CIVIC'S COMMENTS ON THE FINAL WGIG REPORT OF 18 JULY 2005

The Caribbean ICT Virtual Community (CIVIC) welcomes the report prepared by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and is pleased to be given the opportunity of providing comments on the proposals it contains and the issues they raise.

Internet Governance mechanisms

Internet Governance mechanisms should be founded on a solid democratic, transparent and multilateral basis, with a stronger emphasis on multi-stakeholder cooperation on an equal footing, i.e. governments, the private sector, civil society and international organisations. The WGIG report implies a certain hierarchy (with governments at the top) which should be avoided, and the respective roles of the international and intergovernmental organisations within the field of Internet Governance should be clarified within the report.

Decisions on Internet Governance

All decisions taken in the scope of Internet governance should be taken with a view to encouraging development, i.e. socio-economic-cultural development, and allowing all stakeholders to contribute to the creation of a more equitable, peaceful world,

The Role of Government

Government's role in Internet Governance should be mainly focused on the principle issues of public policy, excluding any involvement in the day-to-day operations. Government's role is to create an appropriate legal and policy framework in which the provision and usage of Internet services can grow and prosper.

There are still governments and decision makers that are unaware of the WSIS process, the issues at stake and their importance. WSIS should ensure that all governments that have not yet done so provide a clear statement of their political will and commitment to the WSIS objectives and plan of action.

ICT Policy & Regulation

ICT Policy & Regulation should be about Civil Society in the widest possible sense. All standards, policies, formats and protocols should be open and transparent. Civil Society has been challenged to communicate with a collective "voice" in the past, but in this new world, communication and co-ordination have become much easier.

Stakeholder Interests

The multi-faceted nature of Civil Society and the dynamics existing in each stakeholder render the avoidance of overlapping impossible. However, different stakeholders must be able to pursue their interests. For example, ownership, content and use will be pursued differently by the (various) different stakeholders, each with their own legitimate agenda.

Governance should enable each stakeholder to pursue its interest in peaceful coexistence with the Private Sector focused on distribution of goods and services and development of technology; Government focused on regulation and policing; and Civil Society focused on social, cultural and economic empowerment and justice, improving the quality of life and creating a safety net for those who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

Accountability and Inclusion

Issues of accountability and inclusion apply to all stakeholders and are not limited to Civil Society only.

Domain Name Registries

Each country and region should have its own national domain name registry and registrar. These should apply national and international legislation in the allocation of domain names to ensure the respect of registered trade names, trademarks and related IPR issues.

The Governments have a key stake in deciding on the quality of performance of the allocated registrars, especially where the registrars are not located in the territory.

This is currently a real, immediate, and serious problem in the Caribbean region where there are some countries who are still dependent on the University of Puerto Rico, and from which it has been difficult to reclaim ownership and to implement policies.

All countries should be encouraged to take responsibility for the administrative and technical management of their country code domains.

Internet Security

A global approach to the issue of internet security and security policies must be developed.

Personal Data Protection

A global approach to the protection of personal data needs to be developed that provides a harmonisation of legislation in this field coupled with an enforceable legal system for the prosecution and sanction of crimes. See comments below on cyber crime.

SPAM

A global approach to the 'spam' problem must be developed and this should be based on legislation and cross border enforcement, and industry self-regulation, technical solutions, partnerships between governments and the Internet Community, as well as awareness-raising.

Cyber crime

International cooperation is required to define 'cyber crime' and develop a body of codified laws, applicable sanctions and legal procedures for the cross-border prosecution of offenders, appeal procedures and eventual enforcement of sanctions and compensation of victims.

CIVIC will work in collaboration with all stakeholders in the development of the Internet and will be pleased to collaborate with and contribute to the WSIS process in this respect.

Caribbean ICT Virtual Community
August 31st, 2005

This document was prepared by a CIVIC working group (Steve Foerster, Gia V. Gaspard Taylor, Lance Hinds, Yacine Khelladi, Roosevelt O King, Vidyaratha Kissoon, Josanne Leonard, Jacqueline Morris, Felipe Noguera, Mick Reid, and Deirdre Williams)

ABOUT CIVIC

The Caribbean ICT Virtual Community (CIVIC) is a permanent forum of 200+ Caribbean ICT stakeholders from all sectors: business, civil society organisations, academics, government officials, regional organisations and international agencies. It is a venue for sharing information, holding discussions, networking and linking ideas, actors, projects or initiatives on ICTs and development in the Caribbean. It also aims to contribute to the building of a common vision/perspective on ICTs, and to promote a Caribbean strategy and/or regional Caribbean-wide actions. It is a Caribbean managed and Caribbean owned virtual community and it has members in: Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago.

A "CIVIC" document has been through a participatory drafting and reviewing process and approved by the community via a collective decision mechanism encompassing all members.