

Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI)

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)
Tunis, 16 – 18 November 2005

PrepCom-3 – 19-30 September 2005
Subcommittee A on Internet Governance

Intervention by Christopher Sorek (SAP)
Thursday 29 September 2005

Thank you Mr. Chairman:

We now enter the final phase of what has been a most difficult process. The world has been asked to find the way to best harness the extraordinary resource of the Internet to promote development throughout the world. Based on last night's proceedings, we are presented with a diverse set of proposals that offer different visions of how to go about the task.

How do we all sort them out? What makes the most sense? What really promotes development?

Business suggests that it is important to keep "first principles" in mind. We have repeatedly offered ours for consideration, and we do so again here. First, the result must be the best we can do for development. Second, it must honor the Geneva Principles and the lessons learned from the history of the Internet to ensure that the result provides for the full and effective participation of all stakeholders. Third, it must ensure the stability and security of the current system. Fourth, it must do no harm.

When WSIS began, we in the business community were asked to participate. We took that invitation from the world's governments to mean something like this:

You, business, and the rest of the Internet community have done well in innovating, establishing a stable and secure foundation for the Internet, and launching, growing, and operating the Internet. You have brought the Internet to the developed and most of the developing world in just a brief period of time. Now, work with us to build upon this. Join us so that we can all collaborate in that successful development strategy to bring the Internet and its wonderful benefits to the rest of the world.

The business community accepted that challenge. We have continued existing programs and launched new programs to address the Millennium Declaration Goals and to implement the Geneva Plan of Action. We will attach a few short descriptions of examples of such efforts in submitting this statement to the Secretariat.

We have also participated here so that we can work with all the stakeholders in this process to put the best of what we have learned over the past two decades to use to make the Internet ubiquitous and affordable throughout the world.

There has been much talk in this meeting about government's public policy role. We recognize the critical role of governments, but it should not obscure or diminish the roles of others. That is especially true where those others have clearly and unequivocally demonstrated their contribution in the development of the Internet.

We have previously suggested that all stakeholders should respect the core competencies of others.

The Internet is wonderously dynamic. It has shown astonishing adaptability as it has spread around the world far faster than its early pioneers could ever have anticipated. The founding principles of the Internet, such as the end-to-end principle, and innovation at the edges should continue on that path for many years, if not decades, into the future. So, too, will the mechanisms that decide how to meet the challenges associated with that growth.

A prime lesson learned from the process is that the international multistakeholder cooperative approach has performed well. We believe that the wisest course is to adopt an evolutionary and adaptive approach which builds on this foundation.

Therefore, if we wish to improve upon the current situation, we believe that these discussions have shown us the way. There is no doubt about the need for further capacity building, particularly human resources, in the developing world. Without such capacity, developing nations cannot build or operate the necessary Internet infrastructure, and they cannot fully participate in any Internet governance mechanisms. We should collectively, business, government and the wider Internet community commit to a greater effort at such capacity building.

Second, we have all discussed that various stakeholder communities each have a role in resolving important issues that impact the Internet, such as cyber-security and spam. We have also recognized that in this decentralized process, individual stakeholders innovate to meet challenges, and that out of that process, best practices come to be recognized. It is important to the overall benefit of the Internet for all stakeholders to cooperate and for best practices to be adopted by each stakeholder within its core competency.

We believe that whatever we choose to do should focus on those two goals. A commitment to capacity building and to the exchange of ideas and best practices would be worthwhile results of this PrepCom.

We seek an open, global, multistakeholder approach. We have not seen a persuasive case for extensive governmental intervention nor have we seen evidence that governments can take on any aspect of the technical management or operation of the Internet and do better than is currently being done. We do not believe, particularly in light of our own difficulties in participating fully in this process, that any of the forms of government intervention proposed offer anywhere near the levels of full and effective multistakeholder participation that distinguish the processes that already exist.

We urge that all stakeholders here work together in an open, constructive and collaborative manner. We all seek to close the digital divide. The best way is together, respecting each other's expertise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

WHAT IS THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF BUSINESS INTERLOCUTORS (CCBI)?

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held during the week of 8 December 2003 in Geneva, culminating in the Summit segment on 10-12 December 2003. The second part of this Summit will take place in 2005 in Tunisia.

Principals of the Summit host countries and executive secretariat invited the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to create the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) as a vehicle through which to mobilize and coordinate the involvement of the worldwide business community in the processes leading to and culminating in the Summit. ICC and the CCBI group led the private-sector effort to provide substantive input into the first phase of the Summit, and mobilized the private sector to participate in the preparatory phases and at the Summit itself. The CCBI, is constituted of the following organizations and their members: Among the organizations actively involved in the work of the CCBI, in addition to ICC, are: Asociacion Hispanoamericana de Centros de Investigacion y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones, Brazilian Chamber of Electronic Commerce, the Business Council of the United Nations, Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD; Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce; Global Information Infrastructure Commission; Money Matters Institute; United States Council on International Business; World Economic Forum; World Information Technology and Services Alliance; French Publishers Association; International Publishers Association; and Gobierno Digital.

For further information regarding CCBI, please consult the WSIS website at: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html>
the CCBI website at www.businessatwsis.net
or ICC's website at: <http://www.iccwbo.org/policy/ebitt/id2343/index.html>
or contact wsis@iccwbo.org

ABOUT ICC

ICC is the world business organization, the only representative body that speaks with authority on behalf of enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world. ICC promotes an open international trade and investment system and the market economy. Business leaders and experts drawn from the ICC membership establish the business stance on broad issues of trade and investment, e-business, IT and telecoms policy as well as on vital technical and sectoral subjects. ICC was founded in 1919 and today it groups thousands of member companies and associations from over 130 countries.

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