

**Statement presented by Anriette Esterhuysen of the Association for
Progressive Communications at the closing of OECD ministerial
conference on the future internet economy, 18 June 2008**

Thank you Chairperson.

I want to thank the OECD and the Government of Korea for making it possible for civil society actors to have been part of this process.

As we conclude this event I would like to share a few reflections on areas in which OECD members and developing countries can collaborate more effectively to address internet policy and/or development challenges.

- **Cooperation at the level of integrating development analysis and policy into internet policy:** In many countries policy incoherencies that impede development are built into the structures and practices of governance. Communications ministries and industry regulators do not operate within the terms of national development strategies. This issue of governance needs to be resolved as a precondition for realising the potential of the internet in development.

OECD members, and in particular the OECD-Development Assistance Committee can address this by investing in and supporting approaches that integrate internet development with social and economic development.

- **Cooperation in addressing the access gap:** The challenge of extending internet access cannot be underestimated. While access to mobile telephony in the developing world has exceeded expectations, a new divide is growing: the broadband divide. As we heard here yesterday, diffusion of high-speed bandwidth might be rapid, but it is very uneven. Moreover, what is considered "broad" in broadband today is bound to change. Without the achieving affordable and universal broadband development countries the benefit of the internet will be superficial. The winners are likely to be mobile operators rather than national economies and internet users.
- Consider the power of user-generated content and applications on the internet today, a process that is dependent on fast and affordable access, and then think of the implications of people from developing countries not being able to participate effectively in this process of shaping the internet of the future

The goal of universal and affordable broadband can be achieved through building backbone fibre, national and international, with effective regulation of non-discriminatory access to the bandwidth by operators and service providers.

- **Cooperation in capacity building:** Investing in building human capacity through ensuring affordable access to education is the only long term driver for development, not just the development of the internet economy.
- **Cooperating for a sustainable future:** Climate change and a 'green internet' are addressed in the OECD 'shaping policies report'. But, should policy guidelines on a future internet economy not go further and make an active choice to make environmental sustainability a bottom line in current and future expansion of ICT infrastructure by opting for solutions that are

sustainable, that use renewable energy resources, and that limit harmful impacts on the environment, and the people who make and use technology throughout the life cycle of IT products and services.

There are **three principles** that should underpin guidelines for all policy that relate to the internet. The internet economy, does not exist in a parallel universe, it is intertwined with national, regional and global economies, politics and society. The future of the internet economy should address social, political and economic exclusion more broadly:

Firstly, communications infrastructure should be approached and regulated so that the public interest takes precedence over specific private interests. The importance of this is recognised in OECD policy guidelines. But we should consider going further. Vint Cerf asked his panel this morning whether internet regulatory structures should be rethought. I think the answer is yes, and should be rooted in recognising that the internet has evolved into a global public good. Many policy analysts, some of them here, are making this argument. Clearly agreeing on such a principle would help policy makers and regulators everywhere to address the complexity of making public interest internet policy and regulation. It can facilitate international cooperation in, for example, addressing spam, in balancing freedom, openness and security, dealing with controversies around network neutrality, and a balanced approach to intellectual property. It can help ensure that in considering regulatory reforms to encourage convergence and next generation networks, the free and open character of today's internet is preserved.

Secondly, policy goals for the future internet economy should be considered within the broader framework of the protection and realisation of human rights, particularly assuring rights to access to knowledge, freedom of information and expression, protest and assembly, and the rights of citizens and stakeholder groups to be fully informed about policy development, nationally and globally.

Thirdly, to ensure its effectiveness and legitimacy, policy development for the future internet must be participative and inclusive. This was affirmed by the stakeholder forums that met earlier this week. As already expressed in our opening statement on Monday morning, civil society organisations involved in this process, believe that now is the appropriate time for the OECD to establish a civil society advisory committee, similar to the business industry advisory committee that can facilitate our participation on an ongoing basis. Inclusion of the diverse perspectives and sets of knowledge contained in civil society makes a concrete contribution to policy analysis and the definition of cooperative solutions to challenges, as demonstrated in other venues such as the WSIS, WIPO, and the IGF. Vint Cerf said this morning that the internet is like an eco system. I would agree with this. Participation is one element of a healthy ecosystem. The world is being transformed by the internet and people want to be a part of the processes that shapes its future.

Thank you

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