August 2007

ETNO Reflection Document in reply to the consultation "Preparing for the Second Meeting of the IGF"

Introduction

ETNO, the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (www.etno.be) and its 41 members from 34 countries have been working for many years on a range of policy issues associated with the information society, including Internet governance and the World Summit on Information Society process. Many ETNO member companies attended the Athens IGF, as well as the consultations afterwards for the preparation of the next IGF in Rio de Janeiro.

This document describes how telecommunications network operators view organizational and content issues and it contains suggestions for improvements for the second IGF meeting. Furthermore this document reflects standing ETNO positions on Internet governance and the IGF process as such.

General comments

ETNO and its members are looking forward to the Rio IGF and to contributing to its preparations. From the first consultation after the Athens IGF, ETNO had stressed the need that the programme and schedule (content/themes, format/framework of discussions, and timetable of the preparatory process) of the next IGF should be clarified and made available well in advance, so that debates are more productive. In this regard, ETNO welcomes the fact that the IGF Secretariat presented the first draft programme and schedule prior to the 23 May 2007 consultations in Geneva and, in light of the discussions which took place there, the revised drafts in mid June.

ETNO recognizes that good progress regarding the preparations for the Rio IGF has been achieved thus far. ETNO supports in general most of the modifications / changes to the revised draft Programme regarding the format. However, there is still room for some improvements.

As regards content, ETNO notes with concern the addition of Critical Internet Resources (CIR) as a fifth main theme and questions the added value of a separate debate on CIR, considering that there are no clear

boundaries from the other main themes which also cover issues of CIR and have not been exploited enough yet, nor is there a point of entry nor a specific framework of discussion. Yet, ETNO respects the views of many other stakeholders who want the addition of the Critical Internet Resources theme and in a spirit of good-will can accept it. However, ETNO would appreciate defining clearly the framework of the debate on CIR, bearing in mind that there will be no reopening of issues decided at WSIS, no duplication of efforts, nor unjustified and obscure challenging of work of existing Organizations.

Specific comments

Based on the revised draft programme and schedule, ETNO wishes to make the following specific comments and suggestions:

Basic Meeting Structure

➢ On **Case studies**, including examples of successful initiatives and approaches in main sessions and workshops to foster dialogue on controversial issues:

We believe that case studies etc. should be selected carefully and transparently. Case studies etc. must be "neutral" and they should not promote the views of a sole stakeholder or the views of certain stakeholders of the same interest. Case studies must be chosen on the basis of taking stock from experience and must foster discussions. ETNO would appreciate further clarifications on the selection criteria and selection process of case studies etc.

➢ On **Speed dialogue**:

We noted with content that the process of speed dialogue was dropped. ETNO would like to underline that the Athens IGF was experimental enough and that the Rio IGF has a lot of novelties (5th theme, best practice and open forums etc.), therefore it should not introduce further more, let alone with questionable effectiveness.

➢ On **Exhibition Space** on a commercial basis:

ETNO raises many concerns on this issue. We would like to clarify that we are not per se against an exhibition on a commercial basis, which could take place during the same period as the IGF. But the exhibition on a commercial basis should not be part of the official IGF. It should rather take place in parallel of the IGF, and not within it (not in the space / venue dedicated to the IGF activities). We strongly believe that there should be a separation of commercial and non commercial activities. Even if the ultimate purpose of commercial activities is to fund participation in IGF, commercial activities could harm or distort the multistakeholder nature of IGF, because they could challenge the participation on equal footing. However, it should be clear that commercial activities should not be confused with sponsorship, where sponsors should be given space within the IGF. ETNO would appreciate further clarifications.

Meeting types

➢ On **Reporting Back Sessions**:

In the Athens IGF there was "morning reporting" by the IGF Secretariat and the workshop rapporteurs, which gave a well balanced overview of what happened the day before in the main sessions and an overview of what was discussed in the workshops. Almost all recognized the importance of the "reporting back" and we are extremely pleased to see that in the Rio IGF there will be more Reporting Back Sessions. However, ETNO suggests that these sessions also include a summary of the main sessions as well. This should be done by the IGF Secretariat and could be included in a Chair's overall report.

