Dear IGF Secretariat,

I am pleased to submit this contribution for your planning retreat on behalf of the Internet Governance Civil Society Co-ordination Group (CSCG). CSCG exists solely to ensure a coordinated civil society response and conduit when it comes to making civil society appointments to outside bodies. It comprises representatives of the coalition members of the Association for Progressive Communications, Best Bits, Internet Governance Caucus, Just Net Coalition, and Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group of ICANN. Together the reach of these groups extends to many hundreds of non-governmental organisations, as well as a much greater number of individuals.

In line with our mandate, this submission concentrates specifically on improving the nomination process and make-up of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG).

As you know, this has been the subject of some concerns with stakeholder groups, and we believe that these concerns should be addressed. In order to do this, we recommend the establishment of a small Multistakeholder Working Group, including representatives of Civil Society Coordination Group (CSCG), Internet Technical Collaboration Group (ITCG) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC/BASIS), working with UNDESA to refine procedures and resolve some of these difficulties. We feel sure that by working together we can develop procedures which improve stakeholder representation – and therefore the overall efficiency of the IGF. We commend this recommendation to you.

But in the meantime, and additionally, we refer to the recommendations of the Working Group on Improvements to the IGF, later endorsed by the UN General Assembly, which include 3 sections of relevance to this process. Our suggestions relating to these appear below.

Sect 20(a) The three non-governmental stakeholder groups should propose lists of candidates that should be balanced, including in terms of gender distribution and in reflecting the diversity of geographical distribution. This will enable a wide range of diversity within the MAG, especially those groups which have been underrepresented in the MAG, and will be sufficiently large to provide some flexibility when selecting MAG members;

In finalising representation and providing the flexibility referred to above, we understand that, in addition to balance within each stakeholder group, you wish to ensure that you achieve the best possible gender and geographic balance across stakeholder groups; of course we agree with this objective. But your process for doing this in the past has been to make final selections within UNDESA without further consultation with stakeholder groups. This can sometimes be problematic, as you cannot possibly be aware of the ramifications of some such choices within stakeholder groups.

The way other organisations have handled this is to arrange a simultaneous phone hookup with representatives of stakeholder groups to discuss such final balance issues. You will find that we actually work quite well together in such circumstances, and we believe that the results will be more acceptable to stakeholder groups if this quick final consultation is included.

Additionally, we believe you need to address the issue that certain stakeholder groups have a long history of submitting names to you dominated by male candidates: and that as a result civil society nominations are often adjusted to include more women and get better gender balance overall. That does nothing to address the problem of discrimination against women in those stakeholder groups where there is discrimination against women; it only creates a false perception of gender balance which will, if it has any effect at all, contribute to those problems not getting addressed. Furthermore, it makes it far more difficult for male candidates from civil society to be included. We suggest that you insist that each individual stakeholder group, and particularly governments, must address gender equality within their constituency.

Sect 20(b) Stakeholder groups should identify and publicize the process which works best for their own culture and methods of engagement and which will ensure their self-management;

IGF Secretariat should not run duplicative processes for stakeholder nominations (such as was the case with the nominations for this IGF Retreat). Either a centralised process (where all candidates submit via IGF, and all nominations are then provided to stakeholder groups for assessment at the closing date), or a decentralised process, where stakeholder groups run their own processes (in accordance with 20(b) above) should be run, but not both. Duplicative processes are confusing, require candidates to submit twice, and results in differing sets of candidate groups for assessment existing.

Sect 21 a) The process of selection of MAG members should be inclusive, predictable, transparent and fully documented;

In respect of this, we submit:
1. More transparency is needed. We believe that, in the interests of transparency, names and application details of all candidates for MAG selection should be publicly known. Whether this should be at the close of applications, or at the close of assessments, needs to be discussed further in the light of detailed procedures. Note: This is not a privacy issue as long as candidates are advised beforehand of this requirement.

This requirement will assist with overall assessment of candidates by stakeholder groups, as well as in identifying candidates who have applied via separate organisations. We suggest this requirement be included when stakeholder groups provide their own processes, and also if a more centralised process is run via IGF Secretariat.

2. We also suggest that recommendations from stakeholder groups to IGF Secretariat should be publicly available.

3. Stakeholder procedures for making selections should also be publicly available. (CSCG's current procedures can be found at http://www.internetgov-cs.org/procedures)

These recommendations are based on the best practice we have observed with other organisations in selecting multistakeholder representatives. We offer the above suggestions in the spirit of co-operation with you, as we also want to see the best possible representation of stakeholders. And again, we offer our services to work with you and other stakeholder groups to refine procedures to ensure more acceptable, transparent and representative results.

Sincerely,

Ian Peter – Independent Chair, Internet Governance Civil Society Coordination Group (CSCG)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the establishment of a small Multistakeholder Working Group, including representatives of Civil Society Coordination Group (CSCG), Internet Technical Collaboration Group (ITCG) and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC/BASIS), to work with UNDESA to refine procedures for MAG nominations and similar processes.

We recommend a simultaneous phone hookup with representatives of stakeholder groups to discuss final balance issues (including overall gender and geographical representation).

We recommend that you insist that each individual stakeholder group, and particularly governments, must address gender equality within their constituency.

We recommend that IGF Secretariat should not run duplicative processes for stakeholder nominations (such as was the case with the nominations for this IGF Retreat). Either a centralised process (where all candidates submit via IGF, and all nominations are then provided to stakeholder groups for assessment at the closing date), or a decentralised process, where stakeholder groups run their own processes should be run, but not both.

We recommend that in the interests of transparency, names and application details of all candidates for MAG selection should be publicly known. This requirement should also be included when stakeholder groups provide their own processes, and also if a more centralised process is run via IGF Secretariat.

Recommendations from stakeholder groups to the IGF Secretariat should be publicly available, as well as stakeholder procedures for making selections .