

Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI)

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

CCBI input on the Internet Governance Forum 15 December 2005

CCBI has long recognized the importance of having all stakeholders in the Internet come together to discuss topics essential to its development and success that may not be adequately addressed elsewhere or that could benefit from further information exchange. However, rather than focusing on a single mechanism, CCBI favours addressing these issues in multiple fora that would occur on an *ad hoc* basis, as needs arise.

In the past, CCBI did not favour creation of a single global Forum during the WSIS process because many in business were concerned that the structure to support such a Forum would among other things:

- Be costly and divert money from more vital Internet development projects;
- Lead to the duplication or disregard of work in existing organizations; and
- Support multilateral instead of multistakeholder involvement.

Given this context, CCBI supports the establishment of the “new forum for multistakeholder policy dialogue” - the *Internet Governance Forum* (IGF) - called for in the Tunis documents. Many members of the business community will participate actively in the IGF if, among other critical principles, it is based on the full and equal participation of all stakeholders, is constituted as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process, and conducts its proceedings in a fair and productive manner. The business community has viewed the entire WSIS process as an opportunity to build even better ties to other Internet stakeholders and to assist in the Internet’s development in those places that remain under-served. A truly cost-efficient, fully multi-stakeholder, forum for discussion and exchange of information and experiences based on limited, specific agendas is one way to facilitate such cooperation.

The planning for the IGF, including the formation of a bureau and possible secretariat, will test whether business can embrace it. In order to achieve the goal of greater cooperation, it is clear that there must be thorough and continuous consultation between the UN Secretary General’s work and the business community. We stand ready to work with other stakeholders and the UN to design a Forum that supports “multistakeholder dialogue” on appropriate issues. Establishing a good working relationship between the UN and the business community now, and joint efforts towards an inclusive, efficient, open and transparent process during this formative stage are key factors in securing essential financial, expert and logistical support from the business community.

The following principles are critical to the approach business believes must be taken in this formative stage of the IGF, in both informal and formal discussions.

To maximize the effectiveness of the IGF, it:

- should only address issues that would truly benefit from international multistakeholder dialogue and exchange of information;
- should not duplicate the work underway in existing organizations;
- should develop an effective consultation and cooperation process to make sure that work is being done with those organizations already engaged in these issues;
- should support cooperation and coordination amongst existing organizations and stakeholders;
- should ensure that the work of the IGF does not compete with or impede the technical management and 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 by all stakeholders in Internet related issues, particularly from developing countries.

Consultations

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. We want to underscore the importance of this commitment at all levels of preparation, including in any informal or formal consultations held on the formation of the Forum, its bureau, and a possible secretariat, as critical to any success. Such consultations must include input from all stakeholders, including governments and business, technical experts and civil society – on an equal footing.

Composition of Bureau

Careful consideration needs to be given to the *composition of any bureau* that is put into place for the IGF. It must include representatives from each of the many stakeholders and require consensus among representatives from these stakeholder groups on all decisions. It must also be capable of effectively involving experts in any issues that it agrees will be addressed. The Tunis Agenda supports the critical and equal role of all stakeholders.

The business community, represented here by CCBI, looks forward to discussing several ideas for such a bureau, such as joint leadership by representatives of each stakeholder group. It may also be useful for the bureau to have a ‘programme committee’ of experts to help organize each meeting of the Forum, to draw upon appropriate expertise for specific issues or issue clusters. Different topics would require the input of different experts that may not be members of the bureau, thereby enhancing the Forum’s ability to further the exchange of useful information and experiences. This

would also enable the Forum to enhance the benefits of work being done by existing organizations, and avoid any duplication. Obviously, the same concept of multistakeholder inclusiveness would be applied in the establishment of programme committees.

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 it is the bureau that will determine when and where the Forum event would take place or whether such decisions will be made elsewhere, yet to be established. Given cost and other resource constraints, an annual Forum is likely to make more sense than multiple forum events per year.

We understand that consideration is being given by some as to whether to establish a secretariat in addition to the bureau. We note that the Tunis documents call for an “effective and cost-efficient bureau” to support the IGF, ensuring multistakeholder participation”. We therefore request additional information in order to better understand the rationale for a secretariat, how it would operate, how it would be funded, and what its role would be with respect to the bureau. CCBI members view any such secretariat as potentially coordinating the administrative and logistical needs of an annual event.

Any secretariat to support the planning of an IGF event should draw upon the expertise of representatives from all stakeholder groups to ensure that the principles outlined above are consistent throughout any Forum structures.

The venue of any secretariat, as well as any Forum structure or events (beyond 2006) is unclear and quite important. The choice of venue, and any support structures and Forum events, must be consistent with the principles of neutrality, inclusiveness, openness, cost effectiveness and efficiency. These are therefore key decisions, and should not be undertaken without full consultations with all stakeholders and their support.

Limited financial and human resources

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

Wherever possible, e-mail, Webcasts, wikis, and online collaboration tools should be used in order to maximize the amount of work that the Forum can do online and minimize the need for expensive face-to-face meetings.

CCBI will provide further input on the Forum and preparation for it, as discussions progress in the weeks ahead.

Finally, we wish to re-iterate our views about the fundamental principles that should underlie both the discussion about the IGF and substantive Internet policy issues. We do so to make clear that everything we have said regarding a Forum 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 internationalization¹ 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.*

¹ 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/wsisis/index.html>
the CCBI website at www.businessatwsisis.net
or ICC's website at: <http://www.iccwbo.org/policy/ebitt/id2343/index.html>
or contact wsisis@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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