DYNAMIC COALITION ON INTERNET AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DCICC*)

Draft Statement (20/10/09)

Climate Change and the Internet

The Internet has undergone explosive growth in recent years and plays a critical role in all phases of economic and social activity. Increased access to ICT is a global success story; as more than 4 billion persons now have mobile phones and there are 1.5 billion Internet users.

Due to this growth, ICTs currently contribute 2-3% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and this figure is expected to rise. However, it is reliably estimated that ICTs can reduce emissions in other sectors by at least 15%, making them a significant enabling technology to combat climate change. A future high-bandwidth, lower-carbon society offers a platform for economic, social and cultural development that is sustainable. The Internet also enables the use of ICTs to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors through videoconferencing, tele-working, e- commerce, and intelligent transport systems. The Internet community is also endeavoring to mitigate its own carbon footprint through new energy-efficient data centers, servers, applications and networks, or through the use of renewable energy supplies to power the Internet infrastructure.

Bridging the Digital Divide and bringing the benefits of the Internet to all citizens is fundamental to tackling climate change. Providing equitable and affordable access to broadband connectivity to schools, rural communities, health facilities, etc. are vital to economic development and to making effective use of ICTs to combat climate change.

It is of the utmost important that policymakers and governance of the Internet at all levels, national, regional and international, take full account of the need for sustainable growth of the Internet. Every effort must be made so that the Internet evolves in a manner that respects the need to control its carbon footprint. In particular, the IGF process should highlight to a much greater extent the importance of including climate change as a key factor in any and all policies and frameworks that will shape the future growth of the Internet.

Corporate commitments by Internet companies to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions should be encouraged. Increased use of renewable energy supplies and green purchasing policies are essential parts of the solution. Global standards, including agreed methodologies to measure the impact of ICTs on climate change, can promote more energy efficient ICT products and services to drive the growth of the Internet. Current efforts to adopt and use such standards are encouraged.

E-waste from the Internet and ICTs are a growing problem. Efforts must be made to dispose Internet access devices (mobile phones, computers, etc.) and servers in an environmentally-friendly manner and to reduce and avoid the use of toxic materials. The reuse of ICTs also needs to be encouraged.

The Internet can play a key role to enable the use of ICTs to reduce GHG emissions in other sectors. It is vital to set priority areas for action, such as smart buildings and smart electric grids. Governments, the private sector and the user community each have their role to play in deploying ICTs in other sectors to maximum effect.

Given the special characteristics and needs of developing countries, urgent action must be taken to assist them to adapt to climate change. Most developing countries are only minor contributors to GHG emissions, but they are often victims of extreme weather events and other negative impacts of climate change, such as rising oceans, changes in rainfall, species migration, harm to farmers, degradation of the rainforest, melting of glaciers, and human displacement. For these countries, the Internet and ICTs can serve as a critical enabling tool to adapt to climate change, e.g. through climate monitoring and data collection, which can assist agriculture and other sectors, and in the predicting natural disasters and ensuring a rapid response when disasters strike.
The successful outcome of the pending talks on new global agreements on climate change is of critical importance. There is an urgent need in any future agreements to fully recognize the importance of the Internet and the significant contribution of ICTs in tackling climate change

All members of the DCICC pledge to promote and publicize the importance of the Internet in combating climate change to all relevant actors: governments; citizens; and business; and to establish collaborative partnerships.

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The Dynamic Coalition on Internet and Climate Change (DCICC) was launched in 2007 and presently consists of 27 Member organizations.
http://www.itu.int/themes/climate/dc/