

**Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) and
the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)
CCBI/ICC questions and further input
regarding the Internet Governance Forum
6 February 2006**

IGF Consultations – 16-17 February 2006, Geneva

The global business community has welcomed the opportunity presented by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process to discuss how to bring the benefits of the Information Society to people around the world. Business believes that the post-WSIS processes present continued opportunities to build even better ties to other Information Society stakeholders particularly to address Internet-related issues.

Business considers, that a truly cost-efficient, fully multi-stakeholder, Internet Governance Forum (IGF) for discussion and exchange of information and experiences based on focused, specific agendas is an inclusive, pragmatic and constructive way to further facilitate such cooperation. Full involvement of all stakeholders is an essential requirement for all aspects of the IGF—starting from consultations through establishment, to operational planning and events, as outlined in the “Tunis Agenda for the Information Society”.

The planning for the IGF, including the formation of a bureau and the provisioning of administrative and logistical support services, will determine whether business interests and concerns are taken into consideration, and whether business can thus embrace the IGF. In order to achieve the goal of greater cooperation, there must be thorough and continuous consultation between the UN Secretary General’s work in this area and the business community. We stand ready to work with other stakeholders and the UN to help in designing an IGF that supports “multistakeholder dialogue” on appropriate issues and does not duplicate the work of existing fora. Establishing a good working relationship between the UN planners and the business community now, and joint efforts during this formative stage to build an inclusive, efficient, open and transparent process are key factors in securing essential support from the business community. We encourage the IGF to take full advantage of the expertise of all stakeholders, especially the business community.

As a follow up to the CCBI input of 15 December 2005 on the IGF, this contribution outlines a number of priorities, reiterates essential considerations, and sets forth proposals regarding establishment of the IGF which can be discussed at the IGF consultations to be held in Geneva on 16 and 17 February 2006.

Consultations and IGF procedural priorities

Business, represented here by ICC and CCBI, believes the following priorities to be fundamental:

- All stakeholders from all countries have the opportunity to participate on an equal basis in the consultations and at IGF event(s), and all planning for the IGF include the same basis of multistakeholder involvement;
- No stakeholder group may be excluded from the discussions of the IGF;
- The IGF will be neutral and non-duplicative, and should focus primarily on information exchange;
- As set forth in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda, the IGF will not have decision-making powers; and
- Further consultations-- both online and in-person-- for all stakeholders should be planned promptly to discuss many issues that are difficult to address at this time without answers to several preliminary questions.

Forum event

- ***What is the purpose of the first IGF event in Athens?***
CCBI has recognized the importance of having all stakeholders in the Internet come together to discuss a topic or a limited set of topics that are important to its development and success in bringing the benefits of the Internet to more people, and that could benefit from further outreach, information exchange and human capacity building. To be effective, the first event in Athens and any IGF events in the future should focus on one or a few closely related topics and should not be an attempt to open discussion of a plethora of all possible issues.
- ***What should be the focus of the first IGF event and the topic(s) addressed?***

The Tunis Agenda (paragraph 72) gave the IGF a mandate to promote the expansion and continued development of the Internet through information exchange and sharing of best practices. We therefore believe that the IGF event should focus on information exchange and sharing of best practices.

To maximize that goal, the IGF:

- should only address issues that would truly benefit from international multistakeholder dialogue or work with existing fora to improve awareness and exchange of information on topics already being considered;
- should not duplicate the work underway in existing organizations;
- should be consistent with the aim of promoting the security and integrity of the Internet, and not compete with or impede the

- technical management and technical coordination of the Internet or critical Internet resources; and
- should maintain the focus on development oriented aspects of Internet governance, such as enhancement of capacity building to increase meaningful participation in Internet related issues by all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries.

We are encouraged by the focus of the IGF mandate¹ on capacity-building, education and skills training that are essential to the expansion of the Information Society and that could benefit from the exchange of best practices, experiences and partnership opportunities called for in paragraph 72 of the Tunis Agenda.

Furthermore, we are sensitive to the limited financial and human resources of all stakeholders. The development of the IGF should bear in mind the extent of human and financial resources required to establish and participate in it, especially since these same resources could alternatively be applied to implementing the development goals of the WSIS. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the IGF makes the most effective use of such limited human and financial resources, and that all stakeholders optimize the use of existing mechanisms for Internet governance.

