

## Reflections



**Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2009**  
**15-18 November, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**

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# ICC BASIS Reflections on IGF Egypt

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## **BASIS preliminary reflections on Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt 15-18 November 2009**

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*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 Egypt.*

### **General comments**

ICC-BASIS members congratulate the host country of Egypt, the organizers and the IGF secretariat on a most successful event, and look forward to working with all stakeholders to prepare another successful IGF in Vilnius, Lithuania in September 2010.

The host country of Egypt provided a warm welcome to all participants and supportive logistical arrangements. The special contributions of the Prime Minister of Egypt, Dr Ahmed Nazif and Minister Tarek Kamel expressing strong support for this unique forum set the tone for a successful event. The presence of H.E. the First Lady of Egypt, Mrs Mubarak, and the special session she hosted added significantly to the event. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of the host country organizing team. We also would like to express our special thanks and recognition to Nitin Desai, the Chair of the multistakeholder advisory group for his leadership and guidance and to Markus Kummer, Executive Coordinator of the IGF secretariat and his talented team for their tireless efforts and support.

ICC BASIS members believe that the IGF in Sharm el-Sheikh successfully built upon the productive experiences of Hyderabad, Rio and Athens. There was a strong business presence and an even greater number of overall participants than in previous years. This demonstrates the importance of the IGF for business and all stakeholders.

The IGF in Sharm el-Sheikh once again successfully brought together an extensive range of leaders from the many communities interested in Internet governance. It provided a unique opportunity to have frank and open discussions on a wide range of issues and brought together many stakeholders who otherwise do not have opportunities to engage with each other. A major value add for all is the constructive exchange of best practices and considerations of the best policy approaches and options that in turn resonate in policy discussions and decisions around the world and at national and regional levels.

This IGF proved once again that the IGF is a place where there is nothing that cannot be discussed. The IGF in Egypt underscored how vital the Internet is as a vast resource of information, tools, knowledge, and services with enormous potential and many opportunities. Discussion included how tapping into these resources can help us find solutions to many of the issues we face in today's fast-paced global economy, from climate change to health, to bridging the digital divide to education and economic recovery.

The future of this intricate network of networks requires the attention of all stakeholders: business, governments, civil society, the technical community and international organizations. The IGF's multistakeholder approach with all on an equal footing in all aspects supports this fact.

ICC BASIS members appreciated the range of stakeholders who contributed to and enriched the discussions and the interactions made possible by the IGF. The IGF in Sharm el-Sheikh provided all participants with insights into the priorities and concerns of the others. All

participants came away better informed about who is doing what in technical areas and other Internet-related matters.

The 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. This one-of-a-kind environment of multistakeholder exchange helps everyone to find new understandings, common interests and opportunities. Because the focus has been on substantive exchange instead of negotiated texts, all participants' time is put to good and practical use. The IGF in Sharm el-Sheikh deepened many cooperative and collaborative efforts, created new bonds between people, and strengthened the relationships and exchanges between stakeholder groups and organizations in this arena. Over the course of the past four IGFs we have seen a demonstrable impact of the IGF on policy issues and how they are approached at the national and regional levels. The IGF in Lithuania should continue this effort and this should be kept in mind as we develop the programme.

The IGF has also stimulated more efficiency in other organizations, and fostered national and regional dialogues on IG issues. We believe that the continued exchange in the IGF will lead to more concrete results like those we saw in 2009 with the establishment of several national and regional dialogues and IGF events.

## **Overall theme**

"Creating opportunities for all" was a productive overall theme for the IGF in Egypt. We support an overall theme for the IGF in Lithuania that is inclusive of all relevant topics.

## **Schedule, main sessions and other events in general, and formats**

Significant progress was made this year on developing and posting the schedule of main sessions and workshops further in advance than in previous years. We believe continued efforts to finalize the schedule of workshops, open forums, and main sessions at least one month before the IGF should be the goal. This facilitates participation and more productive sessions that are well prepared. To this end, we strongly encourage minimizing last minute changes to the schedule. Special attention to this will be needed in planning for IGF 2010 since it will be held in September 2010 (earlier in the year than previous IGFs).

In general, the workshops and open forums were productive, useful and interactive. There were still some duplicative workshops, including common speakers, which could have been merged and we recommend closer attention to merging efforts for next year. Indeed, there were workshops covering similar topics held at the same time making it impossible to participate in meetings of interest to particular participants. We also note that the duplication appears to have resulted in reduced attendance in workshops where this was a problem. The number of workshops and open forums should be reduced to ensure stronger participation and allow for the range of views and experiences to be part of the consolidated discussions. There were some workshops that strayed off topic which makes it difficult for participants to plan for certain discussions. It could be useful to develop a set of suggestions for organizing effective workshops which could be posted on the IGF website for workshop organizers to use.

