FINAL YCIG STATEMENT - 9 DECEMBER 2015

STATEMENT OF THE YOUTH COALITION ON INTERNET GOVERNANCE TO THE DRAFT OUTCOME OF THE OVERALL REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WSIS OUTCOMES

Dear H.E. Mr. Janis Mazeiks, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia, and H.E. Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates,

We express our gratitude and appreciation of your leadership in the intergovernmental negotiations of the **World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS)** outcome document(http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95688.pdf**,** which is expected to be adopted at the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on 15-16 December 2015.

We likewise commend the outstanding work of all stakeholders in the attainment of the WSIS Outcomes and the efforts taken by U.N. agencies with a WSIS mandate in facilitating these discussions that have led to this draft outcome.

This statement has been created by members of the Youth Coalition on Internet Governance (YCIG). The Youth Coalition on Internet Governance is an open group of organizations and individuals representing all stakeholders that work together to facilitate better youth participation and involvement on Internet governance discussions and policy issues. The YCIG was founded in 2009 at the 4th UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and is open to all people from civil society, government and private sector, who share interests on youth issues and Internet governance.

When we established the YCIG, the aim was not to compete with or replace many youth collectives who have come to play a role in the regional and International IGF process over recent years. On the contrary, we aim to bring together the messages from many different youth collectives and to develop opportunities for youth collaboration on Internet governance, both within the IGF and across many international multistakeholder youth fora. There is not a single voice of youth, but there are many important youth perspectives on the Internet governance debate.

We recognize that the Internet is a space where young people find opportunities to create their own content, gain access to knowledge, entertainment, learning, positive development, participate in political and social discussions, and exercise their fundamental rights such as the freedoms of association and speech.

We recognize that not all youth have access to the opportunities the Internet provides, and that some (with access) encounter negative experiences through online spaces. In turn, we stress the need for sustained action to promote effective access to the Internet for all youth, and, alongside this, to ensure youth have access to the skills and support needed to maximize the opportunities and experiences derived online.

We urge the members of the United Nations General Assembly to take further steps at the national and regional level to increase youth's digital and media literacy along with awareness and engagement in Internet governance processes and participation mechanisms as it relates to exercising the fundamental rights of young people such as the freedoms of association and speech as well as enabling them to participate effectively in political, cultural, and social discussions.

We, as young people and young adults from all over the world, urge the U.N. to renew the mandate of the IGF. It provides unique opportunity to share ideas on equal footing and to collaborate on action using a multistakeholder approach – working toward a better Internet, and an Internet for all.

We also urge the U.N. to take our comments into consideration below to the WSIS+10 Draft Outcome Document – 7 December 2015.

Please note that our recommendations are based on the resolutions of numerous youth forums, both within and external to the U.N. system, including the UNESCO Youth Forums, the World Youth Forums, the International Youth Parliament, the International Young Professionals Foundation, Youth Input to the DotForce, Youth Building

Knowledge Societies, and regional forums such as the African International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Youth Forum and the Asia Pacific regional IGF (APrIGF) Youth IGF program. The recommendations specifically rely on the following outcomes by youth below:

