

Statement for IGC - *transcript*
David Allen
Consultation on Enhanced Cooperation
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[In response to acknowledgement by the Chair:]

Thank you Mr. Chair.

As said, I am David Allen. And today I am speaking for the Internet Governance Caucus, IGC.

A brief introduction is in order for the Internet Governance Caucus. IGC is a group of civil society actors, around the world, who have been engaged since the beginning of WSIS, going back of course about a decade now.

A small example may be helpful. As we know, the first phase of WSIS produced a Working Group on Internet Governance. Members of IGC played their part as that working group helped bring the multi-stakeholder model to – this important innovation, I might add, the multi-stakeholder model – to WSIS. We'll come back to the multi-stakeholder model, no surprise there of course.

That's by way of introduction to the IGC. Now another snippet of WSIS history sets the scene for the contribution we'd like to make to our work today on Enhanced Cooperation.

As the Chair has just noted, the point of WSIS – if I can put it this way – was to help bring the benefits particularly of the Internet to the several billion in the world who have not yet had the opportunity. Let me put it this way, that purpose was diverted significantly by a concern – and I'll use some of the code words now – concern for supervisory control over what has come to be called Critical Internet Resources.

Why is this relevant? How is it helpful in setting the scene?

First of all, it led of course to one of the paths mandated out of WSIS, namely for steps toward Enhanced Cooperation. Second of all, it would not be inaccurate to characterize some of the concerns during that time to be concerns with *unaccountable behavior*, potentially *arbitrary decisions* – the two key words being 'arbitrary' and 'accountability.'

Again, we'll come back to that. Setting the scene.

In the time frame now, five years later ... in the last few weeks we've had an episode that has starkly brought front and center a selection of the same problems that launched us into a mandate for Enhanced Cooperation, half a decade ago.

The Wikileaks episode, for goodness sake, saw the start of a cyber war! Whether those on the side of trying to stop Wikileaks and its financial sources; or whether those on the side of trying to defend Wikileaks, and freedom of expression – in both cases, it would be accurate to say their behavior was arbitrary and unaccountable. Precisely the sorts of issues that were in the air back when WSIS was diverted to what we know.

How might this be valuable?

Well fortunately, we don't have to worry about Wikileaks! We, at least in this moment – we can step away from ourselves and our own concerns for Enhanced Cooperation and perhaps use that as some sort of model, some sort of structure/framework to look at – in the end, look at ourselves.

Let me suggest the following parallels, huh?

For starters, the Wikileaks problem was a trans-border problem. No nation-state had the levers, had the full means necessary to deal with what was going on.

What is more, multi-stakeholders were very much evident in this, most especially as we've heard Bill Graham describe the work of the Internet Engineering Task Force, the technical community as it's come to be called in our world. Working through very informal means, in contrast with the great formality necessary in a State. And yet they were very important, have been very important in these matters, will be very important in these matters going forward.

So the multi-stakeholders have played a key role in this, just as they do for us in our concerns about Enhanced Cooperation. And I'll just emphasize once again the contrast between the informality of those methods and the necessary formality in for instance the actions of states.

Finally, I notice this parallel. Our concern is for democratically accountable outcomes.

If we think about what we've just seen in these last few weeks, we can see so well the challenges of – again I'll say: reaching across borders, getting democratic representation – and now I'll especially emphasize: wrapping that *in together with* the informal processes in the multi-stakeholders, who inevitably will be also at play here.

Now all I've done so far is portray problems.

Although perhaps it's useful to see, as said, when we can step back from ourselves and look at another situation.

We see there is a trans-border character that the world does not yet have a means to deal with. We see there are informal methods at play amongst multi-stakeholders. And finally we see the great challenges of getting democratic representation when all of these parties are put into the mix.

Do we have any suggestions?

Well there has been quite significant discussion at IGC about the possibilities for a – the phrase is – a Framework Convention. A convening of a discussion about frameworks whereby these things might be dealt with. A discussion that would have to find principles and then build from there.

Does that solve the problem? Of course not. It's only, as we say, one step in a journey of a thousand, or maybe 10,000, kilometers.

And yet, we have to have a place to start. And the advantage of a Framework Convention – not that we've all agreed, even in IGC it's the thing to do, but there's been a great deal of discussion about it – the advantage is that it begins to deal with one of the central problems here: that cultures are so dramatically different among all the parties here.

You have to have some locale in which you can begin to try to find commonalities amongst them.

I will commend to you the handout that I forgot to bring with me ... but because I have good friends, it got copied here anyway. And is around on this subject of Wikileaks and Enhanced Cooperation. And at the bottom of it, you'll find a link to our, of course, web presence. And in addition there is our formal statement, which of course has generously been put up on this Consultation's website.

Mr. Chair, thank you very much.