European Internet Foundation
Dinner Discussion
Follow up on Internet Governance Forum in Hyderabad
European Parliament, Brussels
20 January 2009

Keynote address by
Peter H. Hellmonds
Nokia Siemens Networks

Thank you, Mme Trautmann, Mr. Harbour.

Distinguished Members of the European Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear
Colleagues and Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to be with you here today.

I come here to you as a business speaker who has been actively engaged in shaping
the IGF from its inception during the final days of the negotiations before the WSIS in
Tunis until recently in Hyderabad. For the first two years of the IGF, I have been a
member of its Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group. And after my departure from the
MAG to make place for a more balanced composition in terms of gender and regional
balance, I continued as a MAG alumn and volunteered to organize and to participate
as panelist in the Access Main Sessions. So, I am speaking as an insider here, which
is probably why you invited me.

Critical Internet Resources

But I assume that you are also no strangers to the issues at stake in the IGF, and so
let me dig right into them, starting with the most tricky one: ICANN and the JPA, or,
more clearly: who controls the few centralized resources on the Internet, the DNS
system with its root servers, and the IP address space? We all know, currently the
US Government for historic reasons has a central role in ICANN. However, this year
the ICANN JPA is expiring and we have to decide what we want to do about it.
Should we transition away or do we need more time to decide how to transition?

For many, for example our friends from China and Brazil, this issue is at the core of
the debate, and the reason why we have the IGF in the first place. Those of you who
participated and followed the PrepCom III negotiations leading up to Tunis know what
I mean when I say that the IGF proposal helped to make sure that the WSIS in Tunis

could go ahead as planned. I vividly recall how the final dot on the closing documents was agreed upon in the last hour of the day preceding the WSIS opening.

So, the question is: have we come closer to an understanding of where this needs to go? Personally, I think we have. While there is still wide divergence in the opinions of people from different backgrounds, I believe the IGF has served as a fertile ground, opening up the minds of people to listen and engage with those who may have quite different persuasions. And sometimes we find old foes agreeing with each other in public (like Patrick Fältström with Milton Muller or the MP from the UK with the representative from the government of China). I believe that this is no quick and easy achievement, but it is owed to the nature of the open dialogue, the multistakeholder nature of the IGF, with governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical and academic community, working on an equal footing, and without the pressures and dynamics of having to come to negotiated outcomes or recommendations.

Looking at this and the other issues, where are the business interests?

On Critical Internet Resources, the business interests are aligned around the need to maintain the security and stability of the network. Noone wants to see it break apart for lack of coordinated activities in its core functions. Many business models integrate the Internet into business operations. Just think of the complex coordination of logistics and supply chains used for just-in-time production and delivery, or think of new ways for software distribution or online collaboration, or other Internet-enabled business transactions. Those business models are based on the implicit assumption that the Internet as we know it today is going to remain largely the way we know it.

That is: a highly innovative playground where innovation takes place at the edges, without central authority, with a distributed responsibility, and with multi-stakeholder input into the many processes that set standards and policies. While we are all used to adapting to an ever changing environment, one thing is clear: if this model of the Internet would change abruptly, so would many business plans and earnings projections. And surely, in this current business and financial climate, that would be the last thing we would want to happen.

IPv4 to IPv6 transition or coexistence

Then again, we cannot simply lie down and wait and do nothing. If you think about the impending depletion of the IPv4 number space, we clearly understand that something needs to be done so that we can continue to see expansion in the usage of the Internet. I'm no expert on this technical issue, but I would like to urge everyone to take this issue seriously. Unfortunately, as I understand, the solution, moving wholescale to IPv6 at once, is not a realistic one, for multiple reasons, but a smooth transition plan - which we would all prefer - may be difficult to achieve, as the time to transition between these two different numbering systems is running out. We will need to live with co-existence of two different numbering systems for a while, which is a beneficial thing if you think of the training that needs to be done for this to work smoothly.

