

# RESOLUTION ON TRANSPARENCY

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## PREAMBLE

Access to the free and open Internet has the potential to create benefits in all aspects of our daily life. The Internet is a tool to combat inequality, accelerate development and it enables individuals to exercise their human rights online and offline.

If international trade agreements support a free and open Internet, which is just, fair, and development oriented and furthers the interoperability of Internet information services, that could assist member countries to harness the potential of the Internet to promote social and economic development for all.

Like all other aspects of the international management of the Internet, the development of trade rules that affect the online and digital environment must also be transparent and democratic, ensuring the meaningful and accountable participation of all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, the technical community, the academic community, and end users.

In order to restore public support for the international trade agreements of the 21st century, policy-makers should bring trade agreements into closer alignment with the Internet community's norms of open, inclusive multistakeholder participation, by adopting new practices for the active dissemination of information and the promotion of broad public consultation.

## PRINCIPLES

### Transparency

Governments have a responsibility to inform their citizens of how they regulate and to receive public comments on such regulations. Hence, trade negotiators should proactively and regularly disseminate information about that negotiation, including draft proposals and consolidated texts, to all

affected stakeholders in order to enable them to be fully informed and to meaningfully participate in the negotiation process.

## Consultation

Governments conducting trade negotiations have a responsibility to take affirmative measures to ensure that representatives of all interested parties, including organizations and experts representing Internet users and consumers, have the opportunity for meaningful involvement, access and collaboration with government during the development of textual proposals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Countries should **publish their own textual proposals** on rules in ongoing international trade negotiations at the same time as these proposals are presented to their negotiating partners.
- Countries engaged in trade negotiations should agree to **publish consolidated texts** after each round of ongoing negotiations.
- **Trade ministries should act transparently** by publishing records of their meetings with stakeholders, and should be overseen by an independent transparency officer, subject to statutory confidentiality and non-disclosure standards.
- **Domestic consultations on textual proposals** should be opened up to the public through on-the-record notice and comment, and public hearing processes at relevant points during the development of textual proposals.
- Countries should **make trade advisory bodies more balanced** by taking proactive steps to include more diverse legitimate stakeholders such as representatives of Internet users, and organisations working in the areas of human rights, development, media, and consumer issues.

## REFERENCES

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