



Comments of the Internet Systems Consortium
on the Secretary-General's Report on the Third Meeting
of the Informal Experts Group
2013-02-28

Dear ITU Deputy Secretary Zhou and IEG Chair Kantchev,

The Internet Systems Consortium chose to take part in the Secretary-General's work with the IEG to finalize the substance of the Report for the World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum, shortly before the Third IEG Meeting in Geneva convened, joining the group on the first day of the meet, February 6. Seeking to have our concerns issued as an opinion by the WTPF in May, we submitted our Opinion on Recognizing the Internet in the Information Society to the IEG that same evening.

In light of the last minute nature of our participation, we were told that our opinion was late and that the Chair would consider it. Unfortunately, the first indication that we received of the Chair's consideration – or of the IEG even receiving our submission – was in footnote 2 of the Secretary-General's Report on the Third IEG Meeting, announced by email to the members of the IEG on Feb 20th – two weeks later.

We are submitting this comment on the Secretary-General's Report on the Third IEG Meeting to note that our ability to contribute was hampered by the failure to acknowledge our submission and to note its status for the group's benefit.

Our opinion observes that the outputs of the Geneva and Tunis phases of the World Summit on the Information Society make only minimal references to the term "Internet," and that those documents as well as the Council Decision and Resolutions framing the WTPF use other terms representing broader categories or more specialized technical notions rather than the term "Internet," such as "ICTs," "telecommunications/ICTs," "IP-Based Networks," and "Next-Generation Networks."

The opinion addresses the need for the WSIS to be able to recognize the impacts that public policy decisions and particular technical systems deployed in development programs may have on the Internet, in order to assure that the Internet's advantages are not undermined or overlooked without recognizing the tradeoffs that various other technological solutions may bring. It concludes that the WSIS project must identify key characteristics of the Internet.

In expressing our concern regarding the Internet within the context of the WSIS, our Opinion directly addresses the subject areas and concerns identified by Council Decision 562 and Resolutions 101, 102 and 133 as within scope for the 2013 WTPF. Decision 562 highlights Internet-related public policy matters as of great current concern, and Resolutions 101 and 102 call for the WTPF to direct its attention to the Internet as an engine of growth in the world economy emphasizing the Internet's development and management. These framing documents emphasize enabling governments to carry out their roles and responsibilities in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet through enhanced cooperation, and the promotion of a favorable environment for interoperation between Internet and other global ICT networks.



They also direct the focus of the WTPF on the progress being made by ITU-D in use of the Internet in developing countries, on Internet access and availability for developing countries, including non-discriminatory access to and use of Internet resources, on the developing of strategies for increasing global connectivity. They note the ITU's addressing of technical and policy issues related to the Internet, including a Dedicated Group on international Internet-related public policy issues, and the preparation of a Handbook on IP-Based Networks that includes examination of the question of what the Internet is. They note the significant work being done by the ITU and other international bodies on future Internet, and the cooperation agreement in place between ITU-T, ISOC and IETF.

While we recognize that our opinion was received after the agenda for the IEG meeting had been established, and its substance might not have fit easily into the mode of approach the IEG had taken, of consolidating more than 30 opinions into 6, there was no deadline for opinions noted on the IEG web site, and we heard nothing from the Chair regarding our opinion for the next two days, as the other opinions were taken up by the group. We were thus placed in a position of being admitted to the group yet unable to participate though we had submitted our Opinion the same day we joined, while there was no word regarding our submission from the Chair, either in a revised meeting agenda, or directly to us or to the group.

In any case, the submission should have been posted to the IEG document store and noted on the site as soon as it was received, perhaps noting whether it was under consideration or how it would be handled, including that it might have been found to be inadmissible since the IEG's work would be finished at the end of the Geneva meeting from February 6-8. One week later, a number of associates and concerned onlookers submitted a letter to the Deputy Secretary and the IEG Chair asking for the status of the opinion and urging that it be posted. That email was sent the same day that the other submission noted in footnote 2 of the Report on the Third IEG Meeting, a comment from Canada on the Fourth Draft, was entered into the IEG document store.

Five days later, on February 20, we received word by email to the IEG list, that the Report on the Third IEG Meeting had been completed, wherein we found our first indication of the disposition of our opinion. At this point we discovered that our opinion had finally been entered into the IEG document store on the day before, February 19 – nearly two weeks after we had joined the IEG and provided our contribution. However, our opinion is still not noted among those received by the IEG on the WTPF site.

Whatever the sequence of events that transpired relating to our attempt to provide our perspective and insights to the group might mean, it bears stating that our ability to contribute was severely hampered by a process that did not transparently disclose the status of submissions or respond to them in a timely and forthright fashion. If the Secretary-General intends to conduct proceedings that are actually open to the contributions of stakeholders, it must be recognized that their ability to contribute constructively depends on genuine receptiveness and forthright administration of the contributions of the members taking part in the group.

Sincerely,

Paul Vixie, Chairman and Founder
Internet Systems Consortium