➢ On **Thematic Workshops**:

As there will be 5 mains themes in the Rio IGF, 3 thematic workshops per theme are no longer viable. Any new theme besides the 4 Athens themes should not be treated necessarily as the first 4, but according to its nature and maturity. The Critical Internet Resources (CIR) session has been scheduled to take place on the first day (after the opening ceremony), so there is no time for thematic workshops to take place prior to it. Moreover, as it will be the first time there will be a CIR session and there is no definition of CIR, or point of entry, or suitable approach, it is most important to establish a common understanding of the framework of discussion and what we will be discussing about. Therefore, ETNO suggests that the CIR theme is treated differently than the other 4 themes and that there are no thematic workshops on CIR. However, it should be clear that open workshops on CIR could take place.

As thematic workshops link to the main sessions, for ETNO it is essential that the IGF Secretariat - with the help of the Advisory Group - takes the responsibility of their selection and has a last word on them. The organizers of the thematic workshops should be under the supervision of the IGF Secretariat. As regards workshop reporting (or results) ETNO suggests to keep the workshop template developed in Athens (who participated, what issues were discussed, what were the main points) which worked very well.

➢ On **Open Workshops**:

The principles that "open workshops do not fit easily with the main themes but are important to many of the stakeholders" and that "open workshops report back to related main sessions, where appropriate", should be kept in mind when selecting and when discussing.

➢ On **Best Practice Forums**:

It should be clear that IGF itself does not sponsor nor recommend any best practice. We strongly believe that a "Best Practice Forum" should go no further than an exchange of ideas about a practice that has worked well (or

not) and why. ETNO stresses that "Best Practice Forums" should be about lessons learned, rather than about best practice. In principle there should be a straight distinction amongst Best Practice Forums, Thematic Workshops and Main Sessions.

Format and schedule

➢ On **Taking Stock** and **Emerging issues**:

The two sessions should take place in reverse order. It makes sense to have the "Emerging Issues" session first and then the "Taking Stock and the Way Forward" session, which should consider emerging issues. ETNO would appreciate further clarifications about these two sessions, especially whether the Athens approach will be kept, or if there will be another one.

Content

ETNO supports the proposed sub-themes of the 4 Athens themes (Access, Diversity, Openness, and Security) and welcomes the two cross-cutting priorities (developmental dimension and capacity-building).

As regards the Critical Internet Resources theme, besides the general comments (see above) ETNO strongly supports the first approach (*discussing issues that relate to the framework of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet*). ETNO does not support at all the second approach (*inviting the major relevant institutions to actively participate in a discussion on topical issues related to Internet governance*) and believes that this approach is best suitable for an "Open Forum" and not for a main session.

In the absence of a CIR definition, ETNO insists that in the CIR session participants must have in advance a clear and common understanding which aspects of CIR will then be discussed. By all means, the framework of discussion should be clarified, bearing in mind that there will be no official outcomes, no reopening of issues decided in WSIS, no duplication of efforts and respect of work of existing organizations.

If the framework is clear and accepted by all, this session could act as a "scouting" one, in terms of what the landscape is, what has been done and by whom, aiming at a better understanding of CIR and boosting discussions on other relevant themes i.e. access, security. Moreover, ETNO proposes to discuss under the CIR theme issues such as DNS security, IDNs, new gTLDs, IPv4 exhaustion.

Preparatory process - Timeline

In general the preparatory process and the timetable proposed are supported by ETNO, with one exception. The deadline (August 10, 2007) for contributions for inclusion into the Rio synthesis paper was too soon. Setting a deadline before the consultations on content are over and before there is a clear picture of the themes, sub-themes and framework is quite a paradox. This could affect the quality of the synthesis paper, the validity of

which could be jeopardised. ETNO believes that there is a high risk of presenting in the synthesis paper a limited number of views by only certain parties which applied before the deadline but regardless of any decisions that followed. ETNO regrets that under these circumstances it could not present substantive contributions to be considered for the synthesis paper of the Rio IGF.