We believe a different balance can be struck next year between main sessions and other events. For instance, some main sessions did not need the full three hour slot. We recommend reducing the time for some of the main sessions, and allowing for more

emphasis on workshops since there would be no main session in parallel. Another option to explore is to have a few mornings where there are no main sessions, which would mean participants are involved in the workshops and other events, and then provide ample time in the afternoon main sessions so that workshop discussions can naturally be fed in to the interactions.

ICC BASIS supports the continued use of different interactive formats for main sessions, tailored to the topics and objectives. The use of two or more moderators worked well and should be considered again for next year.

We strongly support the continued practice of having a real break in the schedule for lunch, which was an excellent opportunity for networking and informal meetings without participants' having to forego attendance at other scheduled events.

## **Main sessions**

ICC BASIS members are pleased to provide reflections on the substantive discussions on particular policy areas, and look forward to contributing further as the programme for IGF 2010 is developed.

**The IGF orientation session** on the first day in the morning, was an excellent opportunity for new and returning participants to understand the IGF, the opportunities and benefits. For new participants, this session assisted them in making the most of the IGF and briefed them on previous IGFs. We support including a 'setting the scene' session in the next IGF's programme.

**The regional initiatives session** was also an excellent addition to the programme. National and regional IGF initiatives have been growing in numbers and offer constructive opportunities for regional stakeholders to exchange on a range of issues and bring their experiences to the global level. This session enabled all participants to gain insight into how various regional initiatives are being organized, and the priorities and experiences emerging in their discussions. We believe including a regional initiatives session, with space for national initiatives to contribute as well, will be useful at the next IGF.

## **Internet governance and WSIS principles session**

This session provided a useful overview of the WSIS principles, the integration of them in Internet governance processes and the views of stakeholders. We believe it was a good addition to this year's programme, but do not think it is necessary to have another main session on this topic at the IGF 2010. It could continue to be a topic for workshops, as stakeholders deem appropriate and useful.

## **Access/Diversity**

Creating the necessary enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment to facilitate access to infrastructure and the Internet will remain a key issue, as will the range of diversity issues. However we believe that this discussion area could be reinvigorated next year, by addressing it in a main session on development, and emphasizing the human and institutional capacity building cross-cutting theme. This discussion should also focus on policy implications, and informed policy choices and highlight best practices and challenges and how they have been overcome.

Workshops could still focus on specific access and diversity issues which could take place before a main session on development and thus feed in on particular issues.

### **Security, privacy, openness**

Consideration of all aspects of this set of interrelated topics should be continued to ensure the broad range of views can be expressed and to promote an appropriate balance in the discussions among these issues that sometimes have cross-tensions. Linking views and experiences with these issues to stakeholder-level values should be part of the discussion.

### **Critical Internet Resources (CIR)**

The discussion on CIR issues was substantive and productive. We believe that this session provides participants with a real opportunity to exchange information about CIR issues being addressed in various organizations and forums, and allows for a range of issues to be raised with all stakeholders present. We support inclusion of a CIR session in the programme for 2010.

### **Emerging issues**

A candidate topic at IGF 2010 for this session could be cloud computing. In the IGF context this topic could benefit from a broad discussion to explain what the cloud is and is not, novel solutions it offers and related security solutions and the policy issues it raises. However, it may be appropriate to have an introductory workshop or general session regarding the technology(ies) that could identify some of the policy aspects while the broader general sessions e.g. access, security/privacy, CIR etc could consider these policy aspects of cloud computing along with those of other technologies, applications, infrastructures in greater depth and in cross-cutting discussions.

Another topic area that could be useful would focus on how to shape Internet governance approaches to meet innovation challenges and allow high-tech services and applications that help reduce CO2 emissions. The OECD for instance is developing a comprehensive strategy for innovation, green growth and sustainable economic recovery, largely based on ICT contributions and the use of the internet as a main platform to meet these policy goals which could be part of this discussion.

### **IGF review & continuity consultation**

The overwhelming majority of participants conveyed their strong support for the IGF and its founding principles and structures emphasizing what we believe are essential ingredients for the success it has had---the multistakeholder approach and the fact that it is neither an intergovernmental nor a negotiating setting. No one proposed discontinuing the IGF. Those who suggested consideration of radical changes to the IGF were clearly in the minority.

Continuing the constructive role that the IGF has played as an open, multistakeholder forum where issues and ideas for greater inclusivity that inform all participants should be the goal – not a forum in which stakeholder energies are devoted to negotiating texts.

Many stakeholders wanted to contribute to the consultation. Despite the practical limitations on the number of speakers that had to be imposed, we believe the consultation was productive and demonstrated the desire of the majority of IGF participants for it be continued. This was conveyed by speakers from all stakeholder groups—business, governments, international organizations, technical community entities and civil society.

ICC BASIS, other business speakers, and many other stakeholders emphasized the important and unique opportunity that the IGF provides for exchange and discussion on a range of Internet governance issues, the founding multistakeholder principles that are essential elements of the IGF and its impact on more informed policy and decision making by all.

