Internet Society (ISOC)

INTERNET SOCIETY CONTRIBUTION TO THE ITU WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2017

Priority area:	-	Other proposals

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GENERAL MATTERS

Introduction

The Internet Society (ISOC), a Sector Member of the International Telecommunication Union Development Sector (ITU-D), is pleased to submit this contribution to the Seventh ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-17). The Internet Society is committed to making the Internet available to everyone, everywhere. For twenty-five years, we have worked collaboratively with our global community and diverse stakeholders across the globe to advance Internet growth and promote its open development, evolution, and use for the benefit of all people. Experience has taught us that the challenges for enabling access for Internet growth are complex and interrelated. A "one-size-fits-all" or a 'go-it-alone' approach are not the most effective ways to address some of the toughest development challenges nor to ensure success of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We look forward to participating in WTDC-17 to set the priorities for the work of the Sector for the next four years.

Internet Development Progress

The Internet development landscape has changed substantially since WTDC-2014, particularly in developing countries where Internet growth rates have been on a steady incline as the number of Internet users and households with Internet access increased.[1] Despite this progress, 3.9 billion people are still without an Internet connection. Wide gaps persist in Internet access between developed and developing countries. For example, while Internet adoption has increased in developing countries, only 43 percent of households have Internet access compared with 85 percent of households in developed countries.[2] The development efforts thus far have failed to deliver sufficient progress to reduce the gap between those that have access to an Internet connection and those that don't. The "have nots" represent nearly half of the world's population and are disproportionately located in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Furthermore, the disparaties in Internet access are more prevalent amongst marginalized groups that are predominantly in rural, and remote unserved and underserved areas. Failure to address the digital divide not only deprives a generation of the opportunity to improve their quality of life but undermines the achievement of the SDGs. It is well documented that ICTs and the Internet are enablers of socio-economic development. Therefore, connecting the unconnected is critical to achieving many of the goals set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ISOC Priorities at WTDC 2017

Connecting the unconnected requires action beyond the status quo in order to make progress towards a more globally connected world that enables participation and innovation. For well over two decades, the Internet Society has committed its efforts to Internet development and to making sure that the Internet is available to everyone. Our experience has shown us that while the barriers to Internet connectivity may be similar across the world, each environment is unique and requires an approach that takes into consideration the specific conditions of each community. Factors such as Internet affordability, low population density, geography, lack of public infrastructure, lack of digital skills and/or lack of locally relevant content pose significant

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[1] ITU World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database, 2016

[2] ITU ICT Facts, 2017, see: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2017.pdf

challenges to Internet access and uptake, and require customized solutions.

The Internet Society's main objectives at WTDC-17 are to advance:

I.   **Community Networks as a complimentary connectivity approach:** The Internet Society encourages policymakers to consider community networks as a 3omplimentary form of connectivity, and to lift the barriers that prevent them from emerging or, for those that exist, from becoming sustainable and scalable.[3] Community networks are infrastructure that are deployed and operated by citizens to meet their own communication needs. From Nepal's remote mountain villages, rural towns in Mexico, or low income neighborhoods in New York City, community networks offer a solution to connect the unconnected.[4] With training, capacity building, equipment and tools, community networks can be built around the world to connect the unconnected. Community networks can and do provide affordable connectivity, and key policy and regulatory issues like experimental licensing, spectrum options for deployment (shared, secondary-use, TVWS), and new approaches to Universal Service Funds (USF) can help in their deployment. We are asking policy-makers and regulators to consider new approaches to promote community networks;

II.   **A Trust Framework for the Internet's development**: The Internet needs a solid foundation in trust for its full potential to be realized. An 'open and trusted Internet' is a globally, distributed, interoperable network of networks that cultivates innovation and creates opportunities for all. Its foundation lies in user trust, technologies for trust, trusted networks and a trustworthy ecosystem.[5] It offers inclusive governance, is built on sound policy principles and strives to put the interests of Internet users at the heart of decisions. All stakeholders have a positive role to play in nurturing a trusted and open Internet. We need to work together to secure core aspects of Internet infrastructure, to protect the confidentiality and integrity of the data that flows over it, and to ensure the right policies are in place to support the technologies, networks and actors that make the Internet work. We do this through collective responsibility and collaboration.[6] The Internet Society invites policymakers to use the Internet Society's policy framework[7] for an open and trusted Internet as a guide for addressing the complexities of building trust in an open environment such as the Internet. Furthermore, we encourage policymakers to support capacity building efforts to develop and increase the level of human infrastructure locally

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[3] Rey-Moreno, Carlos "Supporting the Creation and Scalability of Affordable Access Solutions: Understanding Community Networks in Africa."

[4] See, Pun, Mahabir, "Bringing Internet to Nepal's Remote, Mountainous Villages."; Also, see Pietrosemol, Ermanno, "Bringing Internet to Venezuela's Remote Regions – While Setting a World Record,"

[5] Internet Society Policy Framework for an Open and Trusted Internet, https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2016/policy-framework-for-an-open-and-trusted-internet/

[6] See, Internet Society Framework "Collaborative Security: An approach to tackling Internet Security issues ," 2015.

