



COMMONWEALTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION COUNCIL MEETING 2013

Abuja Declaration on the Proposed Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model

1 The Commonwealth of Nations spanning six continents and five oceans, brings together people of numerous races, languages and religions, who are at various stages of economic development. Its shared goals and principles in democracy and development, adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Governments in Singapore in 1971 and reaffirmed in Harare in 1991, include liberty of the individual, equal rights for all citizens and their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live.

2 The Commonwealth aims to achieve the freest possible flow of international trade on terms fair and equitable to all, to encourage the flow of adequate resources to the developing countries in a true spirit of partnership and to establish conditions conducive to sustained investment and growth in the developing countries.

3 The Commonwealth considers itself as one of the most fruitful associations to promote international co-operation which is essential to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice, and secure development.

4 The Cyberspace has fast evolved to become a place where innovation, interaction and entrepreneurship flourish, leading to economic development. It has provided people from all corners of the world with unparalleled opportunities while facilitating better understanding amongst different cultures. On the other hand the Cyberspace has given rise to dangers, both new and existing dangers with a Cyber- element, which calls for concerted action, in most instances spanning more than one jurisdiction. The impact of each country's overall approach to governing the behaviour in Cyberspace is felt far beyond its borders.

5 The principles and values of the Commonwealth are consistent with the basic tenets of governing the Cyberspace which have made it a thriving community full of opportunities, with equal rights for all while facilitating the free flow of international trade and promoting international co-operation.

6 Thus while it is both feasible and desirable to develop a unique Commonwealth approach to govern the Cyberspace which can be subscribed to by Commonwealth countries and open for adoption by non-Commonwealth countries, a great deal of work remains yet to be done to bring the strengths of the Commonwealth to bear on the governing of the Cyberspace.

7 The Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation ("CTO"), as the Commonwealth agency mandated in the field of ICTs, should take the lead in developing the Commonwealth Cybergovernance Model ("Model"), by taking into account the views, priorities and concerns of all Commonwealth countries, liaising closely with other stakeholders whose inputs are necessary to reflect the multistakeholder nature of the Cyberspace.

8 Subject to the outcomes of consultations the CTO shall facilitate and conduct, the Model may seek to

- Foster innovation, freedom and understanding
- Promote contributions to economic development
- Facilitate social interactions
- Recognise legitimate economic, cultural and security concerns of members
- Promote multistakeholder partnerships
- Facilitate Pan-Commonwealth consultations and international linkages