

## Speech at the Opening Session

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Your Excellencies, Mr Wu Hongbo, Under Secretary General, Undesa, Chairman minister Ali Abatov, Secretary Chengetai Masango, in the name of whom I wish to salute all present authorities; ladies and gentlemen:

I have been assigned the honorable task of speaking in the opening ceremony of this IGF in the name of civil society organizations, social movements and individuals active in Internet governance processes, many of them involved in these processes since the inception of WSIS nearly 10 years ago. Several of them collaborated with me in drafting the following statement.

We believe that the absence of gatekeepers and the open, global communication enabled by the Internet is crucial to realize the promise of Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To impose restrictions (legal or otherwise) to the free flow of information is and has always been contrary to the individual human right to freedom of expression.

We therefore oppose efforts to create "national Internets," or to block and filter Internet access in ways that deny individuals access to applications, content and services of their choice.

All attempts to deem certain forms of communication and information illegal and restrict or block them must follow established, transparent, due processes of law and should not involve prior restraint.

We oppose efforts to militarize the Internet, or any actions that would foster a destructive and wasteful cyber arms race among governments or private actors. We consider the covert use of exploits and malware for surveillance or attacks to be criminal regardless of whether they are deployed by governments, private corporations or organized criminals.

We are skeptical of efforts to subordinate the design and use of information and communication technology to "national security" agendas. We believe that Internet security will be achieved primarily at the operational level and that national security and military agendas often work against rather than for users' security needs.

In the processes of policy formulation, we emphasize the need to prioritize dialogue with policy makers over their subordinated law enforcement agencies.

Global governance institutions should not be restricted to states, so we welcome the additional participation in global policy making that multi-stakeholder processes provide. But we caution that multi-stakeholder participation is not an end in itself.

Opening up global governance institutions to additional voices from civil society and business does not by itself ensure that individual rights are adequately protected or that the best substantive policies are developed and enforced.

In the informal spaces created by pluralist institutions, it is possible that powerful governmental and corporate actors can make deals contrary to the interests of Internet users.

Multistakeholder processes, while involving all interest groups, must incorporate and

institutionalize concepts of due process, separation of powers and user's inalienable civil and political rights, and governmental decision-making ought to take into account the inputs of all participants of such pluralist processes.

Let us remind ourselves that participation goes beyond representation, and participation in decision-making goes beyond just debates and dialogues.

Regarding the ITR review process to be concluded in Dubai (and here I use the standard terminology the technical community defines to refer to the different components of the network):

We agree that the internet layer and the layers above it (transport layer and applications layer) should not be included in any way in the regulations, while the free flow of Internet packets should be guaranteed in the link layer, in line with network neutrality in which Internet packets are never touched by the operators providing the physical connectivity infrastructure.

Let the Internet flourish freely to the benefit of those who live at its edges, which are all of us. Thank you.