



International Chamber of Commerce

The world business organization

Department of Policy and Business Practices

ICC Open Consultation Comments on the WGIG Questionnaire

14 June 2005, Geneva

Thank you, Mr Chairman. ICC appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on our response to the WGIG Questionnaire. The business community found that its members had a diversity of views. ICC has developed comments considering these views to be constructive and build upon the positive aspects of WGIG discussion.

General and Forum Function

As WGIG has discussed and recognized, a variety of existing organizations are addressing issues related to the evolution of the Internet and are responsive to its dynamic needs and its applications. These organizations provide forums for discussion and have liaisons between each other, as appropriate. ICC would concede that all institutions need to constantly seek to improve, and those associated with the Internet are no exception. However, each organization working to evolve the Internet has processes in place toward this objective. Brian Carpenter spoke earlier on some of the outreach and other efforts of the IETF. Furthermore, the Internet was designed to be managed/coordinated in a decentralized fashion without any need for “centralized” control. Certainly, it has worked that way for many years and today is bringing the benefits of the Information Society to people around the world improving their quality of life. In addition, it is the foundation of many business models in the commercial world.

ICC supports efforts to increase awareness of existing organizations and to promote greater participation in these organizations. The WGIG has recognized and ICC members agree the Internet itself has been functioning well. Given its history, achievements and stability to date, therefore, it is not clear to the ICC members that there is a “need” for an additional arrangement or body.

Nonetheless, there may, in some cases, be benefits from a “forum function” that could be offered by a discussion forum where public policy issues and concerns of any stakeholder could be heard and, discussed openly. Thus, ICC members have responded with a conditional ‘yes’ to the need for a discussion forum function. The discussion forum could occur within existing organizations and thus may not require an additional body.



ICC members believe that any organization performing this discussion forum function should provide for and promote a multi-stakeholder exchange of information for any issue brought before it. Such a multi-stakeholder discussion should take place in a neutral forum in which all stakeholders are encouraged to participate equally.

Such a multi-stakeholder forum could put forth summaries from the discussions to assist the responsible organizations in progressing the issue. It may give perspectives on policy direction, though it would not have decision-making authority or operational responsibility. Furthermore, in some circumstances, any such forum should recognize and defer to existing expert bodies as the best place to discuss and progress specific issues.

The WGIG has demonstrated the overlapping involvement of many entities and stakeholders in most issues related to the Internet. Thus, it is important that any organization performing the forum function should be flexible enough to encourage greater information exchange across organizations and stakeholders on issues that may be addressed by existing organizations but that have a horizontal cross-cutting nature. This could actually promote cooperation and collaboration and thus promote greater efficiency. However, to do so, it would have to add value and be a neutral forum that could facilitate bringing all the stakeholders and existing institutions and organizations together to promote cooperation.

Oversight

In addressing the need for an oversight function, I wish to offer some further explanation of ICC's response as it deals with both the need for oversight over organizations that deal with issues related to the Internet and oversight over the technical management of the internet specifically. The ICC matrix identifying the many organizations that deal with issues related to the Internet was highlighted this morning. Indeed, as was also pointed out, there are many. As we stated in our first intervention, while some of these organizations could be brought more in line with the Geneva principles and we encourage the WGIG in its report to consider and make practical suggestions for where such changes may be made, oversight is not needed. Rather, discussion and information exchange on cross cutting issues between and among these organizations should be promoted. Such discussion will naturally aid in the coordination of existing institutions and help to avoid duplication of efforts. In this regard, ICC responded with a conditional yes to the need for a need for a discussion forum. We believe that this need is distinct from the need for oversight and should be considered separately by the Working Group, as should be each of the other questions.

The questionnaire also specifically raises oversight related to ICANN's government advisory committee, and that too ICC has answered with the intent of constructively searching for options to address the concerns that are the basis for this question being asked. Paul Twomey discussed the many changes that ICANN has made to reflect the interests of its international stakeholders. Indeed, the GAC too has been in discussions regarding its role within ICANN. ICC supports this effort. Furthermore, we believe that the GAC should be retained and strengthened by more active, broader, and higher level participation. Full advantage of existing mechanisms must be exploited before creating new ones.



Improvements to existing institutions

On the questionnaire topic of improvements in the functioning of existing institutions to bring them more in line with the WSIS principles, ICC believes that existing organizations should:

1. Involve all stakeholders consistent with the mandate of the organization. Some organizations are not meant to have all stakeholders from all regions of the world involved and thus this may not be possible in all cases. However, outreach and information exchange between all stakeholders and regions of the world should be made to the extent possible.
2. ICC encourages the use of innovative technologies to improve participation as appropriate.

The range of issues and existing mechanisms that handle these issues means that no existing institution should be given the role of lead agency. Each institution or organization has an appropriate role to play and needs to continue that role. Most of the issues do not have a simple solution but require the actions of many stakeholder groups and organizations to resolve. Each has a specific part to play.

Functioning / coordination at the national level

ICC appreciates the fact that the questionnaire asked about functioning and coordination at the national level. Activities at the national to establish and promote an enabling environment are critical to the growth and development of the Information Society. ICC believes that to create an enabling environment one of the essential elements is that national governments should consult with all stakeholders in national policy, legal and regulatory decisions.

Conclusion

Once again, thank you Mr Chairman for this opportunity to highlight some of the ICC comments on the WGIG questionnaire

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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.