For Immediate Release

ISOC GHANA LEADS DISUCSSIONS ON INTERNET SECURITY
Accra, Ghana April 23, 2010: "Cyber crime has become extremely pervasive since the invention of the Internet. In Ghana, many people associate the phenomena with *Sakawa*, which is Internet fraud or scamming. However, cyber crime goes beyond Internet fraud, it could also involve the hacking of networks, which could destroy a nation's critical infrastructure. The perpetrators of cyber crime have become very sophisticated, so there is the need to protect our Internet resources by waging warfare against them," said Prof Nii Narku Quaynor.

Prof Quaynor, made these remarks at social night, when he chaired a social gathering organised by the Ghana Chapter of the Internet Society (ISOC) under the theme, ***Internet Security and the National Effort.*** It was attended by about 50 people from ISOC members, government, civil society, industry and academia.

Reiterating the importance of protecting our critical infrastructure, Mr. Daniel Asante, coordinator of the Ghana Computer Emergency Response Team (**ghCERT**) informed the gathering that **ghCERT** was partnering with government agencies, ghNOG, ISOC Ghana, GhNIC and other organisations to create awareness on Internet security issues and how some of the incidences can be prevented. He however, said that because of the pervasive nature of the Internet, it was difficult to track down on the perpetrators and that everyone was obligated to protect the Internet against anti-social acts.

An interesting question that came up for discussion was how much security was needed to prevent the cyber crime. While one school was of the thought that security was extremely necessary and that policies should be put in place to curb cyber crime, another was of the opinion that, the more security, the less friendly the Internet becomes, since the Internet is a network of networks and used by a large number of people.

Adding on to the debate, Prof. Quaynor said that technology keeps changing very rapidly and policies very quickly become obsolete. Moreover, policies on Internet usage are done globally with the involvement of organisations such as, the IETF, ISOC, IGF, ITU, ICANN etc, and these normally take time before they are implemented. He said, rather than preventing the occurrences, the role of **ghCERT** is to respond to problems as and when they occur. Prof. Quaynor stressed on the importance of sharing of best practices among IT operators on a regularly, so that they are abreast of the issues.

Presenting the topic, ***Mitigating the 'Sakawa' Challenge,*** Mr. Charles Nelson, of Youth Against Cyber Crime, described himself as 'a lone ranger' in the war against Sakawa. He described the phenomena as endemic and that the future was bleak if the government does not take measures to nip the crime in the bud. Of great concern to Mr. Nelson,

however is the erroneous perception among people that young people who use Internet are all engaged in the Sakawa business. "There must be a reorientation of the minds of the youth that the Internet goes beyond Sakawa." He said. "Advocacy is therefore, the key to change the mindset of these young people.

As the Internet continues to grow, there is a need for global computer emergency response teams to curb the incidences of cyber crime. The Ghana project is therefore, a laudable initiative. According to Prof Quaynor, there is the need to create network of government ministries agencies and departments to come out with a defence strategy. He made this call when Mr. Godfred Ofori-Som, Chair, Technical Committee, ISOC, Ghana, Ayittey Bulley, Vodafone, Ghana, Daniel Asante and Charles Nelson, constituted a panel to discuss the way forward in forging a strong computer emergency response team. Mr. Asante, said that currently *ghCERT* was operating on funds from benefactors and voluntary contributions and that there was the need to look for other funding alternatives. Dr. Quaynor called on *ghCERT* to form strong ties with the government and tackle the issues from a multi-stakeholder approach. Mr. Asante made a call for volunteers to join in the crusade to make the Internet a safer place. He said *GhCERT* was putting a portal in place where it would disseminate information via listservs.

He also called for volunteers to team up with *ghCERT* to create awareness of the initiative. Four other CERTS in Africa can be found in Tunisia, South Africa, Mauritius and Egypt.

The evening was climaxed with the launching of the new ISOC website, which has current Web 2 features, user generation content, with face book and twitter integrations. The launch was performed by Prof. Quaynor, Board Chairman of ISOC Ghana.

About Internet Society Ghana Chapter
The Internet Society Ghana Chapter (ISOC-Ghana) is a not-for-profit organization and official Chapter of the Internet Society. The mission of ISOC –Ghana is to inform the private and public community of Internet users, on recent developments in Internet technologies and their impact on today's global society.

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