

ICC BASIS preliminary reflections on Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Hyderabad, India 3-6 December 2008

Members of the International Chamber of Commerce and its initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society, BASIS are pleased to contribute these preliminary reflections on the IGF in India.

General comments

ICC BASIS members congratulate the host country India, the organizers and the IGF secretariat on a very successful event, and look forward to working with all stakeholders to prepare another successful IGF in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt in 2009.

The Indian hosts managed the organizational and logistics responsibilities with grace and effectiveness. Particularly under the circumstances, we applaud the Indian government and organizers for all they did to reassure and secure participants, and manage the underpinnings of the event to ensure that it could go on and be productive. ICC BASIS members believe that the spirit in which the Indian government and organizers welcomed participants played a critical role in the success of the event, and would like to express our deep appreciation for each person involved in that effort.

ICC BASIS members believe that the IGF in Hyderabad successfully built upon the productive experiences of Rio and Athens. The sheer number of business representatives present in Hyderabad is just one indication of the importance business around the world places on the IGF.

There are many organizations involved in a wide range of Internet governance issues and each of them has a useful role to play. The IGF's unique capability to bring together the range of organizations and stakeholders involved in Internet governance issues for the open discussions we had in Hyderabad is a particular value add to the global level discussions on these matters. The IGF's format brings all stakeholders together, treats all of them equally, and provides a space to address any Internet governance issue in a timely manner because it is not a negotiation process that requires compliance with set preparatory processes. This unique benefit cannot be fulfilled by alternative approaches.

We have observed that in the range of Internet governance issues, it is the landscape of organizations and forums that are involved that bring out the many dimensions of these policy issues. No single organization leads on or owns any particular issue, but rather contributes in a specific way. The IGF, with its flexible approach, allows for the constant

refreshing and renewing of thought on issues as new developments occur and as organizations make progress on specific aspects of them. This is a real benefit to us all.

The IGF has also stimulated more efficiency in other organizations, and national and regional dialogues on Internet governance issues. We believe that the continued exchange in the IGF will lead to more concrete results like those we saw in 2008 with the establishment of several national and regional multistakeholder dialogues and IGF events.

IGF is the only arena where we come together to discuss, not negotiate, and the ability to do this is an important aspect of enhancing cooperation by encouraging cooperation among different stakeholder groups and among organizations. We believe that the IGF in Hyderabad deepened many cooperative and collaborative efforts, created new bonds between people, and strengthened the relationships and exchanges between stakeholder groups and organizations. Over the course of the past three IGFs we have seen the demonstrable impact of the IGF on policy issues and how they are approached at the national and regional levels. The IGF in Egypt should continue this effort and this should be kept in mind as we develop the programme.

The IGF fulfilling its mandate

As we reflect on the IGF in Hyderabad and look forward to the IGF in Sharm el Sheikh, ICC BASIS takes this opportunity to share its assessment of how the IGF is fulfilling its mandate as articulated in the Tunis agenda.

The IGF has initiated substantive discussions on key elements of Internet governance that have fostered the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet. The new session formats used at the IGF in Hyderabad were another step towards building greater human and institutional capacity on these issues, and the policy approaches and choices that impact them.

The IGF in India built on the experiences of Rio and Athens bringing many organizations engaged in Internet related activities together that deal with cross-cutting international public policy issues such as the OECD, ITU, UNESCO, IETF, ICANN, ISOC, and increased awareness about their work programmes and activities, the status of discussions on particular issues, and for instance, highlighted the issues on the horizon for many of these organizations.

We believe the IGF in India once again brought together several intergovernmental organizations and other Internet related organizations to exchange on issues that they work on, through the open forums, workshops and main sessions.

Business has been very pleased with the increased emphasis on the exchange of best practices, and the discussions about policy choices and challenges and how they have been dealt with by different countries and stakeholders. We believe that the IGF in Egypt

can build on this effort and bring a wider range of scientific, academic and technical communities from the region and around the world.

The access discussions have been a productive example of bringing experience and options to stakeholders to accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world, with a focus on the governance aspects of these issues.

