Research Articles

The Quest for Inclusive Governance of Global ICTs: Lessons from the ITU in the Limits of National Sovereignty*

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Abstract

The construction of inclusive arrangements for governing global information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been a central concern of the international community for several years. However, in spite of much discussion and debate and various experiments in organizational innovation, very little real progress has been made in developing governance arrangements that include developed and developing countries, the private sector, and civil society in international agenda-setting and decision-making processes in a reasonably balanced fashion. This article analyzes lessons that can be learned from the experience of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) regarding different strategies for reconciling national sovereignty with the inclusion of nonstate actors in governance processes. On this basis, it draws conclusions about the future course of ITU reform and about the implications of the ITU's experience for other international organizations and for the governance action plan to be produced by the World Summit on the Information Society.

The Quest for Inclusive Global Governance and the Case of the International Telecommunication Union

In the past decade, factors such as the liberalization of trade in telecommunications and information technology goods and services through agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the rise of the Internet, the growth of industry self-regulation, and the general recognition of the links between information and communications technologies (ICTs) and sustainable global development have triggered a search for new forms of governance that would include developing countries, the private sector, and civil society in some reasonably balanced fashion in agenda-setting and decision-making processes, alongside the developed countries that traditionally have dominated international ICT organizations. This quest has involved much discussion and debate, has prompted movements to reform established organizations, and has led to the construction of innovative governance arrangements, such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the preparatory process for the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). However, it has not yet delivered the results that all parties to the quest are seeking (MacLean et al. 2002:10).

The purpose of this article is to examine the quest for inclusive arrangements for governing global ICTs from the viewpoint of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This may seem a surprising choice because organizations such as the WTO and ICANN are widely thought to represent the way of the future, whereas the ITU is commonly considered a relic of the past, particularly in the

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United States and some other developed countries. However, there are several reasons why it may be useful to look at the ITU for lessons that could help the international community in its quest.

First, the ITU is the most inclusive international ICT governance forum, counting 189 countries and more than 650 private sector and civil society organizations among its membership. The former number includes 158 developing countries and the latter number includes the leading multinational equipment manufacturers, network operators, and service providers from the telecommunications and information technology (IT) industry sectors as well as more than 160 companies from the developing world.[1] Because the bulk of the ITU's output is produced by representatives of these actors rather than by the secretariat, inclusive governance of global ICTs is a day-to-day reality in the ITU to a greater extent than in any other international body, even though in many respects it falls short of the ideals guiding the governance quest.

Second, the ITU has the widest range of ICT governance functions of any international organization, and therefore potentially the greatest impact on linking ICT and development agendas at the international level. These functions are centered on the goals of developing global networks and promoting universal access to their services. They include: high-level policy coordination; regulation of the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbital positions; technical and operational standardization of telecommunication networks; stewardship of global numbering resources; and assistance to developing countries in the areas of policy, regulation, resource mobilization, training, network development, and ICT applications.[2]

Third, in the past decade, the ITU has experimented with a variety of formal and informal mechanisms for including new issues, actors, and decision-making processes in its governance activities. Although these experiments were undertaken primarily for internal reasons, to help the ITU adapt to the changes that took place in the global ICT environment during the 1990s, this experience provides a basis for identifying the political forces and policy options that are most likely to succeed in creating more inclusive governance arrangements for global ICTs.[3]

Fourth, in spite of the changes that have moved it toward the margins of policy concern in some developed countries, the ITU is still the focal point for discussion of issues related to the governance of global ICTs for many developing countries. This is particularly the case for the 49 least developed countries (LDCs) and the small island states that lack the technical, financial, policy, and regulatory capacity to participate in other forums, and that may feel more comfortable with "the devil they know" than in the unfamiliar surroundings of newer institutions.[4]

Fifth, the ITU's responsibility for organizing the forthcoming WSIS places it squarely at the center of the current quest to develop a governance framework that links ICTs to the global development agenda at the levels of principle and action, and that is based on partnership between government, the private sector, and civil society. Although the risks associated with WSIS are high, the summit provides a unique opportunity for the ITU to play a leading role in the development and implementation of this framework.[5]

Taken together, these five factors suggest that it

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1. See ITU (2003c) for a complete list of ITU members.

2. The formal structure of the ITU is set out in the ITU Constitution and Convention, which is published in ITU (2003b). A general description of the history, structure, functions, and working methods of the ITU is available at ITU (2003a), along with detailed information on the work of the ITU Radiocommunication, Telecommunication Standardization, and Telecommunication Development Sectors, General Secretariat, and TELECOM Exhibitions and Forums.

3. For background information on the genesis and scope of the ITU reform movement, see ITU (1989, 1991).

4. As noted in MacLean et al. (2002:19), "The ITU has the greatest developing country involvement in several senses. By its own count it has 158 developing country members, including all LDCs, and 162 private sector members from the developing world, including 9 from the LDCs. Roughly 20% of its budget is allocated to support the work of the ITU Telecommunication Development Sector." In contrast, "The WTO, which does not have a definition of developing countries, nevertheless reckons that it has about 100 developing country members overall" and "ICANN has a completely different view of the world in which individuals, private companies and not-for-profit organizations with an interest in the Internet are organized into constituencies, supporting organizations, regional groupings and other decision-making and management bodies—but in which countries are not counted and governments are represented only in an advisory capacity."

5. See ITU (2003j) for comprehensive information on WSIS.

is worthwhile examining the experience of the ITU to draw out lessons that could help the organization reform its governance arrangements so that it becomes more responsive to and more inclusive of the needs and interests of developing country and civil society actors. This is the principal purpose of this article, but not its only objective.

From the perspective of this journal, ways and means of including actors that traditionally have been excluded from the governance of global telecommunication networks is but one of many issues that arises when the relationship between ICTs and international development is considered. Rather than being preoccupied with matters related to technology and infrastructure development—the principal focus of the ITU—much of the attention of the international community is concentrated on questions related to the use of ICTs for the achievement of economic, social, cultural, and political development goals, particularly through the creation of local content, applications, and services.[6] From this broad development perspective, it is therefore important to ask whether lessons that can be learned from the ITU's experience are applicable to other organizations and other governance domains.

