IBSA Joint Statement

Open consultations on Enhanced Cooperation

UN New York, 14 December

Mr. Chairman.

I am presenting this statement on behalf of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA).

2.   Mr. Chairman, the IBSA is a coalition of three countries of the South, that is, India, Brazil and South Africa. This coalition was established in 2003 and is aimed at contributing to the construction of a new international order and for the three countries to coordinate, cooperate and convey the same message on pertinent global issues. In addition to the same vision, the IBSA countries share similar principles of democracy, multilateralism and the respect for international law. The Internet governance is one of the issues the IBSA countries have common interest in.

3.   In April 2010, in Brasilia, the IBSA Heads of State highlighted the importance of *"building a wide political concertation at international level for making the global Internet governance regime as multilateral, democratic and transparent as provided by the World Summit on Information Society".*

4.   The IBSA countries recognize the importance of the democratization of Internet governance. The Tunis Agenda of 2005 recognizes the need for Enhanced Cooperation *"to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues".* The purpose of enhanced cooperation is therefore to enable States to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in Internet governance - international Internet related public policy issues. Further, the process towards enhanced cooperation, was mandated to be started by the UN Secretary-General, *"by the end of the first quarter of 2006, involving all stakeholders in their respective roles, and proceeding as quickly as possible consistent with legal process"* as contained in para 71 of the Tunis Agenda. It has been almost five years since the Tunis Agenda had specified first quarter of 2006 to begin Enhanced Cooperation. The need for Enhanced Cooperation has grown exponentially and become more urgent since 2005 owing to the rapid expansion of the internet and its growing impact on public policy and other issues. Therefore, the IBSA views this consultation as long-overdue, yet opportune, to initiate the process towards enhanced cooperation as stated in paragraphs 68, 69 and 71 of the Tunis Agenda.

5.   Apart from technical aspects, the discussion on Internet governance has several critical public policy implications that necessitate the involvement of governments. These include among others, issues such as stability of the internet; interoperability; accessibility and openness (costs and human rights); network neutrality; access to knowledge and the balanced approach between openess, security and privacy aspects of the Internet; cybersecurity and the ICTs (as they relate to the Internet) and development nexus. A central issue in Internet governance is the management of Critical Internet Resources. Although there is a positive movement towards improving transparency and accountability in the activities of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), its legal status remains

problematic. The fact that only one country, instead of the international community of States, is the provider and guarantor of the management of names and numbers of the Internet in all countries contravenes established UN principles and universally accepted tenets of multilateralism.

6.   Unfortunately, these issues are yet to be discussed among UN Member States in depth from a public policy point of view due to the absence of an intergovernmental platform mandated to systematically discuss them and make decisions as appropriate. It is thus necessary for governments to be provided a formal platform under the U.N that is mandated to discuss these issues. Such a platform would also complement the Internet Governance Forum, a multi-stakeholder forum for discussing, sharing experiences and networking on Internet governance.

7.   The IBSA believes that this platform once identified and established will allow the international community to accomplish the developmental objectives of the Tunis Agenda, including *inter alia* paragraph 65 of the Tunis Agenda that expresses the *"the need to maximize the participation of developing countries in decisions regarding Internet governance, which should reflect their interests, as well as in development and capacity building"*. It would also allow for meaningful implementation of para 89 of the Tunis Agenda which emphasizes the need *"to improve international, regional and national connectivity and affordable access to ICTs and information through an enhanced international cooperation of all stakeholders that promotes technology exchange and technology transfer, human resource development and training, thus increasing the capacity of developing countries to innovate and to participate fully in, and contribute to, the Information Society"*. Operationalizing Enhanced Cooperation will also enable the Internet to realize its well-recognized potential as a powerful tool for development and poverty reduction, and of achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

8.   Keeping in view the urgency and importance of establishing such a platform, the IBSA countries reiterate the need to ensure that the present consultations result in a clear roadmap for operationalizing Enhanced Cooperation. In this context, we would like to propose that an inter-governmental working group be established under the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), the focal point in the UN system-wide follow-up to the outcomes of WSIS. The Working Group should be mandated to prepare a report on the possible institutional design and roadmap for enhanced cooperation in consultation with all stakeholders, and asked to submit its report to the UN General Assembly in 2011. The Working Group should also take on board inputs from all international organizations including the ITU, and should recommend on the feasibility and desirability of placing the Enhanced Cooperation mechanism within an existing international organization or recommend establishing a new body for dealing with Enhanced Cooperation, along with a clear roadmap and timeframe for the process.

9.   In order to allay any misgivings about a so-called õUN takeoverö of Internet governance, the IBSA reaffirms its commitment to the stability and security of the Internet as a global facility based on the full participation of all stakeholders, from both developed and developing countries, within their respective roles and responsibilities in line with paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda.

10.   The IBSA urges the UN Secretary General to continue the process of consultations with Member States and all stakeholders with a view to facilitating forward movement towards operationalizing Enhanced Cooperation.

******