We have seen several examples of individuals and organizations who were involved in other organizations and came to an IGF and are now involved in the IGF and vice versa, examples of people who have connected at the IGF or learned about how they can participate in other organizations' work of interest to them and are now participating in those activities. Likewise, we have seen relationships formed between national governments, business and other stakeholders from countries meeting at the IGF and forging new communications. This is an important value add for all. These examples are from both developing countries and developed countries alike.

The emerging issues sessions have been excellent opportunities to highlight the policy issues and challenges on the horizon. These sessions have also been complimented by issues raised in workshops and the main sessions and dialogue on several topics.

2008 saw the launch of several new national and regional Internet governance related initiatives, and IGF awareness raising events. We applaud these initiatives and believe that they will serve to strengthen the involvement of local sources of knowledge and expertise in Internet governance issues at national, regional and international levels. This is hands on capacity building, and an excellent way to bring developing countries' interests into the global discussions. We believe that more efforts to support the participation of local experts at the national, regional and international levels should be a topic of further discussion to ensure this trend can continue on a positive and productive track.

The IGF in India built on the discussions of critical Internet resources which began at the second IGF in Rio, and several workshops and open forums also contributed to the exchange on these issues.

This year, there were important discussions on key security and privacy issues, which also focused on child protection online issues, and raised awareness about many organizations' work on these matters. The issues of use and misuse of the Internet and concerns of everyday users will continue to be matters that the IGF can play a real role in facilitating exchange of information, best practices, challenges, policy options, and emerging issues in this area.

The real-time transcripts of the sessions, and the Chairman's report along with the substantive inputs and synthesis paper have been an excellent substantive record of the discussions and proceedings.

Main session panels

ICC BASIS members are pleased to provide a few reflections on the substantive discussions on particular policy areas, and look forward to contributing further as the programme for IGF 2009 is developed.

IGF Egypt

- We believe that a special emphasis on the cross-cutting themes, human and institutional capacity building, and development, will further the discussions on all of the main themes at the next IGF.
- This could be accomplished by having a special session on each of these cross-cutting themes, and addressing the main topics from those angles.

Multilingualism

- This session was a good overview of the issues involved in making the Internet more accessible to people in their own languages.
- We believe that the discussion needs to be deepened at the IGF in 2009 to focus more on policy implications, and informed policy choices through the exchange of best practices.

Access

- The access oriented discussions have ripened at the IGF, and this session highlighted the need for a new approach to the Internet governance discussions of access issues at the IGF in Egypt.
- We would suggest that access be discussed in a real capacity building and exchange of best practice format at the IGF in Egypt.

Dimensions of cybersecurity and cybercrime

- Education and capacity building remain critical issues with end users to ensure that the propagators of cybercrime, i.e. compromised devices, are maintained, and defended against cyber attacks, and that the operators are aware of procedures and tools to mitigate the risks.
- We support the IGF as a useful forum for discussing the important child protection issues and exchanging best practices and policy approaches. We do not however believe that this particular security issue is the only one issue that needs further discussion at the IGF in general and the IGF in Egypt this year.

Open Dialogue sessions

General comments

- In general the new format of having a solid amount of time for interactive discussions in the afternoons worked well. We believe that the discussions will be further deepened by using the co-moderator format for these dialogues and

drawing upon experts who have good facilitation skills rather than relying on professional journalists as moderators. We appreciated the great efforts of the professional journalists who committed their time and skills to these sessions, and make this comment not as a criticism in any way of their incredible contributions. At the fourth IGF the substantive discussions and interactive sessions will need to go one step further to ensure that the IGF continues to be even more meaningful for participants, hence we support the use of subject expert moderators for the main session workshops and dialogues

Specific comments

Promoting trust and security

- Child pornography and child protection online issues were raised by many participants in this dialogue. These are clearly important issues, however we believe that they should be addressed in the larger topic area of promoting trust and security which still requires substantive and enlarged discussions. We therefore believe that it would be premature to narrow the focus of these critical discussions at the IGF in Egypt.

Other main sessions

Emerging issues

- A range of substantive issues were evoked by the panellists, and participants, and stimulated constructive discussion.
- We believe that the points raised regarding the impact of the current financial climate and access to information that links to global issues like health and the environment would be useful to focus on at the next IGF.
- The issue of how Internet governance can positively contribute to addressing inclusive growth, and provide financial infrastructure options would benefit from discussion.
- Policy implications of convergence of services, tools and devices has been discussed generally in the emerging issues session, and workshops, and could be a good topic for main session discussion in Egypt.