The ITU's diverse membership and extensive experience in attempting to enhance the roles of developing countries and nongovernmental actors in its decision-making processes place it among the leaders in the quest for inclusive governance models. However, there are factors that appear to limit the ITU's usefulness as a source of lessons for other organizations and other fields of governance activity. For one thing, the ITU's nongovernmental membership, from both developed and developing countries, is heavily drawn from the traditional telecommunications sector. It does not fully include all elements of the global ICT industry; civil society's participation in the ITU is largely limited to scientific and technical nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and development agencies do not always participate very actively in its proceedings. For another, the ITU's governance functions are primarily technical. Although policy disagreements and political considerations occasionally affect ITU decision-making processes, they are felt less frequently and with lower intensity than in other organizations involved in more sensitive fields of global ICT governance, such as trade in services, development finance, culture, intellectual property rights, privacy, and security. Factors of this kind clearly differentiate many of the substantive governance challenges facing the ITU from those facing other organizations. But do these differences limit the applicability to other governance domains of lessons that can be learned from the ITU's experience?

Louder Voices, a recent report on developing country participation in international ICT decision making, provides an answer to this question. In assessing the results of case studies of developing country participation in the ITU, WTO, and ICANN—and in comparing the findings of these three organizational case studies with the results of six developing country case studies that were undertaken to provide national perspectives on these key institutions of global ICT governance—the report concluded that "there was a high degree of coherence between 'top down' and 'bottom up' points of view on the obstacles facing developing country participants, and convergence on the actions required to strengthen their engagement" (MacLean et al. 2002:20).

These findings indicate that in spite of the substantive differences that exist in structures, functions, and membership of the ITU, WTO, and ICANN, and in spite of the different policy and political forces to which they are subject, the three organizations face a common set of organizational challenges as they seek to construct governance arrangements that are more inclusive of developing countries, the private sector, and civil society. The organizational challenges identified in the *Louder Voices* report are: raising awareness; building policy and technical capacity; providing easy, affordable, and timely access to information; remedying weaknesses in policy processes at the national and international levels; and overcoming financial barriers (MacLean et al. 2002: 20–24). Further research is required to determine whether similar challenges face other organizations involved in the governance of global ICTs. However, on the basis of the *Louder Voices* findings, it seems reasonable to assume that the experience of the ITU can be generalized to other international bodies and governance domains to the extent that it provides positive or negative lessons in relation to these challenges.

6. See Mansell and Wehn (1998) for a comprehensive survey of the relation between information technology and sustainable development.

An extended version of this article that will be published in a forthcoming volume on the governance of global electronic networks will present a detailed analysis of the lessons that emerged from the ITU's experience with respect to each of these common organizational challenges. The present paper briefly summarizes the results of these case studies to highlight the importance of a more fundamental issue, which underlies all of the individual lessons learned. This basic question, which the ITU has so far been unable to resolve, is how to reconcile the governance principle on which the ITU is founded—"the sovereign right of each State to regulate its telecommunication" (ITU 2003b)—with the principle of inclusive governance. The failure to resolve this problem has consistently limited the ITU's capacity to respond to the organizational challenges it shares with other international bodies. It has also consistently limited the ITU's substantive capacity to carry out its traditional governance functions and to respond to new issues that have appeared on the global governance agenda. However, the lessons learned from these case studies are not entirely negative. They also show that inclusive governance is possible when sovereignty constraints are relaxed and less formal decision-making procedures are adopted. On the basis of this experience, the article suggests ways forward for the ITU, the WSIS, and other organizations involved in the governance of global ICTs.

In presenting this analysis and the policy prescriptions that flow from it, I draw principally on my experience as head of the ITU strategic planning unit from 1992 to 1999, as well as on my subsequent involvement as an independent consultant in the ongoing effort to reform the ITU, in the work of the G8 Digital Opportunities Task Force (DOT Force), and in preparations for WSIS. In spite of its long history and the continuing importance of its governance functions, the ITU has been studied very little. Although personal experience and observation cannot claim to substitute for scholarly research and analysis, with hope they might point the way toward topics that may merit such investigation.

Past as Prologue: The Governance Quest in Historical Context

Throughout the history of electronic communication networks, major technological innovations have given rise to new enterprises, transformed economic and social structures, crossed borders, created international rivalries, and led to the development of governance arrangements with almost predictable regularity, accelerating frequency, and an ever-widening circle of economic and social consequences. It is not easy to think of any other field of human endeavor in which the effects of local invention have been so quickly and so frequently felt at the global level, in which the beating of a technological butterfly's wings may indeed shake the foundations of even the most powerful human institutions continents away.

From a technological point of view, the history of global electronic networks can be seen as a series of relatively short cycles—typically of one or two decades' duration—each of which begins with an invention (invariably the subject of dispute as to which individual or country was the true inventor); continues through the stages of application, innovation, and diffusion (usually not for the purpose originally intended by the inventor and always with disruptive effects); and ends with the construction of governance arrangements designed to ensure that the technology in question is developed, deployed, and operated in the common interest. These arrangements may include all or some of the following features: a policy vision setting out goals and principles, a group of participating parties, a set of activities, legal instruments, institutional structures, procedures, and working methods.[7]

Allowing for the time lag that occurs between the initial demonstration of a new technology and its practical application in a commercial or public service setting—and taking into account the blurring that results from the quickening pace of technological change and the foreshortening of historical vision as we move from past to present—this pattern has repeated in the development of every major new telecommunications network tech-

7. When all of these elements are present, this paper speaks of a governance model. When only some are present, it refers to governance arrangements. It also divides the elements that make up a full governance model into two groups: a policy and action framework, which includes goals, principles, participants, and activities; and an institutional framework, which includes legal instruments, organizational structures, procedures, and working methods.

nology, beginning with the telegraph in the 1840s, the telephone in the 1870s, radio telegraphy or "wireless" in the 1890s, radio broadcasting in the 1920s, television broadcasting in the 1950s, geostationary satellite communications in the 1960s, computer communications in the 1970s, optical communications in the 1980s, and the Internet and mobile communications in the 1990s.[8]

From a governance point of view, the history of electronic communication networks also suggests an intriguing, if much more speculative, set of hypotheses: that there are governance long cycles at the global level, which may last as long as 60 or 70 years; that these cycles alternate between phases of diversification and consolidation in the construction of governance arrangements; that they are triggered by sudden shifts, at the levels of power and policy, in the perceived relationship between electronic communication networks and prevailing economic and social structures; and that the third long cycle in the governance of global electronic networks is now fully under way.

The Long Rise and Sudden Eclipse of the ITU

The first of these long cycles began with the creation of the International Telegraph Union in 1865 and lasted until the 1930s. This was a period of institutional innovation and diversification, which saw international telephony added to the responsibilities of the ITU in 1885, a separate International Radiotelegraph Union established in 1906, and three independent technical bodies set up during the 1920s to standardize telephone, telegraph, and radiocommunication technologies—the global ICTs of the time (Codding 1952).