What we need is a concerted effort, similar to what happened in Japan, to work together in introducing IPv6 now. Should we fail to do so in time – and let's all remember: the time is now! – we will face a messy transition where the growth of the Internet may be slowed down and possibly an unfavourable black market for IPv4 addresses. Both developments in themselves would disadvantage the poorer economies who have already been disadvantaged by history through a poor allocation of IPv4 address space to begin with.

Access

Moving on to Access: as a company engaged in building the access infrastructure for the Internet in many countries around the world, we also have a peculiar interest, which is the interest in seeing the Internet to expand. Our prediction is that traffic is going to increase more than 100-fold over the coming years, asking for ever bigger pipes. And we also predict that by the year 2015 there will be at least 5 billion users connected to the Internet, and that the growth will most likely be in emerging markets and developing economies. It will be driven mostly by the mobile Internet experience for the end user on the one hand, and a proliferation of backbone solutions for ISPs and TelCos on the other hand.

We are keenly aware that competition is a key enabler for such an increase, as it reduces barriers to entry into the market, and contributes to lower prices which are benefitting the consumer, the citizen. We understand that in such a situation, profits do not fall from heaven like Manna. Therefore, we develop access solutions for rural communities, bringing down the costs for deployment, and specific applications that address the needs of the users in such communities.

But there is a need to work with other stakeholders, because simply saying: "build it – and they will come" is not sufficient. To increase the usage of the Internet, we need to raise awareness, provide the right incentives for adoption, motivate users and work on increasing their capabilities. These soft factors are as important as the hard business facts and numbers when we think about increasing access to those living at the bottom of the social and income pyramid.

The IGF truly reflects this essential involvement of all relevant stakeholders in Internet governance issues, and demonstrates the understanding that no single stakeholder can do what it takes to resolve them on their own. We may be able to solve the technical challenges, and also find some innovative applications and business models suited for users in underserved rural areas. But issues of content, multilingualism, and especially those issues relating to the triad of security, privacy, and openness, cannot be solved by a single stakeholder group.

Security, Privacy, Openness

Not even governments have the panacea for all problems. For example, everyone agrees that we need to reign in the abuse of children and protect them from becoming victims of abuse, or prevent of them from having access to inappropriate content over the Internet. And we see a lot of initiatives coming up to address this issue. But whether the wholescale blocking of IP address bands is the right means to achieve those ends, and whether to oblige the ISPs to do content filtering and monitoring of user behaviour – that is an issue that ought to be hotly debated in parliaments around the world. So, while we probably all agree on the problem, I am sure we will need to look very closely at the proposed solutions. Not every solution, however good it looks in theory, will work when put into practical use. Or some

solution could work too well, even harming access to perfectly legal and sensible content.

What I saw in Hyderabad was some strange coalescence of persons from very different backgrounds all rallying behind the cry to protect children from abuse. That in itself is a laudable goal. However, any legitimate filtering technology can also be applied to other kinds of content, for example blocking access to perfectly legitimate information. Or methods to track down terrorists can be used also for tracking down dissidents or the political opposition. So, as MEPs, I would ask you to be vigilant in this respect, to protect the civil liberties that can quickly erode once the state has its hands on such technologies, supported by legislation authorizing its use. Strict safeguards protecting civil liberties will need to be put in place here.

In conclusion, Hyderabad has been a further evolution on the innovative approaches introduced in Athens. The open dialogue format has shown its true strength in the Critical Internet Resources session, which was moderated by two members of the MAG. This, in my opinion, has been particularly effective in bringing out the true story, because knowledgeable insiders moderated the session and not journalists who look for the occasional soundbite. I hope that we will continue to work together, share practices, and find common solutions to the challenges we are facing. This is our chance to show how we are doing this in a new dynamic multistakeholder framework, and that this approach will find more interested parties from Europe to get involved at the national, regional and global levels.