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Statement submitted by Internet Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

In the late 1960s, a group of engineers and researchers built the foundations of a decentralized network that would foster, by its very own design, innovation, knowledge sharing and education. About 40 years since its creation, the Internet has evolved to become one of the main drivers of economic and social development, reaching more than 2 billion individuals worldwide.

The Internet enables limitless innovation: it is a general purpose technology that empowers people with the ability to innovate without having to ask for permission from a central authority. It is a space that rewards creativity and groundbreaking ideas. One of the earliest examples of this model is the creation of the World Wide Web; built on top of the Internet layer, it has enabled millions of people to share content and create new services on a shared framework. There are countless examples of new business models and e-services emerging through the Internet, creating value for service providers and consumers and driving overall growth.

The Internet enables people to share and access knowledge in unexpected ways. It is a decentralized and end-to-end architecture that empowers the edges rather than the centre of the network; not merely a technical feature, it also makes it easier for individuals to share, receive and have an impact on information and ideas across frontiers. Because it is open and global, the Internet provides virtually an unlimited source of knowledge and educational material.

Sustainable development driven by the network also requires a sustainable Internet model, one that is based on an open and collaborative approach to the development of policies, standards and technology. The Internet has grown using a bottom-up model that continues to underpin its evolution. For example, open Internet standards, such as those of the Internet Engineering Task Force, provide the foundation for ensuring that the Internet remains interoperable and functional across frontiers. This is key for enabling individuals to connect to exchange information, share cultural content and undertake economic transactions on a global scale through the Internet.

The multi-stakeholder model of Internet policy and technical development — involving Governments, civil society, the technical community and businesses working in an inclusive manner to shape the Internet's evolution — provides a key framework to leverage the network's benefits and to contribute to achieving the objectives of the global development agenda.

Over the years, the open model of the Internet has demonstrated a remarkable flexibility to change and an ability to uphold new innovations and business models. As demand for connectivity and content is growing at a fast pace in developing countries, the Internet Society is committed, at the global and regional levels, to ensuring that the network holds true to its potential for development.
