

Remarks by Mr. Art Reilly
on behalf of
International Chamber of Commerce,
Business Action to Support the Information Society (ICC-BASIS)
at the May 2010 CSTD Session on
Progress made over five years in the implementation of the WSIS outcomes

May 17, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ministers, Secretaries General, Director General, delegates, friends and colleagues

I am honored to have the opportunity to address this Session of the 2010 CSTD on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce. The ICC is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 130 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

Business is proud of its role in the Information Society and the activities initiated at or following the Tunis Summit to support the Information Society and promote achievement of the MDGs.

We, in business, see that each of the following WSIS-related global activities has evolved significantly and since Tunis, and, in the process, heightened recognition of the importance of multistakeholderism within the Information Society and related processes:

1. ECOSOC has expanded CSTD's mandate, agenda and composition as called for in the Tunis agenda, and taken steps to enable participation by business and civil society with an opportunity to participate in the discussions as I am right now. Business appreciates this opportunity. Each year CSTD has reviewed progress and provided draft Resolutions and reports to ECOSOC, and has allowed business and civil society to be included.
2. The UN Secretary General has initiated a process for "enhanced cooperation" as called for in the Tunis commitment. We understand that this year, all the organizations from which information was requested regarding enhanced cooperation, responded positively, outlining their efforts to reach out and cooperate with others, and to engage in capacity building.
3. The Global Alliance (GAID) has been launched and continues to evolve to promote projects to advance ICT and development and ensure that ICTs are central to the UN agenda.
4. The 11 WSIS Action Line Facilitators meetings have been streamlined through the efforts of the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, UNCTAD, DESA and others to create a coordinated program

of facilitation meetings, workshops and interactive sessions that is now the WSIS Action Line Forum.

5. Our colleagues from Tunisia have established the annual ICT4ALL conference in Hammamet, Tunisia. This event continues the spirit of WSIS 2005 and attracts people from around the world.
6. The final activity that I will mention is the Internet Governance Forum. This Forum was born of controversy during both phases of the WSIS.

The IGF has proven itself to be unique. The IGF is a forum that promotes frank and diverse discussions on any subject related to Internet Governance from critical Internet resources to freedom of expression to free flow of information to Cybersecurity to cloud computing.

Participants come to the IGF as leaders in their respective communities who want to voice what is important to them. However, in the process, they have the chance to get a deeper understanding of what is important to others.

Each year the organizational format of the plenary sessions, workshops, dynamic coalitions is very carefully planned. The IGF allows candid exchanges among all the stakeholders on an unqualified equal footing. In his message at the IGF in Rio de Janeiro, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that, "This forum is modest in its means but not in its aspirations. It may have no power to make decisions, but it can inform and inspire those that are in a position to make them."

Some of the key features of the IGF are that it is an

- open,
- transparent,
- independent,
- non-binding,
- multistakeholder forum where the full attention of the participants is
 - on exchanging views, best practices and ideas on any subject related to Internet governance,
 - without stifling the discussion and consuming time drafting a negotiated intergovernmental text

In addition, the IGF has inspired the establishment of national and regional IGFs in East Africa, West Africa, at the European level as well as in many individual European countries, in Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and the United States. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, those who participated in developing the WSIS outcomes should feel flattered.

Business strongly supports continuation of the IGF beyond its initial five-year mandate in its current multistakeholder format and operating under its founding principles.

I would like to take a few minutes to comment on individual business contributions to implementation of the WSIS outcomes.

The ICC contribution for this meeting is posted with other documents on the CSTD website for this meeting and is an input to assist the development of the UN Secretary-General's Report on WSIS implementation and follow-up.

That contribution points to information about thousands of projects focusing on achieving the WSIS Goals in which business is partnering with other stakeholders. I could not even begin to describe all these projects, but I can say that they are for initiatives around the world. These projects are global, regional and national in scope, and address each of the MDGs from poverty and hunger eradication to education to health and gender issues to sustainable environment and international cooperation. Capacity building is a key component of these projects to address specific local needs, while enabling the efforts to be scaled and sustained into the future.

Despite the recent global economic conditions, Internet and mobile services have continued to expand the services that they offer. Equipment suppliers have continued to innovate to address the wide array of expanding user needs. In addition, businesses, civil society and governments have continued to create new content to benefit and enrich the lives of people. Despite economic setbacks, ICTs growth continues to be dramatic. In fact, ICT and the capabilities of the Information Society have been seen by business and governments as a means for creating new opportunities for economic growth and job creation.

Since the 2005 Summit, businesses have increased the number of Internet subscribers from around 1 billion to 1.8 billion. At the end of 2005 when the Tunis summit took place, mobile subscribers numbered about 2 billion. Now more than 4.6 billion people are mobile subscribers who utilize the Information Society to address their needs.

During the past year alone, businesses have begun to serve an additional 200 million Internet and 400 million mobile subscribers.

Another indication of the increased inclusivity of the Information Society since the Tunis Summit is the increase in fiber optic submarine cables that businesses have invested in and deployed partnering with others. Since 2005, approximately 70 submarine cables have been deployed or are in deployment around the world. Of these more than 80% have landings in developing countries. The introduction of Internet Exchange Points with these cables have contributed to local infrastructure development and promoted creation of local content.

Every day, millions of business people design, build, operate and maintain the products, applications and services that empower people, enable the Information Society, help achieve the MDGs, and improve the lives of people around the world. These efforts also help society address global challenges such as climate change since ICTs offer an important means for environmental research, for energy consumption and distribution management, and as an alternative to more energy consuming technologies. In addition, many more business people along with civil societies and governments create the content that enrich lives and support economic and social development.

Despite the progress outlined above, much more remains to be done.

Business is proud of the role that we play. We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders to ensure a more inclusive, development-oriented, and people-centric Information Society.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.