- **2004** – WSIS Youth Caucus Contribution to the Establishment of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG): www.wgig.org/docs/wsis-youth-caucus.doc
- **2004** – WISI PrepComI Youth Caucus Declaration of Principles and Priorities: www.tigweb.org/action-tools/projects/download/344/WISI%20PrepComI%20Youth%20Caucus.doc
- **2005** – Statement of the WSIS Youth Caucus. 7th GFC Meeting, 5-6 September 2005: https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/pc3/contributions/misc/youth-caucus-7-statement.pdf
- **2005** – WSIS Youth Caucus World Program of Action for Youth Draft Review of the ICT & Youth Chapter: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpaysubmissions/wsis_tig.pdf
- **2009** – 2009 Statement of the Dynamic Youth Coalition – Sharm el-Sheikh
- **2009** – Kipourous Speech to EuroDig Geneva in 2009: http://www.ycig.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/kipouros_speech_Geneva.pdf
- **2010** – Opening speech EuroDIG – Madrid 2010: www.ycig.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Opening_speech-EuroDIG_Madrid_10_Matthias.doc
- **2010** – Childnet Youth IGF Project Statement of Belief 2010-http://www.ycig.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Youth-IGF-Statement-of-Belief-2010.pdf
- **2010** – Statement of the Dynamic Youth Coalition IGF 2010 – Vilnius, Lituania: www.ycig.org/index.php/2010/09/statement-of-the-dynamic-youth-coalition-igf-2010/
- **2010** – YCIG Letter to the U.N. General Assembly on the future of the IGF: http://piratepad.net/igf10-ga
- **2011** – YCIG Statement, Nairobi, Kenya: http://www.ycig.org/index.php/2011/10/2011-ycig-statement/
- **2012** – European Youth Forum policy paper on New Media and Internet Governance: http://intranet.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/0253-12_New_Media_InternetGovernance_FINAL.pdf
- **2013** – YouthIGF@Seoul - Youth Statement by NetMission Ambassadors: http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/images/Youth_Statement_by_NetMission_Ambassadors_20131015.pdf
- **2014** – YouthIGF@Delhi Program Report : http://2015.rigf.asia/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ReportonYIGF2014.pdf
- **2014 & 2015** – EU Youth Manifesto campaign 2015- http://www.youthmanifesto.eu/
- **2015** – Statements from National Youth IGFs in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey
- **2015** – Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) Declaration: http://www.igf2015.br/declaration/

With this background in mind, please take into consideration our comments below to the WSIS+10 Draft Outcome Document – 7 December 2015:

On **Preamble – Paragraph 11**: Other than the digital divide between gender, we also see a digital divide among different age groups, which should put particular attention to capacity building and education efforts for youth who are accessing Internet.

On **Preamble – Paragraph 13**: We urge that this paragraph is strengthened by noting that the world has changed since the Tunis Agenda and that this should be reflected in the language of this paragraph by reaffirming that the management of the Internet should be "multistakeholder and open to public participation" as opposed to the statement "multilateral ... and all other relevant stakeholders."

On **ICT for development** – **Paragraph 15**: Reiterate our aforementioned comments.

On **ICT for development**- **Paragraph 18**: Suggest to add information transparency as a benefit since ICT was effective in lowering the information cost, hence increasing efficiency, provided greater market access to users.

On **Bridging Digital Divides** – **Paragragh 23-29**: We urge that these paragraphs take into consideration concerns expressed by young people in the **2015** LAC Declaration:

http://www.igf2015.br/declaration/ that **increasing the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) does not imply that they are being used consciously**.

This was previously highlighted in the Youth Opening speech "Kipourous Speech to EuroDig – Geneva in 2009: http://www.ycig.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/kipouros_speech_Geneva.pdf" that "**copyright policy is one of the bigger challenges we are presented with: sharing all intellectual and creative goods is still a major advantage of the Internet. But as it seems extremely difficult to adapt offline copyrights to online content, there is still the need to remunerate intellectual and creative work. We are in favor of developing – with both users and producers – new, suitable ways of combining both factors, such as Creative Commons or a cultural flat rate**." Moreover, we encourage the emphasis that there are areas that do not have Internet access, and young people who do not have access to computers or Internet-connected devices. Even when young people have access, there is a significant lack of digital literacy and awareness. Therefore, we want to point out the increasing need to educate youth more actively on digital and media literacy as well as their right in participating in Internet Governance discussions. Education of such issues relates to exercising the fundamental rights of young people which would otherwise not be heard, such as the freedoms of association and speech as well as enabling them to participate effectively in political, cultural, and social discussions.

On **Building Confidence and Security in the use of ICTs** – **Paragraghs 50-56:** We recommend that there should be mention of digital and media literacy, digital rights and online privacy & safety education, and the importance of education on prudent and critical use and evaluation of Internet resources. The latter is particularly in regards to the use of social media platforms and also in vigilance against information security risks that rely on social engineering. Social media platforms remain the most-accessed applications among youth, while the Internet remains more diverse than merely that; furthermore, as the Internet becomes a standard and unremarkable part of life, explicit education on mindful and critical use of online platforms and content cannot be taken for granted. Members of the YCIG would like to express that this is a rather youth-relevant (particularly to the very young or newly online) component of developing a global populace that can use the Internet in a safe, mature, and thoughtful manner.

