



International Chamber of Commerce
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An ICC initiative
BASIS
Business Action to Support
the Information Society

ICC-BASIS intervention, Ayesha Hassan, ICC Open Consultation-Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Geneva, 13 May 2008

Thank you Chair.

I will address each of the questions that you just posed. I have a few general comments that I'd also like to make. On behalf of the Global Business Community of the International Chamber of Commerce and its initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society -- BASIS -- which includes, as many of you know, companies and associations from all sectors and around the world. I'm pleased to provide these general comments on the draft program and the schedule for the IGF in Hyderabad, and just note that ICC-BASIS has submitted a comprehensive written contribution that is both on the IGF and ICC Web sites as well as in the back of the room, to provide greater detail on our priorities.

ICC-BASIS members support the evolved approach that's being taken to the draft program and it responds to many stakeholders' feedback that the IGF in India should build on the IGF in Athens in 2006 and in Rio in 2007, and to continue to provide an open and informative forum for discussion on Internet Governance issues among all stakeholders. It is essential that the IGF continue the successful multistakeholder approach in all aspects of its preparations and the events. On the basic structure for Hyderabad, ICC-BASIS members are encouraged by the new approach for this meeting, and the emphasis on interaction in all sessions.

The IGF offers a unique opportunity for discussion and exchange, and the focus should be more on interaction with and by the audience in the main sessions as well as other events. In order to build on the previous IGFs, ICC-BASIS encourages concretization and announcement of partnerships that have been launched and commitments to be part of the IGF in India. The IGF is stimulating many exciting initiatives and they should be captured in the program and highlighted in a primary session. Such a session would capture the developments in the past year and the discussion about useful partnerships and alliances would also help identify people and initiatives that could be replicated in other regions or for other issues. We continue to believe that a session highlighting the valuable activities and partnerships that have been made possible by the IGF is a solid outcome. This could be one of the reporting sessions, for instance, that is devoted to announcing these partnerships and initiatives which may not be taking the dynamic coalition label.

We also continue to believe that the IGF provides value in bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss ongoing and emerging issues together, and that negotiated outcomes would detract from the unique opportunity that the IGF provides for this kind of dialogue.

On the main sessions, we believe that the alternate proposed schedule included in the MAG summary from February and the document that's been posted is a good starting point but it will need further clarification and detail. The main sessions are an important part of the multistakeholder discussions that raise the range of viewpoints on these topics and offer a focal point for that topic.

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At the same time, the schedule should take into consideration the experiences of the past two IGFs and ensure that the main sessions are not in conflict with any -- or very few -- parallel events. Part of the objective should be to increase interaction in the main sessions as well as attendance.

We've made specific suggestions in our written contribution which I just referred to, and these would help to ensure that the sessions are truly adding value for participants. A few of these suggestions are to focus the main session discussions on specific questions or issues, and to integrate best practices and lessons learned instead of general presentations on high-level issues. Related to that on best practice forums, our approach is that the main session should really integrate best practices and there may be very few cases where a separate Best Practice Forum would be useful. We would suggest limiting the number of best practice forums and being very careful about the selection of those forums.

In addition, the main sessions will be more interactive if we vigilantly limit the number of panelists and their remarks. As other stakeholders have noted, the response format was not a very productive approach in terms of bringing more interaction with the audience last time. We would suggest that we increase the time allocated to interactive discussion with the participants in the room and remote participants. And we also suggest and support simplifying the descriptions for the main sessions, confirming them much earlier than in 2007 and selecting the topics for the sessions on the criteria that they're likely to generate useful interaction with the audience.

Regarding the debate sessions, we feel that they would be duplicative given the interactive format envisioned for the main sessions. Regarding reporting sessions, we support the clarified -- pardon me. Regarding the reporting sessions, we do believe that they have been useful. We have offered specific comments about how to limit the time for the reports, the kind of report template that would be useful, and I refer back to our written contribution for greater detail on that topic.

Regarding the main sessions and the approach to the titles, we support the clarified titles that have been suggested for the sessions on "using" the Internet and "expanding" the Internet. On open forums, we believe that there may be some specific open forums that would be a useful part of the program and again, those should be carefully selected. On the cross-cutting theme of capacity-building, we believe that the discussions in all the main sessions should emphasize the specific issues that are of concern to developing country stakeholders within Internet Governance topics and the human and institutional capacity-building measures that are necessary to strengthen the involvement of all stakeholders in Internet Governance issues and institutions.

We have also noted that digital literacy and I.T. training should receive more attention in the discussions at the IGF in Hyderabad, and specifically in those two areas the policy and governance approaches that promote skills development and other resources necessary to get the world online should be a part of these discussions to emphasize the cross-cutting development and capacity-building themes.

Briefly, on emerging issues, we are among the stakeholders who continue to believe that the session in Rio was a very good model and it should be used again in Hyderabad. It was very interactive and a valuable opportunity to raise issues that were not discussed in other main sessions.



In India, we would recommend that the emerging issues session put greater emphasis on issues on the horizon and look to the future.

In closing, Chair, we would like to join others to congratulate you on your confirmation as chair of the IGF multistakeholder Advisory Group and to express our appreciation for your leadership and the tremendous efforts of Mr. Markus Kummer and the entire IGF Secretariat.



What is Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS)?

ICC created BASIS to serve as the voice of business in the global dialogue on the Information Society, following the two World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005). BASIS participates in UN-linked forums set up to continue the dialogue, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), and the WSIS follow-up and implementation processes.

BASIS builds on the activities and network of the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI), which ICC formed to coordinate participation by world business in the processes leading up to and at the Summits in Geneva and Tunis.

To promote the environment in which global business will continue to thrive as an innovator of these technologies, BASIS will mobilize business to help shape the agenda and participate in these global discussions. The initiative aims to unite the business community, to raise awareness among the public, governments, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and technical authorities of what business requires to continue contributing to the development of the Information Society. BASIS relies on policies developed in ICC's Commission on E-business, IT and Telecoms (EBITT) as the foundation for its efforts.

For further information regarding BASIS, the founding partners, members and activities, please consult the BASIS website at: <http://www.iccwbo.org/basis>.

About ICC

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its thousands of member companies in over 130 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

A world network of national committees keeps the ICC International Secretariat in Paris informed about national and regional business priorities. More than 2000 experts drawn from ICC's member companies feed their knowledge and experience into crafting the ICC stance on specific business issues. The United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and many other intergovernmental bodies, both international and regional, are kept in touch with the views of international business through ICC.

For more information please visit: www.iccwbo.org