In the second long cycle, these different governance arrangements were consolidated into a single organization, the International Telecommunication Union. This consolidation process began in 1932 and was completed in 1947 when the ITU took on its modern institutional structure and became a part of the United Nations (UN) system. For the next four decades, the ITU was the principal forum for governing electronic networks at the international level and enjoyed a monopoly of power that reflected the structure of the telecommunications sector within its member states. However, by the late 1980s the ITU's role was beginning to be undermined by the changes that were taking place in the traditional telecommunications industry, as well as by the broader effects of technological change that were captured in concepts such as "the information society" and the "new economy."[9]

At base, a set of fundamental technological advances—in the digitization of all forms of communication, in the development of microelectronics and high-capacity transmission media, and in software design and engineering—had given rise to opportunities to develop new network products and services that competed with the offerings of traditional network operators. To capitalize on these opportunities, a worldwide movement began in the most powerful nations and regions of the world to transform the policy and regulatory model that had governed electronic networks at the national level. This movement, which was led by the United States and quickly followed by Japan and Europe, aimed at replacing monopoly with competition, public ownership with private enterprise, detailed regulation with rules for fair and effective competition, and cross-subsidies between profitable and unprofitable services with market-oriented prices and explicit subsidies to achieve social goals.[10]

From a long-term perspective, this transformation in the governance framework of electronic communication networks was undertaken in response to fundamental changes that were taking place in the structure of Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) economies, where technological innovation had emerged as a key component of growth, productivity, and international

8. See Michaelis (1965) for a useful account of the relation between technological and governance innovation from the telegraph to the satellite. Although there are many sources of information on the governance issues raised by more recent technological developments, the ITU's World Telecommunication Development Reports and *Internet Reports, which are issued on a periodic basis, provide comprehensive, accessible overviews of the links among technological developments, economic and social development, and governance issues at the national and international levels. See ITU (2003f) for information on these publications.*

9. See Codding and Rutkowski (1982) and Savage (1989) for accounts of the ITU during this transitional period.

10. See Jussawalla (1993), Nordenstreng and Schiller (1993), Melody (1997), and Hudson (1997) for contrasting views of these changes.

competitiveness; where information-based services had emerged as a leading source of employment; and where new opportunities were arising to use electronic communication networks in the design and delivery of public and social services.

The cumulative effect of these technical, economic, social, regulatory, and political changes quickly undercut the ITU's claim to provide an all-encompassing model for governing global electronic networks and began to raise questions about its capacity to discharge some of its core technical and regulatory functions. After a decade-long incubation period among OECD countries, a tidal wave of new issues burst onto the global governance agenda, including privatization, competition, deregulation, trade in telecommunication services, convergence, industry self-regulation, intellectual property rights (IPRs) in electronic media, e-commerce, protection of privacy, regulation of undesirable content, network security, cyber crime, the use of ICTs for development, and e-government. Many of these issues fell mainly or entirely outside the ITU's governance mandate and organizational capacity. They brought new players and new forums into the global governance arena from the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. In addition, many of them were brought into focus for the international community by the Internet, a new kind of electronic communication network that had developed entirely outside of and largely in opposition to the governance model embodied in the ITU.[11]

The Governance Divide

The transition from the consolidated governance model of the second cycle to the diversity of the third cycle had different impacts on developed and developing countries. Although the national administrations that traditionally represented developed countries in the ITU lost power both domestically and internationally in relation to new policy players, developed countries as a whole did not suffer. The third cycle agenda was their agenda, not the agenda of the developing countries. Nationally, through the transformation of policy and regulatory frameworks; regionally, through trade agreements; and internationally, through organizations such as the OECD and the WTO, they had been preparing to play the new governance game for a decade. To a greater or lesser extent, developed countries entered the third cycle with the institutional capacity and the public and private resources needed to engage the new governance agenda, if not in its full scope, at least on matters of highest national interest. For a number of reasons, most developing countries—particularly the poorest LDCs—were unprepared for the eclipse of the ITU as the central institution for governing global electronic networks.

During the 1980s, while OECD countries were working together to define a new governance framework based on the presupposition that the building of electronic communication networks should be a private business operating in markets that were regulated to ensure fair competition and protect consumer interests, developing countries were focused on an entirely different agenda. This agenda, which was crystallized in the 1984 report of the Maitland Commission, centered on the twin challenges of modernizing telecommunications infrastructure in the developing world and extending networks to provide universal access to basic telephone service in all developing countries (ITU 1984). Standing behind this agenda was a policy framework based on the presupposition that telecommunications should continue to be a public service, and that the building of networks in developing countries should be financed largely through public expenditures, supplemented by subsidies and other forms of assistance deriving from solidarity and partnership among developed countries, the private sector, and the developing world.

In addition to these differences of perspective, there were other reasons developing countries were unprepared for the new agenda that was launched in the 1990s. One was simple lack of awareness and capacity. Given the state of telecommunications networks in most developing countries, their economic structures, and their income levels, most of the new issues simply did not arise and in cases where they did, there was little real governance capacity to deal with them. Second, in the years before the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the subsequent worldwide embrace of capitalism, it was still possible for developing country leaders to be-

11. See MacLean et al. (2002:10–20) for a mapping of the global ICT governance universe that includes issues, decision-making processes, institutions, and players.

lieve that there might be alternatives to market-led development. Finally, the hard currency obtained through the ITU system for sharing revenues from international telecommunications traffic, and the incentives that system provided for charging prices that were well above cost, gave developing countries a strong, if short-sighted, stake in maintaining the status quo.

Almost 20 years into the third cycle, the developed countries that initiated the "Big Bang" in global ICT governance—and the many developing countries that have become active participants in the new universe—are justifiably proud of their creation, which has spurred telecommunications innovation, investment, and access on an unprecedented scale throughout the world. From another perspective, however, these benefits have come at a significant governance cost. Where once there was a single forum for governing global electronic networks open to all countries, there now appears to be a global governance void within which a complex and confusing array of local activities take place without any overall coherence or top-down coordination.

This is not to say that the new universe is entirely random—far from it. The most powerful government actors are able to exercise a significant degree of policy and regulatory control from the bottom up by pursuing national or regional interests across a wide range of forums, while the most powerful private actors are able to exercise an equally significant degree of market control by coordinating their activities through private forums, or through the exercise of raw market power. But what is often missing are opportunities for the less powerful to be engaged in the discussion of global governance issues; to participate in decision-making processes; to understand the consequences of these decisions; and to adapt their policies, regulations, and practices accordingly. With the best will in the world, in the absence of the less powerful, their interests are unlikely to be given serious consideration, and the potential benefits of international cooperation not fully realized.