- ***What will be the typical length of an IGF event?***

Based on the principles articulated in this and previous inputs, CCBI believes that it is difficult to state an exact timeframe for the IGF event in Athens before its specific purpose(s) are defined. Two days should be sufficient for the IGF to focus on a few closely related issues, with the majority of the time structured around interactive discussion and information exchange through workshops and break out sessions.

The IGF should meet no more than once a year in light of limited human and financial resources. Continued online dialogue and information exchange could be ongoing.

- ***How will IGF event agendas be developed?***

The bureau could be responsible for developing the agenda in consultation with stakeholders from the relevant groups. The inclusion of issues to be covered on the agenda must be done by consensus following such consultations, which can be facilitated through outside multistakeholder advisory or programme outreach efforts. This bureau structure is discussed further below.

- ***How will IGF event discussions be structured?***

The discussions should be structured in a way that facilitates the exchange of information and true dialogue. IGF discussions should continue to build on the WGIG multistakeholder model, where all

¹ Consistent with other elements of this mandate, CCBI understands that the “emerging issues” mentioned in sub-paragraph g) refers solely to “emerging public policy issues related to Internet governance topics”.

stakeholders had equal status and where there was no particular speaking order. Lengthy presentations should be avoided, and interactive discussion should be encouraged. Focused ‘workshops’ and ‘break out sessions’ could be a constructive format for the event.

Because this is an informational and education-oriented event, rules created for typical international, intergovernmental negotiation and decision-making situations, such as UN rules, are not appropriate for this multistakeholder discussion and information exchange forum.

Any IGF event(s) should be open to all interested stakeholders. IGF should invite existing organizations to participate as well.

Participation of all stakeholders should be facilitated by the availability of translation into other languages, as well as the use of online tools to facilitate interaction and participation. The availability of tools, such as WiFi and webcasting, should be ensured and preferably with no restrictive measures and at no cost to the participants.

- ***How will participation of all stakeholders from developing countries be ensured?***

Governments made commitments during the WSIS process to ensure effective multistakeholder participation and the “full involvement” of all stakeholders in Internet development and governance, as expressed throughout the Geneva and Tunis documents. The importance of these commitments should be understood at all levels, including in any informal or formal consultations held on the formation of the IGF and its bureau, and the provisioning of secretariat services, as critical to its success.

Wherever possible, e-mail, webcasts, wikis, and online collaboration tools should be used in order to maximize the interactions that the IGF can facilitate online and minimize the need for expensive face-to-face meetings. The IGF event(s) should be webcast or broadcast so that stakeholders who cannot attend in-person, particularly those from developing countries, will have another means of participating in or at least be able to follow the event without incurring the cost of travel. If the meetings are too long, this option would be less feasible, thus the 2 day maximum mentioned on page 3.

Considering that many of the various stakeholders are interested in both the IGF and other WSIS follow-up and implementation activities, CCBI suggests that IGF event(s) and related post-WSIS activities should be coordinated to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders and reduce travel and other costs. Setting dates and venues well in advance and in close proximity to each other will help more stakeholders to participate in these activities.

Composition and Role of the bureau

- ***What will the role of the bureau be?***
- ***How will the bureau members be selected?***
- ***Who will be organizing the process of selection of the bureau members?***
- ***What are the criteria for the bureau members?***
- ***How many bureau members will there be?***
- ***What will the time commitment and responsibilities of the bureau members be?***

Careful consideration needs to be given to the composition of any bureau that is put into place for the IGF. Given the need for careful consideration, CCBI/ICC will likely comment further as the discussion about its composition and role evolves. As preliminary comments we offer the following principles to guide such discussion and the ultimate decision.

The Tunis Agenda supports the critical and equal role of all stakeholders. The process for deciding the composition and role of the bureau must be transparent and involve all stakeholders. An open and consultative process should be used for designating the members of the bureau from all stakeholder groups. Business would, for example, expect its representatives in the bureau to reflect the range of sectors affected by the Internet governance issues, and also ensure that real consultations amongst the business communities at the national, regional and international levels can take place.

Moreover, any bureau must include representatives from each of the many stakeholders and require consensus among representatives from these stakeholder groups on all decisions related to the operation of the IGF. There should be joint leadership involving representatives from each stakeholder group. The bureau should be small.

