

Comment on Zero Paper Paragraph 104

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Technicalities

This comment relates specifically to Paragraph 104 and to the topic of roles and responsibilities. While understanding roles and responsibilities remains important, confining them to “within their respective roles and responsibilities, as set out in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda” is problematic in that those roles and responsibilities, arguably insufficient twenty years ago in Tunis, are highly inappropriate today. Paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda continues to miss fundamental aspects of roles and responsibilities. In one respect, as we move into interaction among actors who are involved in both multistakeholder and multilateral processes, we see that the border line between, for example, a government actor and a civil society actor are not that well delineated, especially in those cases where the same actor has distinct roles and responsibilities in more than one stakeholder group. At the time of the Tunis Agenda, it almost made sense to talk of 3 or 4 stakeholder types, each having a distinct set of non overlapping roles and responsibilities. Now we find that roles and responsibilities are often shared by several stakeholder groups. Additionally, as processes and projects get more complicated, it turns out that role and responsibilities often change depending on the phase of a project or the circumstances of a process. Determining roles and responsibilities in 2025 is far more complicated than the view held 20 years ago.

Understanding the historical importance of the Tunis Agenda, and of this paragraph that was the focus of many extensive discussions over the years, I do not suggest removing it as a reference. Instead, I suggest modifying Paragraph 104 of the Zero Paper to read as follows:

We reaffirm the principle agreed in the Geneva Declaration of Principles that the management of the Internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders and relevant intergovernmental and international organizations, within their respective roles and responsibilities, **building on those as set out in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda, with attention to the new sets of emergent roles and responsibilities that vary depending on the phase of a process and the type of management required.**

Again, I wish to thank the co-facilitators for the degree of multistakeholder cooperation they have brought into this multilateral process.