For all these reasons, many developing countries were slow to accept the ITU's diminished status. Some ITU member states still appear to dream of restoring the union to the center of the governance universe. For many, the shift has left them adrift in the world, without governing institutions in which they feel fully at home.[12]

Coordinating Diversity: The Quest for Inclusive Governance

Policy, like nature, abhors a vacuum and it was not long before a quest began to put some sort of order into the diverse arrangements that characterize the new governance universe. It is important to be clear about the nature of this quest and how it differs from the goals that guided the earlier governance cycles. It is not a quest for a new overarching treaty or a new umbrella organization, although that may come in time if there is ever a fourth long cycle to consolidate the present governance diversity. Instead, it is a quest with three less ambitious but nonetheless challenging objectives. The first is to develop a policy vision, along with a set of goals and principles, that in some general sense applies to all of the diverse governance arrangements that characterize the new cycle, to provide a beacon for guiding and coordinating their activities. The second is to frame these overarching goals and principles in a way that addresses the needs and captures the interests of both developed and developing countries, so that no country is left out of the policy picture. The third is to include partnership among government, the private sector, and civil society as a fundamental feature of this policy framework and of any coordinating mechanisms that are put in place to give it effect. In other words, the essential goal of this quest is to develop an inclusive policy and action framework, which brings together the diverse contributions of all these players—not to establish a new institutional framework based on a new treaty agreement and featuring a new organizational structure.

This quest was launched at an ITU event, the first World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC), which took place in Buenos Aires in 1994. In his keynote address to the conference, U.S. Vice President Al Gore proposed a set of five market-oriented principles to guide the building of what he called the Global Information Infrastructure (GII; Gore 1994). The G7 group of countries built on this

12. For an analysis of the history of the ITU from the perspective of regime theory, see Drake (2000:124–177; 2001:25–74).

proposal and enlarged the scope of the governance quest at a Ministerial Conference on the Information Society hosted by the European Union in Brussels in 1995, which added three additional principles to address social, cultural, and developmental concerns (G7 1995). In 1996, the scope of the quest was further enlarged to include issues of concern to developing countries when, with support from the European Union and at the invitation of South Africa, the representatives from the G7 and 40 developing countries met at the Information Society and Development Conference (ISAD) in Midrand, South Africa (ISAD 1996).

The ITU, which had not been invited to the Brussels meeting and given only a minor role at Midrand, regained the initiative and upped the ante in 1998 when its Minneapolis Plenipotentiary Conference adopted a resolution proposing that the United Nations should convene a WSIS involving UN member states, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations, with the aim of developing a declaration of principles and plan of action that would provide a policy framework for coordinating the actions of these four stakeholder groups (ITU 2003b). The UN readily agreed; it had recently become an active player in the quest for a new governance framework through the activities of its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In December 2001, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution authorizing the summit, linking it to the achievement of the development goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and tasking the ITU with the job of organizing the summit, which will take place in two phases, in Geneva in 2003 and Tunisia in 2005 (ITU 2003h).

In parallel with this move to construct a new, inclusive governance framework for global electronic networks on a UN foundation, the G8 continued its quest to achieve a similar result, but with a different approach. At its 2000 Okinawa summit, the G8 established a DOT Force, which included representatives from G8 governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations, with a mandate to recommend objectives and actions designed to ensure that ICTs support global development and benefit all. The DOT Force report was accepted at the 2002 G8 Kananaskis summit, and task force members are implementing its recommendations, in some cases in partnership with the UN ICT Task Force.[13]

As the first phase of WSIS approaches, these different streams are beginning to interact—in some cases to merge, in others to diverge, and in still others to continue on their parallel courses. At this point it is difficult to foresee what will result from all this activity. A policy consensus is beginning to emerge on a set of general principles to guide the governance of global ICTs, as well as on the main lines of action that governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations should undertake in partnership to give effect to these principles.[14] However, in the current international political and economic environment, it is uncertain whether WSIS or any other current process will be able to mobilize the will and resources required to implement this agenda. Whatever the outcome of these efforts, it seems clear that the issues of linking ICTs with the development agenda and including the private sector and civil society in global governance institutions and processes are unlikely to disappear.

Lessons for the ITU: Aligning Governance Form and Function

ITU member states have not been blind to the changes that have reshaped their universe. As well as participating in the broader quest for inclusive global governance, for the past 15 years they have been trying to adapt the ITU regime to "the changing telecommunications environment" through a reform program aimed at:

- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their traditional activities—technical standardization and the regulation of international radiocommunications
- Putting ITU development activities on the same formal footing as radiocommunication and standardization, through the establishment of a development sector
- Enlarging the rights and obligations of private sector members of the ITU

13. See DOT Force (n.d.) and UN ICT Task Force (2003) for information on the work of these two bodies.
14. See the WSIS Web site at ITU (2003j) for the current version of the WSIS Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action.

- Developing a role for the ITU as a forum for discussion of global policy and regulatory issues
- Building bridges between traditional telecommunications and the Internet
- Modernizing the role and management of the ITU secretariat

Underlying all these issues are two fundamental questions that bear not only on ITU reform, but on the broader international quest for a new policy and action framework to govern global electronic networks.

The first question concerns the scope of ITU member states' governance ambitions. In view of the erosion of their power and the pressures to do more with less in terms of financial and human resources, should they abandon any hope of continuing to exercise general governance over the telecommunications sector to concentrate on their core businesses? Or should they seek instead to reform the ITU with the goal of drawing new actors into the organization, expanding its mandate to address new issues, tapping new resources, and introducing new decision-making processes that would reflect the power shifts that have taken place in the telecommunications sector?

The second question concerns the member states' willingness to share the power they have traditionally enjoyed within the ITU with new actors. This issue arises whatever the scope of the members' different governance ambitions, because it is increasingly difficult to either carry out the ITU's traditional functions or to expand its range of activities without making some accommodation with the new actors that have appeared on the international scene.

Patterns of Power and Preference

It is not easy to characterize succinctly the policy priorities, preferences, capacities, and power of different ITU member states in relation to these two strategic questions, or to the more specific reform issues they underlie. This is all the more the case because there are no easy and simple divisions among the member states of the ITU.

