

The role of the Commonwealth in facilitating cooperation in Cyberspace

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Honourable Adriel Braithwaite, distinguished guests, on behalf of the CTO, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Commonwealth Cybersecurity Forum 2016. You join us at an exciting time for the CTO as we celebrate our 115th anniversary as well as launch the Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, which was adopted last week by the CTO Council.

Before I address the topic of the role of the Commonwealth in facilitating cooperation in Cyberspace, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our hosts BT, and our sponsors – platinum sponsor ICANN and gold sponsor Huawei. In fact special thanks are due to BT, one of our key ICT Sector Members, who is hosting this important Commonwealth event for the third year.

We have already heard from Les Anderson of BT and Cherine Chalaby of ICANN on the role their organisations are playing in protecting Cyberspace so that it can deliver its developmental potential, and I thank them for their contribution.

As I said, the CTO Council has just approved the organisation's Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2020. The Strategic Plan commits the organisation to the following six strategic goals:

- Enhance the value of CTO membership and expand the CTO membership base;
- Promote enabling regulatory environments;
- Promote affordable and high quality broadband connectivity;
- Promote a culture of Cybersecurity and effective Cybergovernance;
- Promote the development and use of ICT applications for socio-economic development; and
- Ensure the effective coordination of Commonwealth countries at international ICT conferences and meetings.

These are all very important areas and the staff of the CTO Secretariat, and myself, are all very excited about taking this forward. However, it is goal four – promote a culture of Cybersecurity and effective Cybergovernance – which I want to focus on today, and how the CTO can play a unique role in ensuring the Commonwealth plays its part in facilitating international cooperation in Cyberspace.

The rapid development of Cyberspace has connected many millions of people – it has truly started to bridge the digital divide. The open, decentralised nature of

Cyberspace has empowered individuals, fostered innovation and driven development.

However, Cyberspace also presents dangers for its users. It can be used for criminal activities by targeting individuals through identity fraud, targeting the vulnerable through child exploitation, targeting communities through extremism and even targeting whole countries – the experiences of Estonia in 2007 being one example. Cyberspace relies on its interlinked infrastructure. It must be secure and resilient to attack. Thus Cybersecurity has to operate in many domains, from technical to human; from physical to virtual.

In view of the interlinked nature of Cyberspace, coordinated international action is essential to address these threats. And with the variety of contrasting views on how to govern Cyberspace, harmonisation is critical to facilitate growth and to realise the full potential of Cyberspace. That is why the CTO, under its new strategic plan, will not only continue but expand on our leading role in this area, particularly with Commonwealth countries. With its membership of 53-countries around the world, coupled with a network of key decision makers and experts, the CTO is ideally placed to facilitate cooperation across the Commonwealth and beyond.

The Commonwealth Charter of March 2013 reflects the values and aspirations which unite the Commonwealth – democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Charter expresses the commitment of member states to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.

These values and principles are equally well applicable to the governance of Cyberspace, and they were the basis for the Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model, which the CTO developed, in consultation with stakeholders, and which was adopted by Commonwealth ICT Ministers at the Commonwealth ICT Ministers Forum 2014.

From the Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model the CTO produced the Commonwealth Approach for Developing National Cybersecurity Strategies. This guide was developed to assist Commonwealth countries to develop their national Cybersecurity strategies in a way that is in harmony with the principles of the Commonwealth and maximises the developmental impact of Cyberspace. Importantly this guide is applicable to countries outside of the Commonwealth and, indeed, to the whole of Cyberspace.

I am pleased to say that this guide has so far been applied to four Commonwealth countries: Botswana, Cameroon, Fiji and Uganda. Based on the experiences of these projects, the CTO has now developed an updated version of

the guide which will undoubtedly assist more countries in the near future to develop, update and implement their national Cybersecurity strategies.

So how can these principles be further applied to the governance of Cyberspace? And what is the role of the Commonwealth in facilitating cooperation in Cyberspace? As a unique subset of the world's countries, and, as we've heard, guided by the Commonwealth values and the principles of the Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model, Commonwealth countries are well placed to approach Cybersecurity in a coordinated manner.

Among many other things, we will hear during this conference about establishing effective national Cybersecurity strategies, about facilitating international capacity building and the need for international coordination in this area. The CTO's work in developing national Cybersecurity strategies not only strengthens the Cybersecurity posture of the individual countries, but also contributes to developing norms and standards in Cybersecurity across the Commonwealth, which leads easily to international coordination on various aspects of Cybersecurity and coordinated capacity building across borders.

The unique nature of the Commonwealth also offers opportunities for connecting people and businesses across continents, leading to economic growth and innovation in Cyberspace. We will hear tomorrow about opportunities – and threats – for businesses and consumers, and how we can realise the potentials of the digital economy.

Indeed, this conference offers opportunities for businesses across the Commonwealth to connect with potential customers and partners and contribute to the efforts to strengthen Cybersecurity in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth, with 2.2 billion people, belonging to many religions, nationalities and ethnic groups, is an ideal example of strength in diversity. The way the Commonwealth has grown from strength to strength, speaks volumes about the benefits of inclusivity. In an age when attempts are being made to use Cyberspace for extremism, the Commonwealth is a beacon of hope. The session on Cyber Terrorism will examine how we can work together to eradicate extremism from Cyberspace and make it an exciting, safe and pleasant place.

In 2014 the CTO were mandated by Commonwealth ICT Ministers to coordinate the engagement of Commonwealth countries in international ICT fora. With our network of members, consultants, policy-makers and opinion formers, we are well placed to facilitate Commonwealth cooperation in Cyberspace and, if I can take you back to our strategic goals, work on this area is one of our key priorities.

Indeed, given this mandate we have recently taken over management of the Commonwealth Internet Governance Forum which, along with coordinating

participation from Commonwealth countries in international fora, and also seeks to develop capacity and understanding on many of Cyberspace's policy issues.

Before I wrap up, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the UK, our host country, and especially the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, for their generous support to the CTO's Cybersecurity agenda, as a part of which we have assisted member countries to develop their National Cybersecurity Strategies. We look forward to UK's continued support in strengthening Cybersecurity across the Commonwealth.

Along with FCO, we are well aware that Cyberspace is only as strong as its weakest link, and that the least-secure countries are not only at most risk, but also those which pose the highest risk to the entire Cyberspace. We will hear more on FCO's work tomorrow, but in the meantime, thank you for your assistance.

Most importantly, I thank you for being here today. It is clear that you all recognise the importance of Cybersecurity and the importance of developing a safe and secure Cyberspace, and I promise that you will hear much to assist you in this area. Working together with you – the stakeholders – the CTO will strengthen Cybersecurity in the Commonwealth.

Thank you.