Taking stock and way forward

- This session was a productive and balanced discussion about the experiences of participants and reflections on the IGF in India to inform preparations for 2009.
- We continue to believe that the taking stock and way forward session is a useful opportunity to identify substantive issues, how they were discussed, and how the discussions can be further built upon for the coming year.

Overall schedule

- ICC BASIS members maintain a concern that we have raised in the past that the number of parallel events detracts from participation in the main sessions, and leaves some side events less well attended.
- We propose that for the IGF in Egypt there be more opportunities where there are no conflicting events with the main sessions. One way to accomplish this would be to create a wave through the schedule, of periods of time where no other events will take place---perhaps not having any events during the main session open dialogues, or main session substantive panels thus allowing more participants to benefit from the information and interaction being provided.
- We appreciated the coffee and lunch breaks each day and support having these breaks with no parallel events at the IGF in Egypt. These breaks allowed for many participants to have discussions that were an important part of the opportunity the IGF provides for new contacts, relationship and partnership building, and sharing of ideas.
- An orientation session for new participants before the IGF begins would be a useful addition to assist participants in taking full advantage of the substantive opportunities.

Remote participation

- The remote participation efforts in Hyderabad provided an important opportunity for participants around the world who were not able to come to the IGF in person.
- We applaud the efforts made to ensure real time transcription, webcasting and interactive opportunities. The remote participation hubs and overall numbers of remote participants increased significantly this year as a result.
- The remote participation facilities and opportunities should be progressed further for the IGF in Egypt and members of the business community remain willing to assist in this effort.

Logistics

- The hosted lunchtime buffets and coffee service in several places in the venue were greatly appreciated, and allowed both informal networking as well as easy and quick meals between meetings. This was a great help and the fact that it was free was a real benefit for all participants.
- The WiFi and sound system was not as consistent as one would have hoped it would be.
- The IGF Village was much better placed this year, and we hope that it can be organized in a central area again next year. The Village was once again an important area providing the opportunity to facilitate interaction and information exchange among the stakeholders, and we believe this continues to be a very useful and concrete ‘takeaway’ for participants. Some participants felt it was difficult to communicate to secure a booth at the village, and that local co-ordination could be improved by providing a dedicated email address with a specific person and name to handle these requests.

- The communications from the IGF Secretariat regarding the security issues and logistics were very helpful and reassuring.
- The gala dinner was a wonderful experience and gave participants a taste of the cultures, foods and the city and provided an excellent opportunity for networking.
- Registration worked well. The badges could be improved next year to make names and organizations/affiliations larger and positioned on the badge to make it easier to read from a distance. This would facilitate interaction and networking.
- The efforts of the IGF Secretariat to allocate rooms for meetings and networking were greatly appreciated. However, we would suggest that more meeting rooms be made available at the IGF in Egypt to facilitate the important discussions that will take place, and that the allocation of meeting rooms is done in advance to allow organizers to send room information to participants in the side meetings earlier thus saving time and energy on the ground.
- We fully recognize the extraordinary efforts of the IGF Secretariat to improve the website, and hope that resources can be made available to the secretariat to improve the website further. Additional information about the IGF, how it is organized, why stakeholders should participate and contribute, and why it is important could be further highlighted on the website. In addition, information about the national and regional IGF initiatives should feature prominently and become a resource for stakeholders around the world.