There are significant differences in the preferences of the "ICT superpowers"—the United States, Europe, and Japan. The United States tends to be the most conservative member on questions related to potential enlargement of the ITU's sphere of activity and to the sharing of power with other actors, be they the private sector, NGOs, or the staff of the ITU. Japan, on the other hand, has tended to favor an expansion of ITU activity, particularly in coordinating telecommunications policy and regulation, and has been open to enhancing the role of the private sector in some ITU activities. Europe as a whole is somewhere in between—in favor of rationalizing the ITU's regulatory and standards activities and granting a larger role in decision making in the latter area to the private sector but cautious about seeing the ITU expand into new areas of activity—although individual European states often depart from these positions in one or another direction (e.g., with the United Kingdom often closer to the U.S. position than to some of its European colleagues, whereas France and Germany are sometimes closer to the Japanese view).

The preferences of developing countries are even more difficult to characterize, given the enormous differences that exist between developing countries and regions. On the whole, though, they tend support a wider role for the ITU in the new environment and to be skeptical about giving the private sector or other actors a larger role in ITU decision making unless it is tied to greater financial contributions. Both positions are understandable: few developing countries have the resources to pursue their interests in the many intergovernmental and private forums now active in the governance of global electronic networks, few have private sectors capable of supporting their interests in more open decision-making processes, and many regard the NGOs that purport to represent their interests with suspicion.

With few exceptions—most notably among the Arab States—developing country members of the ITU tend not to contribute actively to discussion of the big issues of organizational and global governance, but to focus instead on matters of direct concern to developing countries. In the case of Africa and the poorer regions of the Americas and Asia-Pacific, this means focusing mainly on the development assistance activities of the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D). In the case of other developing countries—particularly the "tiger economies" of southeast Asia and the emerging economies of eastern Europe—it means focusing on the technical work of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization and Radiocommunication Sectors (ITU-T and ITU-R).

It is worth calling attention to the policy preferences of a third group of countries—the "governance go-betweens"—which includes both middle-power developed countries (e.g., Australia, Canada, the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, and Switzerland) and political leaders from the developing world (e.g., Morocco and South Africa). These countries frequently serve as intermediaries between contending interests (Doran 1989). In general, the preferences of this group are moderately progressive on the two key issues of expanding ITU activities and sharing power with other actors, and tend to avoid the extremes of other players. These preferences suit these countries for leadership roles within the various decision-making processes of the organization. However, their political skill alone has not been sufficient to resolve the fundamental tensions that exist among other ITU members.

No survey of policy preferences would be complete without mention of a fourth group of countries—the "awakening giants." This group includes countries such as China, India, Brazil, and Indonesia, which, although sometimes political leaders in the ITU, do not yet carry the full weight that their market mass and growing technical capacity will surely confer in the coming decades. This group also includes the Russian Federation, which before the breakup of the Soviet Union was an ITU superpower on a par with the United States, Europe, and Japan. During the last decade, it has fallen from these heights. However, Russia's underlying technical capabilities, longer-term market potential, and renewed political confidence will likely qualify it as a "re-awakening giant."

This group of countries has not been very engaged in the ITU reform process, nor in the broader quest for a new global governance framework. Yet without their participation and commitment in the longer term, it will not be possible for either the ITU or the international community to construct anything more than a partial solution to the problem of governing global electronic networks. In an era when markets for telecommunications goods and services are saturated in the developed countries that have traditionally dominated international governance arrangements, the awakening giants of the developing world—countries in which market demand remains high and needs are far from satiated—are likely to become much more influential players in the global governance game if they can learn to use their power effectively.

The Reform Scorecard: Winners, Losers, and Stalemates

Judging by the results of the series of Plenipotentiary Conferences[15] that have taken place since the ITU reform movement was launched in 1989, member states have not been satisfied with the progress made on the ITU reform agenda. These results have fallen short of the expectations of most developed and developing countries. They have disappointed the ITU's private sector members, as well as elements of civil society that remain effectively excluded from participating in its activities. Although the ITU still has value in the eyes of many countries and nongovernmental actors (as evidenced by their continued, albeit diminished, willingness to pay their annual membership fees and to contribute to the ITU's work by participating in meetings and conferences), it is clearly caught in a downward spiral that threatens to erode its viability. This is particularly the case because of the financial crisis that has followed the 2002 Marrakech Plenipotentiary Conference, a crisis that was triggered in large part because of the dissatisfaction of the United Kingdom and some other member states with the results of the reform process.[16]

What if the effort to reform fundamentally the ITU finally ends in more or less complete failure at the next Plenipotentiary Conference in 2006—and the financial and power-sharing constraints imposed through commission or omission by major member states force the ITU to retrench to concentrate on its core businesses (principally radio regulation and

15. The Plenipotentiary Conference is the ITU's supreme governing body. It meets once every four years to adopt a strategic and financial plan for the next plenipotentiary period; amend the ITU Constitution and Convention (i.e., the basic treaty instrument); adopt decisions, resolutions, recommendations, and opinions on specific policy and administrative issues; and elect the members of the ITU Council, which governs in the period between Plenipotentiary Conferences; the secretary general, the deputy secretary general, and the directors of the Radiocommunication, Standardization, and Development Bureaus; and the members of the Radio Regulations Board.

16. See MacLean (1995, 1999) for an analysis of the decisions of the 1994 and 1998 Plenipotentiary Conferences with respect to the ITU reform agenda. See ITU (2003i) for information on the proceedings of the Marrakech Plenipotentiary Conference.

standardization with a little development on the side) and to abandon the initiatives sponsored by its current and previous secretaries general to enlarge the "soft governance" activities of the ITU to fill at least partially the current void in governance of global electronic networks?[17] Which countries would be the winners and losers under this scenario? And would this be a good result for global governance?

The overall winner would be the United States, which has never shown much enthusiasm for fundamental change in the ITU. And why should it? The ITU has generally delivered what the United States has wanted, particularly in terms of access to radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbital resources, and has even made improvements to the accounting rate system for sharing international telecommunication revenues under the threat of bilateral U.S. action.[18] In addition, the United States has been largely successfully in preventing the ITU from venturing very far into new areas of activity, particularly in relation to Internet governance and global policy and regulatory coordination.

For Europe and Japan, the results would be mixed. Like the United States, they have been winners in terms of what the ITU has delivered through its technical activities, particularly in terrestrial mobile communications. However, they would be losers in terms of the fundamental reforms they sought to make to the ITU, by seeking to increase the formal rights of the private sector in the case of Europe and by seeking to develop the ITU as a forum for discussion and harmonization of policies and regulations in the case of Japan.

