

# OECD Workshop on Multistakeholder Co-operation

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## The Debate on Internet Governance and its Contribution to Multistakeholder Co-operation

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# WSIS-I and WGIG

WSIS 2003: Clash of two visions:

- Classical intergovernmental cooperation vs. private-sector led multistakeholder arrangements.
- Compromise: WGIG.  
Mandate to “investigate and make proposals for action”.

# WGIG and multi-stakeholder cooperation

- WGIG was shaped by the Internet model: governments are not in the driving seat.
- In other areas governments are asked to share their prerogatives.
- Internet is different: governments ask for more say in running the Internet.
- WGIG: a successful model of multistakeholder cooperation – all members participated on an equal footing.
- WGIG established multistakeholder cooperation as a viable model.

# The beginning of a multi-stakeholder public policy dialogue

- WGIG open consultations brought together two worlds:
  - World of governments;
  - Internet community, private sector and civil society.
- Recognition on both sides that there is merit in talking to each other and discuss public policy issues.
- Fluid nature of “public policy issues”, e.g spam.

# The WGIG legacy

- WGIG shaped the Tunis agenda : WSIS endorsed its findings to a large extent.
- WGIG
  - placed debate in development context;
  - proposed a broad definition of Internet Governance (more than numbering and addressing; governance > governments);
  - identified a broad range of public policy issues;
  - proposed a “new space for dialogue” (“Forum”), based on the OECD model;
  - proposed further internationalization of Internet governance arrangements.

# Tunis Agenda

Recognizes that “existing arrangements (...) have worked effectively” but...

...there is room for improvement.

Two pronged decision:

- WSIS invites UNSG to “convene a new forum for multi-stakeholder policy dialogue”;
- WSIS recognizes “need for enhanced cooperation to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities”.

# Important cornerstones

Tunis Agenda recognizes:

- Academic and technical communities as a new stakeholder group.
- Importance of a multistakeholder approach at all levels – national, regional, global.
- Role of private sector and civil society as drivers of innovation in the development of the Internet.

# Outcome of WSIS-II

- All parties “equally happy”.
- Existing institutions confirmed.
- Process continues.
- Agreed texts sufficiently ambiguous to allow everybody to claim victory.

# Post WSIS-II Internet governance

- IGF could provide a space for structured policy dialogue on Internet related public policy issues.
- IGF could provide a platform for sharing best practices at national and regional levels.
- IGF could provide a neutral meeting place for all relevant institutions – IGOs and ‘Internet institutions’.
- IGF could help build trust and confidence among all Internet users.
- Open question: how to handle “enhanced cooperation”?

# The Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Emerging common ground:

- Development orientation and capacity building as overarching objectives.
- Open and inclusive format based on WGIG Consultations.
- IGF as a distributed bottom-up process drawing on input from existing institutions (such as OECD).
- Yearly meetings of 3 to 5 days duration.
- Small Secretariat to administer process.

Open questions:

- Management structure (Programme Committee)
- Substantive priorities.

# Elements for a “positive IGF agenda”:

- Key issues for future debate:
  - spam;
  - cyber crime;
  - multilingualism;
  - privacy and consumer protection;
  - interconnection fees.
- Place to take up new issues.
- Build on national and regional processes.
- Need for measures to assist developing countries to make their voices heard.

# Conclusion

- The WSIS/WGIG process firmly established the multistakeholder approach.
- WSIS was good for the Internet:
  - all actors are happy with its outcome;
  - fragmentation of the Internet is off the agenda.
- But...
  - ...debate on Internet governance is not over – it has just begun!