It must also be capable of effectively involving experts in any issues that it agrees will be addressed. Much of the work in selecting agendas and organizing programmes could be done by outreach to multistakeholder Internet experts with the necessary knowledge and experience to inform the discussions. These could draw upon appropriate expertise for specific issues or issue clusters depending upon the event and its agenda. Different topics would require the input of different experts that may not be members of the bureau, thereby enhancing the IGF's ability to further the exchange of useful information and experiences. This would also enable the IGF to enhance the benefits of work being done by existing organizations, and avoid any duplication.

Consideration also needs to be given to the *role of the bureau* and *what kinds of decisions would be made by the bureau*. It is not clear yet whether the

bureau would determine when and where any future IGF events would take place or whether such decisions will be made through a mechanism that has yet to be established. CCBI believes that the multistakeholder bureau should be responsible for all decisions regarding operational aspects of an IGF event(s), be accountable to the UN Secretary General and follow appropriate transparency rules.

The Tunis Agenda gives a mandate for a small and economical structure for the IGF. A small bureau could efficiently perform its operational duties related to the IGF with the aid of external multistakeholder expert groups, as described above. The role of the bureau should also include organizing online consultations and communications with all stakeholders regarding IGF events. Any necessary administrative or logistical support functions related to an IGF event could be handled in conjunction with the host by a few people tasked with event logistics and administrative support for online consultations, for example. We understand that consideration is being given to a secretariat, in addition to the mandated bureau. Stakeholders should consider how to ensure that the necessary functions can be accomplished with the smallest and most efficient structure.

IGF meeting outcomes

An IGF event should promote interactive discussion amongst all stakeholders on the selected issue(s). The direct and most tangible outcomes of the IGF, accordingly, should be neutral written summaries of the discussions, and exchange of information and best practices and experiences that occur at the meeting. While such summaries should in no way be regarded as dispositive of the issues discussed, they would be most effective if prepared with a view to assisting all stakeholders and national public policy development, and thereby promoting the objectives of the meetings.

The IGF as a venue for discussion as well as the bureau should not engage in producing any decisions or substantive work products other than those related to the operational aspects of the IGF. It should rather focus on how best to facilitate the exchange of vast amounts of information on key issues that are being produced around the world by many stakeholders.

Finally, we wish to re-iterate our views about the fundamental principles that should underlie both the discussion about the IGF and substantive Internet public policy issues. We do so to make clear that everything we have said regarding the IGF is consistent with these values. They are:

Fundamental principles related to Internet governance

- a) *Ensure the stable, secure and consistent functioning of an end-to-end Internet;*
- b) *Ensure full and effective multi-stakeholder involvement (including governments, the private sector, the technical expert and academic community, civil society and relevant international organizations) in policy shaping and development at the national, regional and international levels, recognizing the shared responsibility of all stakeholders, each within their respective roles and responsibilities;*
- c) *Foster innovation and development;*
- d) *Promote the free flow of information and the continued evolution toward internationalization² of Internet content and software;*
- e) *Preserve private sector and technical community leadership in the technical management of the Internet;*
- f) *Ensure that policies and guidelines are developed through a bottom-up approach;*
- g) *Promote development of and expanded access to the Internet in order to facilitate the bridging of the digital divide [for example: capacity building, education and training, and workforce skills];*
- h) *Remain sensitive to limited financial and human resources; and*
- i) *Create the necessary policy, legal and regulatory enabling environment to attract investment in ICTs and the Internet, stimulate infrastructure development, promote entrepreneurship, and foster innovation and creativity.*

² Internationalization includes development of content in more languages, and multilingualism of the domain name system. There is great value in expediting progress toward multilingualism in both content on the World Wide Web, and in the use of non ASCII character domain names. However, CCBI cautions that it is important to acknowledge that true progress must take into account the technical and other complexities of implementing internationalized domain names, including agreement on official language tables. Success in this area rests in substantial part on working with all organizations currently engaged in developing solutions including the browser /software development community.

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 took place from 16 to 18 November 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 business community has decided to maintain a role for CCBI with regard to follow-up from the WSIS and its outcomes.

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, Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD; The Computer Society of Kenya, Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce; Global Information Infrastructure Commission; Latin-American Information Technology Association; United States Council on International Business; World Information Technology and Services Alliance; French Publishers Association; International Publishers Association, CABASE, E-COM LAC.

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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