

Excellencies, participants, I am honoured on behalf of the ICC Business Action to Support the Information initiative to address you today.

Many of you are aware of BASIS from our record of action and organization within the context of the Internet Governance Forum.

ICC is a very large network comprising hundreds of thousands of companies in 120 countries. It is composed of, of course, international companies, but a key reality of ICC is that 90% of our members companies are small- and medium-sized enterprises. What these companies have in common – big, small, medium – is that they're all involved in cross-border trade, and are drivers of the global economy and the global trading system.

For many of these companies the Internet is not a tool, it is the life blood of their business and so they are very much interested and engaged in the development of that particular medium. It is one reason why at ICC we are very solid in terms of our support for IGF. We see it as a form of international governance that actually is delivering results. When we look at the situation in the world crisis that we have been experiencing economically in various parts of the world for the last several years, many of our models of governance have been found wanting, certainly in terms of delivering progress and results. We look at the world trade system and the frustrations and stalemates that are part of that particular engagement, we look at the world economy and the difficulty of countries even within a G20 grouping to act decisively together. We look at the world environment and again governance is found to be slow in terms of its possibility to deliver results. The IGF for us as a business community is a model that works. It has delivered stability, it has delivered confidence, it has delivered growth: growth in terms of the number and spread of users but also in terms of its impact on the world economy and not individual and national economies. So it is, from a business perspective, a model of governance that needs to be supported and developed.

In the current economic crisis, again, it has been underlined to us how crucial this model needs to be supported, how crucial it is that we are able to make sure that trade through the Internet, that activity through the Internet of all kinds, is built on the respect for the rule of law and on regulatory predictability and on stakeholder participation from all the communities that need to be involved. We at ICC believe that the IGF is that vehicle, that it provides a fair, balanced and effective approach to Internet governance. ICC was founded by business people, nearly 100 years ago, who called themselves the merchants of peace because they believed that the world of business went beyond the horizon of the bottom line, that it involved contributing to peace and prosperity in the world. It is a firm conviction of ICC members in this modern day world of the 21st century and the Internet, and the developments that have taken place that we are all called upon, in terms of the cooperation that is required, to use and develop the Internet. We must all become modern day merchants of peace. Thank you.