

## ICC BASIS responses to IGF questionnaire

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### Formal consultation with Forum participants In accordance with Paragraph 76 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society

*The Tunis Agenda for the Information Society calls on the Secretary-General “to examine the desirability of the continuation of the Forum, in formal consultation with Forum participants”. This consultation will be held at the Sharm El Sheikh meeting. As an input, all stakeholders are invited to submit comments with the online questionnaire below (there is no word limit). Other comments are also welcome.*

*A synthesis paper, conceived as a rolling document, will reflect all comments received. A first document will be made available for the 13 May open consultations and a revised version will be made available for the 16 September Open Consultations. The final version will be submitted to the IGF meeting in Sharm El Sheikh.*

Questions:

#### 1. To what extent has the IGF addressed the mandate set out for it in the Tunis Agenda?

The IGF is fulfilling its mandate as articulated in the Tunis agenda. Details regarding how the IGF is fulfilling elements of its mandate are articulated below.

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.

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. 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 discussions on the main themes (access, openness, security, diversity and critical Internet resources) have all been productive examples 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. 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. 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.

At the IGF in Hyderabad, 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 outputs of the discussions and proceedings.

## **2. To what extent has the IGF embodied the WSIS principles?**

The IGF has embodied the WSIS principles in many ways including:

- Contributed to building a people-centred inclusive Information society
- Its model of transparency through the open consultations, exchange of information at every step of the preparations, summaries of contributions and MAG meetings, real-time transcripts of the open consultations and main sessions
- It has paid special attention to the needs of remote participants, marginalized communities and those with disabilities by increasing ways for them to participate, and discussing the substantive issues that affect their access to the Internet

## **3. What has the impact of the IGF been in direct or indirect terms? Has it impacted you or your stakeholder group/institution/government? Has it acted as a catalyst for change?**

The IGF provides a useful opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to discuss important Internet governance related policy issues and exchange experiences on challenges faced, solutions that work, good practices, and issues on the horizon. It also provides a place for new contacts to be made, partnerships to be formed and awareness about initiatives and resources to be raised. There is no other forum that provides the opportunities that are afforded by the IGF to all stakeholders.

- The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has significant value as it brings together leaders from many technical groups and organizations (including governments, civil society, business) in a setting that is open to all interested parties with outreach through pre-meeting preparations, webcast, and real-time transcriptions, in a forum that is open to all topics and that has proven to be very frank and candid in its discussion of issues.

- Business supports the multistakeholder approach used in the IGF, where all stakeholders participate on an equal footing, because it is an opportunity for frank and open exchange on important policy issues. There is no alternative approach, and no intergovernmental organizations or traditional settings offer the opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to engage and exchange on an equal footing.
- This is a unique forum. It offers us all a chance to speak, but also to listen. Business welcomes the chance to participate actively and comes with the experience and willingness to work with all stakeholders.
- The focus on exchanging of best practices, policy approaches and experiences is a strength of the IGF that maximizes the time spent by all relevant stakeholders on substantive exchange instead of negotiated texts.
- There is no topic that cannot be discussed at the IGF, and mechanisms like the Dynamic Coalitions, if structured in a balanced manner, can be important opportunities for stakeholders that may come from very different perspectives to listen to and share with others. This dialogue can lead to new understandings and new found common interests or opportunities.
- The IGF has brought many organizations together, raised awareness among stakeholders about who is doing what in the technical areas, and Internet related matters at national and regional levels. At the IGF itself and through the preparatory process for each IGF problems get addressed, a range of options for solutions to policy challenges get shared with a broad group of stakeholders. These are real benefits, and have facilitated 'enhanced cooperation' among these organizations and between stakeholders for solutions that can be collective, co-ordinated and comprehensive.
- The multistakeholder approach of the IGF is valuable because it leads to more informed policy choices, and business choices.
- The IGF has been a catalyst for change through the information exchange, dialogue and contacts that get formed at and through it. These real impacts need to be recognized and captured more fully.

The IGF has been a catalyst for the building of several new relationships and deepening others. Business has seen a major difference in the relationships between business representatives and certain governments, as well as other organizations and actors which have led to new joint initiatives, invitations to speak and participate in national and regional events on a variety of topics, the exchange of experiences and expertise which have helped to shape initiatives and policy approaches.

#### **4. How effective are IGF processes in addressing the tasks set out for it, including the functioning of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG), Secretariat and open consultations?**

**MAG:** The MAG's multistakeholder nature has been an essential component in its successful support to prepare the IGFs. The range of view points and experiences has helped to 'digest' the input from the broader community in a fair and balanced manner, and the MAG members have provided essential support for the IGF activities on the ground.

The MAG composition with a balance of multistakeholder experts renewed and rotated has continued to improve in terms of timing. The balanced multistakeholder nature of the MAG must remain, and there should be continued focus on ensuring that non-governmental stakeholders are well represented.

The Chair of the MAG, Mr Nitin Desai has provided essential leadership, and very effectively led the MAG and the IGF preparations. The secretariat, led by Mr Markus Kummer, and his team have successfully and efficiently supported the preparations and the IGF itself. The Secretariat has provided critical support and managed many situations gracefully, effectively and fairly.

The Secretariat will need adequate funding and human resources.

**The open consultations** have worked very well and the real-time transcripts of them have been very beneficial. The open consultations give all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the preparations of the IGF, on an equal footing. The written contributions ahead of the open consultations give all stakeholders a chance to share their views and priorities. In turn, the written contributions and the Secretariat's synthesis paper, help stakeholders to understand the views and priorities of others. This is a valuable exchange that leads to better discussion, increased understanding of the concerns of different stakeholders and more informed policy choices down the road.

We suggest that the open consultations be kept to one day when feasible in the future.

#### **5. Is it desirable to continue the IGF past its initial five-year mandate, and why/why not?**

ICC-BASIS members support the continuation of the IGF, in its current format and structure, with the essential approach to multistakeholderism and all participants on an equal footing because it provides a unique space for exchange, dialogue and relationship building among stakeholders who would otherwise not have an opportunity to come together. The non-negotiating nature of the IGF is a unique quality that allows for open, frank exchange that has a positive impact on approaches to Internet governance issues in

other forums, and at national and regional levels. There is no alternative approach to achieving this special opportunity.

**6. If the continuation of the Forum is recommended, what improvements would you suggest in terms of its working methods, functioning and processes?**

- Ensure that the Secretariat has additional human and financial resources to carry out its activities
- Find ways to involve members of the community to spread the work of managing the IGF activities on the ground at the event
- Remain sensitive to limited time and human resources of all stakeholders in setting deadlines, dates and locations. This has been increasingly the case for the IGF, and we reiterate this point to ensure continued sensitivity.
- Ensure that the MAG renewal and rotation process is timely and effective
- Continue to work on remote participation and online tools to allow a broad range of relevant stakeholders to contribute to and participate in the IGF
- Develop effective ways to capture all of the substantive impacts that result from the IGF and its preparatory processes