Contribution from the GSM Association to the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance

- Area: COMBINED INTERNET GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND ROADMAP
- Entitled by: Belinda Exelby
- Region: Global
- Organization: GSMA
- Sector: Private Sector
- Keywords: Mobile Industry
- Doc Attached: Click here to see the doc 1

Abstract

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting nearly 800 of the world?s mobile operators with 250 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, as well as organisations in many other industry sectors. The GSMA?s members will collectively continue to deliver the Internet to the next generation of mobile Internet subscribers; mobile operators alone have invested over $1 trillion USD over the last six years in developing and building out mobile internet infrastructure. As the industry that underpins and enables the growth of the Internet worldwide, the mobile industry is in a unique position to contribute to the evolution of Internet governance discussions. This paper sets out the GSMA position?s on the future of Internet governance and contains proposals for consideration in the discussions in Sao Paolo on a set of principles for Internet governance and a framework for the evolution of the Internet governance model.

Document

Contribution from the GSM Association to the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance

The GSMA appreciates the opportunity to submit a contribution to the Global Multistakeholder Meeting on the Future of Internet Governance, to be held in Sao Paolo from 23-24 April 2014.

As the global trade association for the mobile industry, the GSMA represents the community of mobile network operators, as well as members of the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies, equipment providers, Internet companies, and media and entertainment organisations, that collectively deliver the Internet and will continue to deliver the Internet to the next generation of mobile Internet subscribers. Currently there are 6.97 billion mobile connections and 3.4 billion individual subscribers covering every country on the planet. Mobile operators alone have invested over $1 trillion USD over the last six years in developing and building out mobile internet infrastructure. Clearly this industry underpins and enables the growth of the Internet worldwide *(Source: The Mobile Economy Report, GSMA Intelligence, February 2014).*

A very significant proportion of total broadband and other Internet connections are made using mobile networks, and that growth – nurtured and stimulated by competition – is accelerating. The growth of mass-market mobile connections to the Internet is important to the world for many reasons. It provides increased access to education, vital medical and governmental services, and unprecedented opportunities for new job creation. Importantly, increased mobile and Internet penetration has demonstrated a positive impact on economic growth, especially in the developing world. While mobile operators provide connectivity to end users and are the first point of contact in the customer relationship, with the advent of the 'Internet of Things', mobile networks are also helping to expand the Internet to new territories by facilitating Machine to Machine (M2M) communication through SIM-enabled devices and mobile networks.

Internet policy should encourage mobile operators to continue to invest and give them the freedom to provide innovative new networks and services that will drive the continued growth of the Internet. Competition and a light touch regulatory environment have enabled the mobile industry to innovate in access and connectivity through private sector investment and the roll-out of network infrastructure worldwide. For this to continue, the mobile and Internet ecosystems need stable and predictable regulatory regimes, based on a level-playing field for all actors and free from uncertainty at national and international levels. The output of the review must be focused on Internet governance principles and must not introduce global regulations or prescriptive recommendations that risk hampering operators' ability to invest and innovate. On this basis, the GSMA, on behalf of the mobile industry, seeks to contribute to proposals for the stable evolution of the current Internet governance model. These proposals must be carefully analysed and tested and must have consensus from the broad multistakeholder community, including the mobile industry.

Principles for Internet Governance

The mobile industry has a critical role to play in the worldwide availability and adoption of the Internet. Mobile networks will be key to ensure inclusion and to bring the benefits of the Internet to individual subscribers everywhere. The GSMA therefore contributes the following points for consideration to the discussion in Sao Paolo on a set of principles for Internet governance:

1. 1. We support the decentralised development of the Internet marked by a governance approach supporting commercial flexibility, choice and competition that foster business model diversity. This is the governance model that is best suited to the dynamic nature of the Internet.Its strength is its ability to adapt rapidly to changing technologies and user requirements. Internet access should remain market-driven and responsive to the needs of the users of the Internet. This will continue to enable the economic growth, prosperity and well-being that we see today.

2. 2. The current global nature of the Internet has brought social and economic benefit to users all around the world, and the rapid growth of the Internet has facilitated a wide variety of technological innovation in networks and infrastructure. The governance of the Internet should be underpinned by a coherent set of common principles shared by all stakeholders from different sectors in order to ensure the continuation of a global and seamless Internet that brings benefit to all.

3. 3. We support a collaborative, diverse and inclusive model for Internet governance that is open, transparent and multistakeholder. Within the multistakeholder model we believe that all relevant stakeholders – including industry, governments, the technical community, civil society and academia – have an important part to play regarding the Internet's development. We recognise that there are some Internet-related issues, such as privacy and security, where governments have an especially important role to play. In others, however, such as standards development, technical and private sector relationships are paramount. This dynamic among stakeholders allows for a better match between governance issues and governance institutions. Any evolution of the current governance model should include the principles of flexibility and agility and they should be applied so that all relevant stakeholders are represented appropriately.

4. 4. We support the ongoing internationalisation of the Internet, and of Internet governance mechanisms, including ICANN and IANA. We urge all parties to continue carefully on the path towards a multistakeholder accountability framework to ensure that changes will enhance the security, stability, resilience and interoperability of the Internet. Any evolution of Internet activities, including naming and numbering, must be resilient, secure, stable and inclusive. The current system relies on these characteristics and they

must be maintained and protected.

A framework for the evolution of the Internet governance model

The GSMA contributes the following points for consideration in the discussion in Sao Paolo on a framework for the evolution of the Internet governance model:

1. Internet governance models, in their various aspects, must remain multistakeholder and inclusive of all those who wish to participate. Issues should be resolved with due process in a clear and transparent way. The role of mobile network operators must be meaningfully taken into account in any discussions affecting the infrastructure of the Internet, given the crucial role of connectivity functions in the Internet ecosystem.

2. Legitimacy and trust in the governance model must be reinforced through an improved inclusiveness and wider geographical representation, particularly vis?à? vis developing country stakeholders.

3. An analysis of the work of existing multistakeholder mechanisms should be carried out, noting the similar activity being undertaken under the auspices of the CSTD Working Group on enhanced co-operation (CSTD-WG on EC), with a view to streamlining processes and eliminating duplication and to determine whether there is a need to change or even create new processes or institutions. Nevertheless, the current multistakeholder fora such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the IETF and ICANN should be strengthened in order to reflect the changing nature and scope of Internet governance. This framework should be capable of addressing relevant issues for which mechanisms have not yet been identified and/or developed.

4. No governance body should be seen as competing with another or duplicating processes. All processes have value in contributing to the global Internet governance debate. The long-term ambition should be to implement a framework that clarifies which governance body has the authority to act on which subject matter. The framework should clarify whether and how the interrelated activities of different governance bodies should be coordinated with one another.

5. The IGF has played a very important role in bringing together stakeholders. Its policy outcomes should be integrated into other, existing governance mechanisms. The IGF should be better funded and its role and influence expanded. Interactions between the global IGF and the regional and national IGFs should also be strengthened.

Conclusion

The mobile industry is delivering the mobile Internet at an extraordinarily fast rate to people all over the world. Mobile operators are in a unique position to contribute to the evolution of Internet governance discussions.

The mobile industry believes in an open Internet that is safe, secure, stable and interoperable. Openness is essential for innovation at the core and at the edges of mobile network Internet infrastructure. We must be able to expand our networks and innovate with new technologies and business models in order to deliver the Internet globally as the demand for mobile Internet connectivity continues to grow dramatically.

The GSMA and its members look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders to contribute to the ongoing preparations for the Sao Paolo meeting and its successful outcome.