

# OECD Ministerial meeting Internet Technical Community Forum

Multistakeholder cooperation or new  
models of global governance

Seoul

16 June 2008

Markus Kummer  
Executive Coordinator  
Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)  
<http://www.intgovforum.org/>

# The Internet as a bone of contention

- WSIS put a new issue on the agenda of international cooperation: the Internet.
- Recognition of the importance of the Internet as backbone of globalization.
- Clash between the Internet community and governments.
- Two visions of the world:
  - Bottom-up distributed cooperation vs.
  - Classical intergovernmental cooperation.

# WSIS Principles

- The management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic.
- Open to interpretation: what does it mean?
- Traditional IGO cooperation vs. bottom-up multistakeholder co-operation?

# A government takeover?

- WSIS seen by many as an attempt by governments to take over the Internet.
  - This did not happen: WSIS gave existing institutions good marks.
  - WSIS adopted a new model of multi-stakeholder cooperation for policy dialogue: the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).
- => A major shift in international cooperation: governments accepted other stakeholders as equals.

# An Internet takeover?

- Are governments learning from the Internet community?
- Are governments adapting to new forms of economic and social organization and decision-making?
- Governments recognize the need to cooperate with other players: they cannot do the job alone!

# Preliminary Synthesis: multistakeholder cooperation

Multistakeholder cooperation between:

- Governments
- Intergovernmental organizations
- Internet institutions
- Private Sector
- Civil Society
- Academic and Technical Communities

# Working with other stakeholders

- Governments need to work with other stakeholders to tackle global problems:
  - climate change, HIV/aids, food crisis etc.
- Governments are increasingly keen to interact with other stakeholders – OECD Ministerial, IGF.

# The Internet Governance Forum as an experiment

- Based on 'soft governance' approach.
- IGF has no decision-making power.
- IGF has the power of recognition:
  - can identify issues of concern;
  - can draw attention to an issue;
  - can put an issue on the agenda of international cooperation.
- Can shape public opinion and decision making.

# Roles of stakeholders

- Different roles for different stakeholders.
- Governments are the 'decision makers', but...
- ...decisions need to be based on solid understanding of issues.
- Need for dialogue between technical community and governments.
- Governments need to signal issues of concern.
- Technical community needs to advise on feasibility and consequences of envisaged solutions.

# National vs. international policies

- Much of the discussions deal with international factors.
- However: National policies are equally important.
- Enabling environment at national level is a key factor in all policy areas.
- Enabling environment is also key factor for development and deployment of Internet.

# Policy coherence and coordination

Need for policy coherence at all levels:

- International
- Regional
- National

=> International coordination needs to build on coordination at the national and regional levels.

=> Coordination needs the involvement of all stakeholders at all levels.

# The Internet model

- Can governments learn from the Internet and the Internet community?
- The Internet as a decentralized network has the intelligence at the edges.
- The Internet maximizes users' capacity to create and adapt.
- The Internet community's open, distributed and bottom-up decision-making processes point towards new governance models.

# The broader picture

- The discussion on Internet governance is also to be seen in a broader context.
- The Internet is part of 'our common future' and linked to sustainable development.
- The Internet contributes to the problem, but can also be part of the solution.

# Towards 'networked governance'

- Internet favours participatory forms of governance (= 'good governance').
- The Internet can be an enabler for 'networked governance', or new forms of economic and social organization and decision-making.\*
- 'Networked governance' needed to adapt to climate change and to achieve sustainable development.
- Internet-enabled creative capacity will be key to coping with emerging global problems.

---

\* Don MacLean, International Institute for Sustainable Development