Assuming that the ITU-D emerged relatively unscathed from this worst case scenario, it could be argued that developing countries would emerge as survivors—if not outright winners—from the collapse of the ITU reform process. However, from a broader perspective it could equally be argued that the ITU-D is a trap if it continues in its present form and that, in the absence of new and more effective initiatives, developing countries would emerge as the principal losers for several reasons. First, the role of developing countries in what many would see as the real work of the ITU—standardization and radiocommunication—has not significantly increased as a result of the creation of the ITU-D and the obligations imposed on the other two sectors by the ITU constitution to assist with development. Second, the modest resources of the ITU-D have limited its effect in comparison with the results achieved by many developing countries through participation in alternative development mechanisms, such as the programs of the World Bank and the WTO telecommunication agreements. Third, a decade after the formal creation of the ITU-D, the ITU appears uncertain whether its role is the development of telecommunications or telecommunications for development. Consequently, there is as yet only a limited connection among its development activities, the international development agenda, and the resources available through official development agencies.

The collapse of the ITU reform movement would not likely alter any of these results. Instead, it would probably entrench the divisions that exist among the three sectors and continue the isolation of the ITU-D in a largely self-contained governance space.

Inclusive Governance: What Works and What Does Not?

A result of the kind described in the previous section, although highly likely given the results of the Marrakech Conference, is neither inevitable nor desirable, both for the interests of ITU members and for the broader quest for a policy and action framework for governing global electronic networks. Avoiding it and releasing the governance value buried in the ITU will require breaking the sovereignty mold that formed the ITU in 1947 and still shapes its structures and governance mechanisms today, in spite of the enormous changes that have taken place in telecommunications and in the international environment.

Is there any reason to think that a result of this kind is possible? The experience and observation of the past decade argue that there is, if we consider a set of cases where ITU reform was systematically frustrated at the formal decision-making level (i.e., in treaty-making processes) by conflicts between the sovereignty-related policy preferences of ITU member states but where substantively similar issues were resolved at less formal decision-making levels—where sovereignty concerns could be put "in

17. See ITU (2003f) for information about the current ITU secretary general's New Initiatives Program.
18. See Hudson (1997:423–426) for a succinct account of this complex and long-standing problem.

square brackets"—through cooperation among ITU member states from the developed and developing worlds and a variety of nonstate actors, including the private sector. The following sections, which are keyed to the common organizational challenges identified in the *Louder Voices* report, illustrate this point by presenting summaries of detailed case studies that, as previously mentioned, will be included in an extended version of this article to be published in a forthcoming book on the governance of global electronic networks.

Case study 1—Building policy and regulatory capacity

What is the best way of coordinating the policies and regulations of ITU member states with respect to the issues that have arisen as a result of the changes that have taken place in the telecommunications environment? Over the past decade and a half, the ITU has tried to deal with this question in two ways—through its formal, treaty-making apparatus by attempting to amend the International Telecommunication Regulations (ITRs), and informally through periodical World Telecommunication Policy Forums (WTPFs) and smaller-scale policy initiatives sponsored by the ITU General Secretariat and Development Sector. The results of this two-track approach appear clear. The effort to amend the ITRs, which began at the 1988 WATTC and was revived in 1998 after lying dormant for a decade, has gone nowhere. The WTPF and other informal activities, on the other hand, have consistently produced effective results.[19]

Case study 2—Developing inclusive decision-making processes

How can nongovernmental members of the ITU—particularly the private sector companies that manufacture equipment, build and operate telecommunication networks, and provide services—be given a role that more closely reflects the role they play in the global marketplace? Can they be induced to assume greater financial obligations toward the union if they are given the right to participate in decision making? These have been central questions throughout the ITU reform process, and they too have been pursued through a two-track process, one through the formal treaty-making process, and the other through the informal process of revising the working methods of the ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector (ITU-T). The formal approach has repeatedly failed to achieve its objectives, whereas the informal approach has effectively given nongovernmental actors the right to make decisions, although it remains to be seen whether this will lead to increased financial contributions.[20]

Case study 3—Providing information to aid decision making

Unlike technical standardization, the regulation of the radio frequency spectrum and satellite orbits is, at base, a matter for government decision making and control. But how deeply should governments be involved in the implementation of their policy decisions regarding the allocation of these scarce resources to different services? And what tools should be used to help fairly assign resources to individual users and service providers? In the ITU, member states not only determine the allocation of resources, they also design the procedures for implementing these decisions and supervise the work of the secretariat in applying these procedures. In general, access to spectrum and orbital resources is given on a first-come-first-served basis; economic disciplines have played no part in this process. The explosive growth of satellite, cellular, and other forms of radiocommunication in the 1990s overwhelmed the capacity of the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) to work within this framework. Resolving the problem of the backlog in satellite system filings by formal ITU mechanisms proved extremely difficult, until a cost-benefit analysis prepared on the initiative of the secretariat exposed the inequities of the system and ended the free ride that had been enjoyed by a small number of rich and powerful developed countries at the ex-

19. See ITU (2003f) for information about the WTPF, other policy initiatives of the ITU general secretariat, and the effort under way to review the International Telecommunication Regulations. See ITU (2003d) for information about the policy and regulatory activities of the ITU-D.

20. See ITU (2003h) for information about the alternative approval process that allows ITU private sector members to approve technical standards (recommendations) without reference to member states.

pense of other member states, through the introduction of cost recovery.[21]

Case study 4—Raising awareness of the links between ICTs and development

One of the functions of the ITU Development Sector (ITU-D) is "to raise the level of awareness of decision makers concerning the important role of telecommunications in the national economic and social development programme" (ITU 2003b). The 1992 Geneva Constitution, which reorganized the ITU to face these and other challenges arising from the changing telecommunications environment, designed ITU-D using the same treaty-based template of conferences and study groups that it used to design the structures and working methods of the ITU-R and ITU-T, in spite of the differences that existed in the work carried out in these different areas. Was the application of an intergovernmental governance model the best way to achieve this critical objective? A comparison of the results achieved by ITU-D in raising high-level awareness with those achieved by the ITU's world and regional TELECOM Exhibitions and Forums—informal events that are among the largest and most successful ICT industry events in the world—suggests that it was probably not the most effective organizational option.[22]

These and other examples that could be cited from experience and observation suggest there is a way forward for the ITU. They show that the central problem facing the ITU does not lie in the policy framework of goals and principles that guide the activities of its members—save in the one principle that has so far been off limits for discussion and debate, the sovereignty principle. They show that the problem does not lie in the ITU's membership: these cases illustrate that developed and developing countries, the private sector, and civil society organizations can work together on even the most difficult issues that have consistently defeated the formal decision-making processes of the ITU when the constraints imposed by the sovereignty principle are relaxed. These examples also show that the ITU secretariat can play a useful role in supporting more inclusive governance practices if, as a former secretary general liked to say, "They are allowed to think," instead of being confined to their traditionally passive role.