Workshops/Open Forums

- ICC BASIS members participated in many of the workshops and open forums, and believe that the most productive events were those which brought out the range of viewpoints, and allowed for substantive interaction with the audience.
- As noted above in the comments on the schedule overall, we believe that having well organized, balanced, substantive workshops and open forums with good participation should be a priority. Overall, ensuring that there are fewer conflicting events would assist in this regard.
- Recognizing that some workshops and sessions were challenged by last minute cancellations by speakers under the circumstances, ICC BASIS members are concerned that some of the workshops and open forums did not effectively bring out the range of viewpoints and experiences on particular issues, and in particular the range of business perspectives were often not included in the panels or discussions. In some cases, this could lead to participants coming away from workshops with a skewed view of where civil society, governments and business interests are in agreement or disagreement, or a misperception that there is consensus where none exists. Workshop and open forum organizers should be further encouraged to have a truly balanced panel, and discussion. We would urge the IGF secretariat to direct organizations in charge of selecting panelists to ensure broad, balanced participation.
- In developing the programme for the IGF in 2009, particular care should be taken to ensure that special interests do not overly influence the IGF. Some examples of this took place in Hyderabad, where key IGF themes (education, openness, diversity, access, security and critical internet resources) were addressed focusing on the organizers' own specific and narrow ideological or corporate goals. A clear example of this was the workshop "Overcoming Obstacles to Effective Digital Education." Education in all its forms is vital to the IGF's goals for the "next billion" but this workshop appeared to be designed solely with an agenda that opposed intellectual property rights and issues, without either explaining the pros of protecting intellectual property rights or outlining a proposal based on viable alternatives. The result of sessions like these is that stakeholders who attend them (including government officials) may be misled into thinking that there is an easy and inexpensive solution and that scarce resources should be used to deal with issues about which there is actually little agreement as to solution or scope.

Other examples of this were the workshops on standards issues, where discussions took place without the range of viewpoints or experiences, and could lead to misunderstandings or uninformed choices.

- One approach to assist in the effort to achieve better balance in the workshops going forward may be to solicit interest to have workshops on particular themes instead of requesting proposals as has been done in the past. The entities that wish to address specific themes could then forge their collective

energies to organize workshops that have a more comprehensive set of viewpoints and experiences.

- It is also important to remain clear that recommendations and positions expressed in the various sessions and workshops are useful contributions to the exchange at the IGF, but are not endorsed by the IGF or official positions. The range of ways to address issues and policy approaches are part of the richness of the exchange at the IGF.

Suggestions for media operations at IGF

1. We understand that of 36 international media who tried to register for the IGF in India, only 5 were given accreditation. It would be helpful to know how and why journalists are accepted and the criteria for future IGF events, in particular for Sharm el Sheikh.
2. Have the IGF website up information updated well before the event. The schedule, panellists, moderators, organizers etc should be finalized earlier and posted.
3. Designate UN media contact people well in advance to facilitate communication with stakeholders' communications teams and raise more awareness of media opportunities.
4. Send out regular information to all participants not just accredited journalists. For example, there was a media briefing 2 days before the event that ICC BASIS communications' person was not invited to or made aware of.
5. Distribute or post a complete programme on the website, including a full list of speakers before the event.
6. Have the 'listserve' distribution system up and running before the event to avoid the disruption caused by the malfunction this year. We appreciate the apology that was sent out regarding this issue.
7. Better coordination of video messages well in advance.
8. ICC BASIS has noted in reflections on previous IGFs' that it would be very helpful to take the journalists' lists from the past three years and identify which journalists are attending the event internationally. This would allow stakeholders to establish closer contact with them before the event offering interviews etc. More information about local journalists should also be sought.

What worked well for media operations?

- A very helpful and friendly UN team on site.
- A well-located, well-functioning media room and TV studio. Practical and convenient.

ICC BASIS members appreciate the opportunity to provide these reflections on the IGF in Hyderabad and look forward to working with the other participants to develop a productive programme for the IGF in Sharm el Sheikh.

What is BASIS?

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) created BASIS to raise awareness among the public, governments, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and technical community of what business requires to continue contributing to the development of the Information Society. It serves as the voice of business in the global dialogue on the Information Society, following two World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005).

To promote the environment in which business around the world will continue to thrive as an innovator of information and communication technologies, BASIS participates in UN-linked forums set up to continue the dialogue, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the WSIS follow-up and implementation processes, and the UN Global Alliance for ICTs and development (GAID).

To help shape the agenda and participate in these global discussions, BASIS relies on the policies developed in the ICC Commission on E-business, IT and Telecoms as the foundation for its efforts.

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 WSIS.

BASIS members include business organizations such as the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), Business Software Alliance (BSA), Africa Investor, e-Skills Industry Leadership Board, Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC), Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), as well as several ICC national committees and companies from across sectors and geographies.

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 hundreds of 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 2,000 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