

Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI)

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

PrepCom 3 resumed

CCBI intervention for Subcommittee A on Internet governance by Ayesha Hassan, ICC 15 November 2005

Thank you Chairman,

Business commends the serious attempts to develop text outlining a path forward. We trust that the distinguished participants in this summit would like to take into account in their deliberations the opinions of business and the technical community that has built major parts of the Internet and has contributed to the enormous increase in both the physical infrastructure and the wealth of applications that exists today, however much more needs to be done.

Business shares the concern about and desire for a successful summit outcome. We note the efforts undertaken by governments and other stakeholders in this process to agree on common positions. In the spirit of helping to move the current deliberations to a positive and forward-looking outcome, we offer in brief the following, but essential concerns that are at the core of business interests worldwide.

First, we expect that the concept of "multistakeholder participation" must move beyond a verbal commitment and be implemented and manifested in concrete actions; Business must be an equal stakeholder.

Second, we do not support an intergovernmental oversight mechanism.

Third, with regard to the proposed forum, businesses believes that this function does not require a new organization and must be based on existing organizations.

Fourth, and most important of all, we should remind ourselves that the most important issue for governments and all stakeholders, and the ultimate goal of the WSIS, is not about control but about enabling and facilitating development and accelerating the availability and affordability of the internet in the developing world.

Please allow me to briefly expand on these four major core issues.

1. What is at stake in the multistakeholder issue?

* The issue at this specific World Summit is the Information **Society**. All stakeholders together form this society. Decisions that are being made need to take into account the opinions of the various stakeholders. These stakeholders, including business, have a shared responsibility to the Internet.

2. Why do we not support an intergovernmental oversight mechanism?

* An intergovernmental oversight mechanism is not responsive to the day-to-day needs of the Internet and its users. An intergovernmental oversight mechanism runs the risk of slowing decision-making, thus creating uncertainty which hinders innovation and investment.

3. On the Forum issue:

should the summit decide that there is a manifest need for its establishment, it should be neutral, should not duplicate the work of others, should not result in binding recommendations and should not be a decision-making body;

(a) on neutrality – competitors should not also be referees in a competition in which they participate. Any forum can only guarantee independence and impartiality if it is neutrally organized. Therefore, business believes that no single U.N. entity should be the basis of the forum function.

(b) on the non-duplicative nature – we need to recognize that any forum will require the attention, physical or virtual presence of informed stakeholder representatives, and we should be cognizant of the limitations in terms of financial and time resources, especially of some participants from developing countries.

(c) Any forum must be non-binding and non-decision making and should focus on having substantive discussion and exchange of information and best practices. Business must be an equal stakeholder in any forum.

4. What do we mean by development?

* We should bring the benefits of the Internet to the people and economies of the world. In the interest of development we should strive to create an enabling environment which encourages innovation and investment, expands infrastructure and access, creates opportunity and fosters economic growth.

Thank you.

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, 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/wsindex.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.