These examples demonstrate that the fundamental problems facing the ITU, as it seeks to reform itself and contribute to the broader governance challenges of the third cycle, lie in the union's institutional framework—in its legal foundations, organizational structures, formal decision-making procedures, and working methods—that blocks progress by imposing constraints derived from the sovereignty principle in areas where they no longer make sense given the changes that have taken place in the global governance environment. The way forward, simply put, is to redesign these elements of the ITU governance model in way that allows form to follow function.

Future Shock?

It is also clear from some of these examples, as well as from the results of the Marrakech Plenipotentiary Conference, that this is not necessarily the path that ITU member states will choose to follow as they prepare for the next Plenipotentiary Conference in 2006. There is every danger that, without some shock mighty enough to shake the introversion and complacency that have characterized much of the ITU reform effort, the downward spiral traced in the previous section will continue.

It may be possible that a shock of this kind could be internally generated—that the friction built up as a result of a decade of frustration among the ITU's private sector members and among the countries that have taken leading roles in different aspects of the ITU reform movement will reach a high enough level to force a redefinition and a reorientation of the reform agenda. At present, however, this does not appear likely to happen. In its current state of financial crisis, the telecommunications industry has little time, attention, or money to spare for investment in yet another round of ITU reform, and the countries that have consistently championed the reform movement also appear to be running out of energy and enthusiasm, particularly as individuals who have played prominent roles in the reform movement leave the scene. In the current situation, organizational survival, protection of sectoral inter-

21. See ITU (2003e) for information about the work of the Satellite Backlog Action Group, the body tasked with resolving this problem.

22. See ITU (2003g) for information about the ITU TELECOM Exhibitions and Forums.

ests, and the pursuit of narrow national objectives are likely to be the dominant motivating forces, hardly ideal ingredients for launching an internal movement for radical reform.

Externally, the WSIS, which will unfold in parallel with the next stage of the ITU reform process, has the potential to provide the necessary shock, although not necessarily in positive ways.

As the institution responsible for organizing the summit on behalf of the UN system, the ITU may have an opportunity to claim a significant share of the credit if the summit succeeds in credibly meeting its objective of adopting goals, principles, and a plan of action that succeed in guiding governments, the private sector, civil society, and international organizations in developing and deploying ICTs in support of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration. Its technical foundations also put it in a good position to incorporate the new concerns about network security that have emerged on the international agenda post-9/11 into WSIS proceedings. A successful outcome of this kind would position the ITU to leverage its part in the preparation of the summit role into a leading role in the postsummit world. A failure, however, would further erode the ITU's standing and undermine its credibility as a serious player in the global governance game beyond the confines of its traditional mandate.

The shock needed to change the ITU, so that it continues to discharge effectively the governance functions that are the foundation of its value to the international community at the same time it begins to leverage its WSIS role into a position of governance leadership, likely can only come through the fusion of internal and external forces for change, coalesced around a new vision for the ITU, a new organizational design, a new governance structure, and new financial arrangements. The time has come for the ITU to learn the lessons of the past 10 years and to break up its current structure. This is the only way to release the full governance value that is currently buried in the ITU.

Toward a New Institutional Framework

To escape from its current impasse, to release the governance value that lies buried in its structures, and to prepare the ITU for a possible future role post-WSIS as the institutional home for a new model for governing global electronic networks, it will be necessary to break up the current ITU structure and create a much more loosely affiliated network of four organizations, each of which would assume one of the ITU's current governance roles and each of which would be governed, operated, and financed on the basis of arrangements tailored to its specific requirements.

In other words, instead of continuing to govern all of the activities currently and potentially performed by the ITU within the confines of an intergovernmental treaty framework, and instead of adopting a cookie-cutter approach to organizational design—that is, applying the same template to all activities no matter how different their responsibilities—the new organizational and governance model would allow form to follow function. This would mean that there would continue to be a regulatory agency, responsible for radio matters, that would be founded on a simplified treaty, and a new standardization agency that would be organized and governed under the leadership of the private sector.

Breaking up the current ITU structure and reorganizing its components on the basis of the services they provide to the international community would also mean merging the ITU-D, TELECOM Secretariat, and Strategy and Policy Unit into a new global development agency that would do policy research and analysis, provide training and consulting services, and organize discussion forums and exhibitions in response to client demand. Creating a structure of this kind would make it much easier for civil society organizations to participate in the work of the ITU.

The new model would also mean replacing the ITU's general governance and management structures (i.e., the Plenipotentiary Conference, Council, and General Secretariat) with a much lighter coordinating council that would include members drawn from the three new operating agencies, supported by a central service provider.

A key element of this model would be a plan to put the new network on a solid financial footing by replacing the ITU's current free-choice financing scheme—in which government effectively subsidizes the private sector and developing countries effectively subsidize the developed world—with a more rational model that would share the cost of ITU operations more equitably and capture some of the economic value inherent in the ITU's governance activities (i.e., the value inherent in ITU standards, radio spectrum and orbital allocations, and information

management) to help build the technical and policy capacity of developing countries, and support their fuller participation in ITU governance activities.[23] Without a quid pro quo that would simultaneously realign governance responsibilities and rebalance financial contributions in a way that would give developed and developing countries, the private sector, and civil society what they really want from the ITU, there is no possibility of real reform.

Building a Winning Coalition

It would be an enormous challenge to secure the agreement of ITU member states to organizational, financial, and governance changes of the kind recommended earlier. At this point, it is not clear which countries would have an interest in initiating a reform movement of this kind, although they are more likely to be found among the ranks of the developed and developing country mediators than among the ranks of the countries and regions that have been directly party to the sovereignty-induced stalemates that have impeded ITU reform and undermined its international credibility, moral authority, financial capacity, and policy creativity. In addition, it would be necessary to have early support from each of the other main groups identified earlier—particularly from the superpowers and the awakening giants—as well as from leaders from the developing world. On the basis of their past performance in the ITU and other international forums, this reform coalition might initially include countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom.

