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BASIS
Business Action to Support
the Information Society

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**Delivered by ICC BASIS Chair Mr Subramanian Ramadorai,
Vice Chair, Tata Consultancy Services**

(Main dignitaries by name), friends, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of ICC BASIS, I would like to express my deep pleasure at being here with you all today, and to participate in and contribute to the CSTD deliberations.

Firstly, I am pleased to share that ICC BASIS members from companies and associations across sectors have been actively participating in the important events that took place during the 'WSIS week', starting May 14th.

We also value the unique opportunity presented by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) each year for all stakeholders to come together on an equal footing to discuss Internet policy matters that affect us all. We were active contributors to the open consultation and Multistakeholder Advisory Group's preparatory work last week and look forward to yet another successful IGF Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan later this year.

Our BASIS members appreciate the WSIS week - including both the IGF preparatory meetings and the WSIS Action Lines Forum - which allowed for business participation in both. We strongly encourage the continuation of the present schedule of having the IGF and WSIS Action Lines Forum in one week and the CSTD meetings in the following week. This truly helps us to schedule ahead and participate. We are sure that it helps many other stakeholders as well, as we strive to remain sensitive to limited time and resources.

The WSIS Action Lines Forum is another important WSIS outcome that provides us an opportunity to exchange experiences and initiatives that are implementing the WSIS action lines. We believe all stakeholders benefit from the exchange of action oriented information and could use the experience of others to implement new initiatives around the world on issues ranging from e-governance to capacity building. Our BASIS members were very pleased to participate in this Forum.

On Friday of WSIS week, global business was also actively engaged in the CSTD's consultation on '*enhanced cooperation*'.

ICC-BASIS continues to believe that greater cooperation among existing organizations does not require the creation of new entities or processes, and that such actions would be counter-productive. The WSIS - Tunis Agenda, signed by heads of state, recognizes the critical role of all relevant stakeholders in Internet

governance issues.

All efforts to continue to advance '*enhanced cooperation*' should be based on the commitment to openness, inclusiveness, and outreach. And we believe that governments and international institutions should ensure their Internet policy related decision-making activities are open and inclusive to all stakeholders on an equal footing role.

We also continue to see, and be impressed, by how 'Internet access' is transforming economies and industries, human societies and individual lives. Its potential to empower the marginalized, and improve the lives of millions of people remains undiminished, and it continues to be one of our most important global resources.

In this context, I would like to share a couple of examples from India – a fast growing nation, grappling with several challenges and inequities, but where our government is focused on driving inclusive growth through Internet access.

The first example is of 'DesiCrew'. Desicrew is a 'rural business process outsourcing service (BPO)', based on a pioneering vision to stimulate inclusive growth. Started as an outcome of the Indian Institute of Technology - Chennai's Rural Technology Business Incubator cell, this startup company has used broadband technology to set up BPO service centres in the villages of the state of Tamil Nadu. A majority of its employees are rural women. In addition to giving them gainful employment, this company has also given them both computer and English language skills.

DesiCrew centres today provide BPO Services in areas such as Insurance, Market Research and e-governance. One of the interesting projects that they undertook was an e-governance project for the Indian state of Rajasthan, involving providing smart cards to all women statewide.

The scheme involved opening bank accounts, providing health insurance, and disbursing a certain sum of money to all women in the state, who were below the poverty line. A massive exercise was carried out to collate the names and details of these women, to get them to sign insurance forms, etc. All the data was digitized by DesiCrew. In terms of scale of effort, DesiCrew trained over 1,000 professionals, processed 4.1 million forms in English and Hindi, coordinating 40 data entry centers and scanning centers.

A truly remarkable example, in my view, where rural Indian women – hardly an intuitive segment for such a task - with limited education and limited resources, have leveraged a vibrant technology platform to help transform the lives of other rural Indian women.

Another example I would like to share with you today is that of a Citizens' Portal called 'MP Online'. This is a joint venture between a private player - Tata Consultancy Services – a company which I serve as Vice Chairman, and the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.

This portal enables citizens to avail of a wide variety of government services (such as copies of land records, forms for professional examinations, birth or death certificates etc) from designated kiosks of MPOnline, Common Service Centres (CSCs), or through an individual's Internet connection.

In a country where citizen services are often prone to graft and inefficiencies this portal has been very successful in allowing citizens access to government services from anywhere and at anytime. It has also won several awards, generated employment, helped build capacity and motivated IT literacy in the state.

These examples that I have shared with you could only be possible because the necessary conditions----policy, legal and regulatory----were in place for such initiatives to take root and flower. These initiatives became a reality because government, business and all relevant stakeholders partnered and cooperated towards meeting a common goal, with measurable social benefits and outcomes.

We therefore believe that the multistakeholder approach at the regional, national, regional and international levels is key to successfully leveraging ICTs and the Internet for the benefit of the countries' economies, and for the benefit of its citizens.

Thank you.

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