On **Internet Governance** – **Paragraph 61**: We would like the U.N. General Assembly to note that net neutrality and the open Internet is a common concern of young people who are the future of the Internet. This is expressed in Statements from National Youth IGFs in Austria and Germany (2015) and the 2015 LAC Declaration: http://www.igf2015.br/declaration/ among other statements from other regions. Moreover, there should be added focus on amplifying the voice of young people on all topics related to Internet governance as it should be a cornerstone of the multistakeholder process. We reiterate our comments on the **urgence** of adopt an Internet governance model based on a multistakeholder approach, not in a multilateral one.

On **Follow-up and Review- Paragraghs 50-56**, we call for the WSIS Forum and the CSTD to review the goals and actions addressing to marginalized groups, including women, developing countries and youth participants annually. This would ensure consistency among the stated goals and review is consistent.

In addition to all of the above, we would like to underline that businesses would benefit from hearing the voices of their customers, and governments would benefit from hearing from their future – if not current – voters. However, young people – who, according to the Previous Research (http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP_Social_Media_and_Young_Adults_Report_Final_with_toplines.pdf), are active Internet users and content creators among all other age groups – still face unreasonable access and limited or even complete restriction from participating in Internet governance processes due to language barriers, high travel costs, prejudices from various groups, and limited networks. We would urge on creating a more enabling environment for youth to participate in Internet Governance processes.

We would like to refer your excellencies to the ITU WSIS+10 Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes (https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/review/inc/docs/final/wsis10.statement.pdf) that states:

"**We reaffirm the vital role of youth and youth organizations as recognized in paragraph 11 in the WSIS Declaration of Principles, stating that 'youth should be empowered as learners, developers, contributors, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. We must focus especially**

on young people who have not yet been able to benefit fully from the

opportunities provided by ICTs. We are also committed to ensuring that the development of ICT applications and operation of services respects the rights of children as well as their protection and wellbeing.' The role of youth was also underlined in the World Programme of Action for

Youth, where ICT is identified as one of the 15 priority

areas, in the sense that it can provide youth with the opportunity to overcome the barriers of distance and socio-economic disadvantage. In addition, the ITU Global Youth

Summit in 2013 declared youth as a force for progress, and assured the importance of their full participation in decision-making processes to improve democracy, marking that

the spread of information among young people can directly foster empowerment and innovation on a global scale (BYND 2015 Global Youth Declaration). While progress has been

made, it is important to exert greater efforts to ensure the implementation of mentioned program, declarations and others alike."

Lastly, with these WSIS+10 discussions ongoing, we again urge the members of the U.N. to give young people the opportunity to participate and become active in Internet governance processes. We call for a new term of the IGF that builds on the existing forward-thinking model of multistakeholder participation and discussion, especially embracing marginalized communities like developing countries, women and youth. We believe any changes to the IGF structure that makes effective youth participation more difficult would be a step backwards, especially considering that youth are the future of all decision-making bodies concerned with Internet governance. The Internet is the medium of the future across the globe. Let us pursue transparent and accountable discussion with all stakeholders to find collaborative and consensus-based answers for the challenges we face on the Internet and to explore together the opportunities for our governance systems, human rights, and social and economic development.

In conclusion, we believe that by embracing the opportunities the Internet presents for youth and addressing the times when they are not realized, the Internet governance dialogue will be enriched. We believe in the approach on building digital literacy and fighting ignorance, than to restrict Internet freedoms and rights.

This statement has been endorsed by YCIG, and created as a collective effort by young people globally who are members of the YCIG.
The statement can be found online
here: https://beta.etherpad.org/p/YCIG_Statement_to_draft_WSIS_outcome_Document

If you have any question or would like additional information, you can contact the secretaries to the drafting process:
Ephraim Percy Kenyanito (Kenya/ East African Community)- <ekenyanito@gmail.com> and Sonia
Herring (Turkey/USA) <s.sonia.h@gmail.com>