[7] Internet Society Policy Framework for an Open and Trusted Internet, https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2016/policy-framework-for-an-open-and-trusted-internet/

that can build, maintain and ultimately grow the networks. Internet development should include local capacity development (skills, knowledge and resources) that can secure the networks and, protect users and their data.[8]

III.   ***Innovative Approaches that drive Internet Development:*** The task of connecting the unconnected requires having a smart governance infrastructure that promotes Internet use**,** innovation and expansion. Shared knowledge and collaborative relationships are key drivers of successful Internet growth. The Multistakeholder and Enabling Environment approaches support and expand policies for Internet access and are the surest way to sustained Internet growth.

   Multistakeholder Model for Internet Growth: The Internet was developed by the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society, harnessing the shared technical expertise of a global community of equals. Much of the Internet's infrastructure is operated across borders and by diverse groups of stakeholders. To tackle the complex challenges of enabling Internet access, it is important to implement an inclusive and collaborative approach that brings government, businesses and other stakeholders to the table. By coming together, and each with an equal voice at the table, stakeholders can share ideas and lessons learned, discuss different needs and develop local solutions to the issues. The value of the Multistakeholder model and its impact on the Internet's growth and development can not be understated or undervalued. It is important that, as the Development Sector and its Members decide on new projects and activities, that the Multistakeholder approach is integrated into the work plans and activities of ITU-D to ensure that shared knowledge and collaboration continues. The multistakeholder approach should emphasize core attributes of inclusiveness, transparency, collective responsibility,accountability, effective decision making, and a distributed and interoperable governance system. Attributes that all stakeholders, whether private or public should adopt to create the conditions that are necessary to expand Internet access.[9]

   Implementing an Enabling Environment approach is critical to Internet growth: Connecting the unconnected requires a dual focus on extending Internet access to those for whom access is still not available, and those who could access the Internet, but choose not to. Connecting the unconnected is a task that requires collaborative efforts across a range of stakeholders, including private sector and civil society, among others. Policymakers, however, have an important role to play in creating an enabling environment for the Internet that promotes universal and affordable access and the

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[8] Internet Society 2017 Global Internet Report, " Paths to our digital future." Digital Divides: "New divides will emerge in the future driven by developments in technologies and networks, as well as by the lack of economic opportunity and cyber readiness. Disparities in infrastructure development, high costs of connectivity, restrictions on access, barriers to entrepreneurship, and lack of skills and resources will amplify these new divides, hampering the ability of many people to fully enjoy the economic and social benefits the Internet offers, and making some nations even more vulnerable to cyber threats" See: https://future.internetsociety.org/

[9] See, Internet Society Policy Brief, "Why the Multistakeholder Approach works," 2016.

content and services, and skills that improve people's lives.[10] Progress towards a more globally connected world can be realized by having the right set of conditions that foster an enabling environment across infrastructure, governance, and human capacity that enable Internet adoption in unconnected parts of the world. Together these sets of conditions foster an environment that supports development:

> ***Expanding Infrastructure*** should include the development of core Internet infrastructures and the creation of an environment where local content and its hosting and distribution can flourish;

> ***Fostering Skills and Entrepreneurship*** amongst citizens who can create and sustain access infrastructure, online content, and e-services is essentialfor a sustainable economy and creating jobs;

> ***Supportive Governance*** that leverages the expertise and commitment of the range of participants involved in the Internet in order to advance growth.

In conclusion, the Internet Society is pleased to participate at WTDC 2017. We look forward to working together with all participants to advance our shared goals for Internet growth. Furthermore, we look forward to providing and sharing our expertise, technical knowledge and lessons learned on various Internet development aspects.

Additional Resources/Internet Society Papers:
* Community Networks; < https://www.internetsociety.org/issues/community-networks/>
* Collaborative Security; < https://www.internetsociety.org/collaborativesecurity>
* The Challenge of Spam; < https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/spam>
* Multistakeholder Approach; < https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2016/internet-governance-why-the-multistakeholder-approach-works/>
* Policy Framework for an Open and Trusted Internet; < https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2016/policy-framework-for-an-open-and-trusted-internet/>
* Policy Framework for Enabling Internet Access; <https://www.internetsociety.org/resources/doc/2016/a-policy-framework-for-enabling-internet-access/>
* Internet Ecosystem; < https://www.internetsociety.org/who-makes-internet-work-internet-ecosystem>
* Internet Exchange Points (IXPs); < https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/ixps/>
* Internet Interconnection; < https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/internetinterconnection>
* Internet Society 2017 Global Internet Report: Paths to Our Digital Future; < https://future.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-Internet-Society-Global-Internet-Report-Paths-to-Our-Digital-Future.pdf>
* Open Internet Standards; < https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/openstandards>

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[10] See, Internet Society Policy Framework for Enabling Access; https://www.internetsociety.org/blog/2016/09/read-the-internet-societys-framework-for-access-policy-and-share-your-views/