 1992 to provide leadership in Internet related standards, education, and policy. With offices near Washington DC, USA, and Geneva, Switzerland, it is dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution and use of the Internet for the benefit of people throughout the world.

The Internet Society acts not only as a global clearinghouse for Internet information and education but also as a facilitator and coordinator of Internet-related initiatives around the world. For over 15 years ISOC has run international network training programs for developing countries and these have played a vital role in setting up the Internet connections and networks in virtually every country connecting to the Internet during this time.

The Internet Society has more than 80 organisational, more than 28,000 individual members and over 80 chapters around the world. ISOC has also created regional bureaus to better serve the regional Internet community. In the last three years, ISOC

established three regional bureaus: one for Latin America and Caribbean another for Africa and a third for South and Southeast Asia.

The Internet society has been very active in Africa and in Egypt. Africa has been among the first continents to benefit from the educational activities of the Internet Society. Many African countries also established local chapters. There are currently 19 chapters many of whom are making significant contribution for the development of Internet in their countries.

Egypt was among the early adopts of Internet Society. The Egyptian chapter of Internet society was among the most successful. It was instrumental in making Egypt one of the first African countries to get connected to the Internet. Many of those who led the chapter have also led the ICT sector in Egypt. One of the shining examples is of course H.E. Dr. Tarek Kamel, minister of Communication and Information Technology who was chair of ISOC Egypt and a member of the board of ISOC.

ISOC Egypt is not as active as it used to be and we are looking forward to see its revival. We are encouraged by the interest shown by young Egyptians who are inspired by what ISOC Egypt has done in the past and who want to revive it to use it to tackle today's challenges of the Internet.

Before finishing my speech, I would like to thank our co-organizers and partners, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology without whom this meeting could not happen. Our special thanks goes to Nermine El Saadany and Christine Arida and their teams that have worked tirelessly for months to insure the success of this meeting. I would also like to thank the many distinguished speakers who have accepted to come a long way to contribute to this meeting.

Finally, I wish you all a very successful day.