However initiated, it is clear that building a political coalition in support of this vision would require changes in the mind-set and behavior of many developing countries. It would mean abandoning forever the idea that the ITU and its member states could be restored to their former position at the center of the global governance universe. It would mean accepting the desirability of plural centers of power operating under different regimes and adopting a strategic approach to issues of global governance that would use different international forums to pursue national development goals in a consistent and coordinated fashion, just as developed countries have done. Above all, it would mean making changes in policy processes at the national and regional level in the developing world aimed at building capacity through pooling of resources and involvement of all stakeholders.

Changes of these kind in developing countries will only be possible with active support from developed countries, private sector, and not-for-profit organizations that: share the vision of a new model for governing global electronic networks, are prepared to live with its consequences, and are willing to assist developing countries in taking real advantage of the participatory opportunities it would present.

A key element in building a coalition of this kind would be a strategy to begin to open the ITU up to the light of day. In the view of many, it resembles a closed shop or a highly restrictive, somewhat secretive club. There is little understanding of the importance of ITU decisions at senior levels in the public and private sectors and little appreciation of its impact on the world. Other organizations, such as the WTO, have been forced to become more transparent, open, and accountable to the international community. It and the process of global governance are arguably the better for it. The great success of TELECOM events and the audiences attracted by ITU policy publications and discussion forums suggest what may be possible if the ITU becomes more open to the world around it.

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23. In the ITU financial system member states are free to choose the number of units they wish to contribute to the ITU budget from a scale running from 40 units at the high end to one-sixteenth of a unit at the low end, instead of being assessed contributions on the basis of national wealth or according to some other measure of capacity to pay. Sector members contribute to budget on the same basis, although the monetary value of a sector member unit is only one-fifth the value of a member state unit, a ratio related to the fact that sector members do not have the right to vote and other equally intangible considerations. The current value of a member state unit is 315,000 Swiss francs, whereas the value of a sector member unit is 63,000 Swiss francs. Member states currently contribute about 65% of the ITU budget and sector members contribute about 13%. The remainder comes from the sale of publications, cost recovery for certain activities, and miscellaneous sources of income. With few exceptions, developed countries contribute less to the ITU under the free choice system than they would under a UN-style system of assessment on the basis of capacity to pay, whereas developing countries and LDCs contribute more. The contributions of sector members cover only a portion of the cost of supporting their activities in the ITU.

Whatever the right combination of elements, it is clear that there is very little time for ITU members to create a winning strategy. The work of the G8 DOT Force, the UN ICT Task Force, and the preparations under way for the first phase of the WSIS have already begun to affect the governance universe, positively and negatively. The second phase of the summit process will coincide with preparations for the ITU's next Plenipotentiary Conference in 2006. Without rapid action, the opportunity to reform radically the ITU's organizational structure—to resolve finally the problems that have impeded its performance for the past decade and to fit the ITU for a leading role in the postsummit environment—will be foreclosed and the ITU will have no option but to continue its descent in an ever-tightening spiral.

Lessons for WSIS and the Broader Quest

Clearly, the successes and failures of the ITU's attempts over the past decade to develop more inclusive governance arrangements have important implications for the future direction of the ITU reform movement. Equally, there are lessons that can be learned from this experience and applied to the broader quest for inclusive governance of global ICTs, both through the WSIS process and in the reform movements now underway in other organizations.

The first lesson concerns the goals of the WSIS process. The summit is unusual in that it will take place in two phases, the first in Geneva in December 2003 and the second in Tunis in November 2005. The UN General Assembly has decided that the output of the first phase should be a declaration of principles and a plan of action. But what of the second phase? Some have argued that it should result in a treaty for regulating cyberspace, or a charter specifying the obligations of developed countries toward the developing world. The experience of the ITU—over the past decade as well as throughout its long history—suggests that goals of this kind are unrealistic and that the time is not right now for a single, overarching treaty instrument to govern global ICTs. We are clearly in a period of governance diversification and experimentation, similar in some respects to the first long cycle described at the beginning of this article. This does not mean, however, that new, focused governance arrangements are not needed, even at the treaty level. A strong case can be made, particularly in light of the changes that have taken place since 9/11, for a convention on cyber security. A strong case can also be made for the creation of innovative financing mechanisms, based on partnership between government and the private sector, to support the build-out of ICT infrastructure in some developing countries and regions. However, the WSIS process will only succeed if governance issues of this kind are treated separately and on their own merits. Attempts to bundle them into a comprehensive treaty-based package are bound to fail.

The second lesson concerns the need to align the form of governance arrangements with their function and to avoid one-size-fits-all approaches based either on the ideology of national sovereignty or on the ideology of industry self-regulation. As mentioned previously, the *Louder Voices* project gave detailed study to the WTO and ICANN, as well as to the ITU. These three organizations provide interesting points of comparison in view of the differences that exist in their structure, functions, working methods, and culture. Neither the WTO nor ICANN is currently as inclusive as the ITU, because the former limits participation in its work to governments, in spite of the enormous impact of its decisions on the private sector and civil society, whereas the latter limits participation to the private sector, in spite of the strong interest many developing country governments have in its activities. Like the ITU, both of these organizations are seeking ways of becoming more inclusive within the framework of their founding ideologies, principally through the adoption of informal mechanisms that relax the constraints that flow from these ideologies. And like the ITU, both of these organizations are likely to find that it is not possible to become truly inclusive without more fundamental organizational changes that clearly separate public and private governance responsibilities at the same time as they create greater synergies between them.

The third lesson confirms two of the principal findings of the *Louder Voices* study: first, that the key to strengthening developing country participation in the governance of global ICTs lies in building technical and policy capacity at the national and regional levels; and second, that without this capacity changes to the governance structures and decision-making processes of international organizations that

are designed to create special spaces for developing countries may mean very little in practice, even if they are potentially valuable (MacLean et al. 2002:26–28). The ITU has a broad range of developing country participants from the public and private sectors, long experience in providing technical assistance, and a separate organizational sector devoted to development activities, and it has imposed development obligations on its regulatory and standardization functions. In spite of this, developing countries are far from being fully included in the ITU's principal governance activities, fundamentally because they often lack the capacity to participate effectively at every stage of the governance process, which includes technology assessment, issue identification, agenda setting, policy formulation, coalition building, negotiation, policy implementation, and evaluation. Like the ITU, other organizations must direct a larger portion of their energies and resources toward building these capacities if they are truly serious about achieving the goal of inclusive governance of global ICTs. ■

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