In general, for the main sessions it would be useful to ensure the moderators, chair, and any panelists are well prepared in advance, and that sufficient attention is paid to ensure all stakeholders who wish to speak from the floor are given balanced opportunities to do so.

## **Remote participation**

- The remote participation efforts in Egypt provided an important opportunity for participants around the world who were not able to come to the IGF in person. The remote participation contributions to main sessions appeared to be reduced this year. We encourage additional attention to this for the coming year.
- We applaud the efforts made to ensure real time transcription, webcasting and interactive opportunities.
- Some remote participants faced some difficulties. It would be useful to understand better why they had difficulties and whether it was a national issue or linked to the IGF facilities or not.

## **Record of IGF sessions**

The summary reports of the IGF provided by the Secretariat and the transcription text posted on the website offer excellent records of the IGF sessions. More extensive reporting is not needed and would create non-productive activities that challenge the IGFs ability to consider all views, to be accurate in reporting and to be balanced. Individual organizers of workshops have many opportunities to distribute/post information regarding the discussions that take place in their workshops and/or other IGF activities that they believe of interest to others.

## **Logistics**

### ***What worked well***

- The IGF website was updated regularly. The IGF Secretariat did an excellent job of updating the website and we urge continued progress on the website.
- The YouTube IGF site was a good addition.
- There were plenty of meeting rooms available and allocated on a timely manner. The efforts of the IGF Secretariat to allocate rooms for meetings and networking were greatly appreciated.
- Lunches and coffee breaks hosted by the country were very helpful. 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.
- All main sessions and many workshops were webcast.
- The IGF Village was in an ideal location that encouraged participants to visit the booths and interact. The placement of the village in an open accessible space should be a priority for next year as well. The Village is an excellent 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.
- The availability of electrical plugs and Wi-Fi and cables was appreciated.



## ***Challenges and suggested improvements***

- Shipping information should be made available at least one month in advance of the event.
- Custom charges should not apply for materials brought in for the Forum.
- Accurate and easy to use visa information needs to be available ahead of time.
- Fluid and timely transportation should be made available, especially if the location does not have a good system of taxis and public options.
- Registration was efficient; however some participants had to wait in line for a few hours on the first day in particular. Registration should be quick and efficient on all days.
- Coffee needs to be readily available to delegates, if not free of charge as part of the host's break, at cost somewhere in the venue.
- Computers, with internet connection, and printers need to be available to ALL delegates.
- Proper internet connections are necessary throughout the event.
- The venue and venue hotel(s) need to be set up to receive the number of participants and have adequate business center facilities and meeting rooms.
- Host country website would have added more value if information was available in a timely manner.
- Last minute changes to the schedule caused several challenges.
- Host country or other professional photographers are helpful to capture the events in a high quality manner.
- Continued efforts to improve the availability of electrical plugs, and a stable Wi-Fi system that can handle the load in both main session rooms as well as workshop/meeting rooms will be important. Would be helpful for the IGF Village to be set up and ready the day before the IGF begins.
- The gala dinner gave participants a memorable cultural experience and sincere appreciation to the host country for this opportunity. For next year, the networking and interactive aspects of the social evening should be re-introduced.
- 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.
- We encourage the adoption of a new format for the schedule that is posted online to make it more user friendly, and easier to print.
- We support the implementation of standard UN security measures.
- In selecting venues for the IGF, both the conference facility and hotel(s) we strongly urge consideration of venues that allow participants to be in one or a few hotels close together. This facilitates an important benefit of the IGF which is networking and informal exchanges. This also reduces the time lost and burdens of transportation if the venue and hotel(s) are close by. Thus, we encourage selection of venues that allow for a large percentage of participants to be in the same hotel.
- It was difficult for participants who needed to work after hours to do so either at the convention center or their hotels. It would be helpful to ensure that there is affordable and reliable Internet access and 24 hour Internet access at the conference venue.

## **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.

## **Suggestions for media operations at IGF**

### **Media feedback**

- Despite a good turn out of regional and national media, there were few international media representatives registered for the event.
- A well-equipped media centre was made available. However, there was no formal way for participants to communicate with registered media.
- It would be helpful to have someone manning the media centre to offer assistance with media relations and coordination of interview possibilities.
- It would also be useful to have an area where participants can display media kits or announcements for media. A system whereby participants could provide journalists with information as the journalists register, and/or a notice board in the media centre.
- Better signage for the media centre is required so participants can easily locate it.
- Access to list of registered media and final list during and at end of event.
- Photos of the venue made available before the event.

### **What worked well**

- Functionality of media centre. Good supply of computers, photocopier and printers for media related participants.
- Photo support of Flickr.



## About the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its thousands of member companies in over 120 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](http://www.iccwbo.org)

## About BASIS

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 TechAmerica, World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), Africa Investor, Global Information Infrastructure Commission (GIIC), Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), and the Association for Competitive Technology (ACT) 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, visit: [www.iccwbo.org/basis](http://www.iccwbo.org/basis)

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