

ICC BASIS interventions – World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines Forum Consultation Geneva, ITU Tower, 15 February 2012

This document provides ICC-BASIS' interventions at the WSIS Action Lines forum consultation meeting. Two ICC-BASIS representatives, Claudia Selli, AT&T, and Marilyn Cade, mCADE llc, represented ICC-BASIS at this consultation. Comments made by both followed the prepared statement, but broadened to respond to proposals made by the ITU Chair of the meeting on various topics. The notes are not 'verbatim' but are close to what was said.

Geneva, 15 February 2012

Initial intervention made by Claudia Selli, AT&T

Introduction of self and noting – speaking on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce, ICC, and its BASIS initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society. Noted that additional comments would be made.

- ICC is pleased to have participated in the WSIS Action Lines Forum since its inception. Our business members participated in previous years and look forward to bringing business experience and perspectives again to the May 2012 WSIS Action Lines Forum.
- The ecosystem of business has broadened and changed considerably since 2005 and the landscape of co-existing process and forum has changed as well. ICC BASIS also supports the IGF and applauds its unique role as a multistakeholder platform for policy dialogue, exchange of information and best practices on Internet governance issues, with all participants on an equal footing.
- The global business community is actively engaged this week in the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) consultation meetings. The IGF is a key sister activity and important outcome of the WSIS in Tunis and should receive full support from all stakeholders at today's WSIS Action Lines Forum discussion. We encourage all to also become involved in the IGF consultation, look forward to seeing you in May at the next consultations, and hope you will mark your calendars to participate in workshops and open forums at this year's IGF in Azerbaijan.
- The WSIS Action Lines Forum is also unique, and has a significant responsibility to maintain that unique role. The Action Lines are one of the key outcomes of the WSIS in Geneva¹ and Tunisia². The responsibility accepted by UN organizations to

¹ Geneva Plan of Action (2003), Chapter C. Action Lines

act as facilitators is appreciated by business, *but business would like to encourage the facilitators to enhance their outreach to the business sector in a way that enables business to contribute in business ways.* The Action Lines are some of the main WSIS outcomes and should continue to focus on their unique purposes and functions, which are vitally important to the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and the continued development of a people-centred Information Society.

- ICC-BASIS has consistently provided input stressing the importance of focusing WSIS Action Line discussions (be they in the annual forum or elsewhere) on concrete national and regional initiatives that demonstrate the efforts of all stakeholders to implement the goals of the WSIS' Action Lines. This relevance of encouraging all stakeholders should be further clarified in requests by facilitators to the business stakeholders for input to and nominations for workshops, high-level speakers, and in other ways.
- Business is pleased that there have been some sessions that did provide real examples of such concrete projects; these sessions provided excellent examples of initiatives being taken by a range of stakeholders to fulfill the goals of the Action Lines, they were informative and inspiring.
- We would encourage the WSIS Action Lines Forum and facilitation process to prioritize and build on such sessions and ensure that a broader range of stakeholder activities are highlighted in this year's events.
- Contributions ahead of this consultation encouraged sessions/workshops on Action-oriented initiatives that are implementing the Action Lines. We also note that many of the submissions into the stocktaking-document are examples of nationally focused initiatives that may be very suitable to sessions.
- In particular, we support the focus on sessions emphasizing initiatives related to ICTs and education, technology, business, literacy, smart and ICT and green issues as well.
- We believe care should be taken not to duplicate policy and other discussions in other processes; we believe contributions like number 34 that proposes to explore domain name systems (DNS) and new generic top-level domains (gTLDs) and the concept of enhanced cooperation that are not part of the purpose of the WSIS Action Lines Forum are not appropriate for this Forum.
- We welcome seeing the interest in these topics and propose that this discussion belongs at the IGF. A workshop proposal could be submitted for the IGF in Baku.
- As it pertains to the Action Line Forum, we will evaluate the opportunities as this year's programme develops and will certainly consider providing high-level business speakers or business expertise.

- In response to a call for cooperative efforts among the Action Lines facilitators, we were pleased to see the cooperation of ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD and encourage all to build on this effort in the future; we would like to hear more about the activities of all of the facilitators to facilitate the action lines and more about all stakeholders' activities. We applaud ITU's contribution but we note that to date, the organizing of the Forum has not been undertaken by other facilitators.
- The hosting of the WSIS Action Lines Forum by multiple hosts is important.
- High-level events: business would like to focus on meaningful exchanges that are focused on the Action Lines. A roundtable of countries' senior speakers outlining key initiatives that they are driving in the achievement of the Action Lines could provide a foundation for a high-level introductory panel or two.
- It appears that funding and travel support may be a major barrier to full participation, and there is presently no transparency on how travel funding may be supported. This may create a barrier to full participation by some groups.
- As we have said many times in the past, it is critical that all remain sensitive to time, financial and human resources available to all stakeholders.
- We also support the continued hosting of the WSIS Action Lines Forum in Geneva in May 2012 and beyond. This is essential to facilitating participation of all stakeholders and remaining sensitive to limited resources of all. And we will continue to support the scheduling of the second IGF consultation on the IGF to coincide with this week, to support the ability for participation and attendance in both events.
- Claudia concluded her comments noting that additional comments would be made later in the meeting.

Marilyn Cade provided some of the following points during the discussions among the participants.

- Consolidation of all the action lines events in the booklet provided last year brought the events related to all the action lines together in an easy resource to consult.
- The Stocktaking document is impressive, and a further analysis that documents the number of contributions by states, civil society, business and the key categories (such as a spread sheet) will augment the already exciting information available in the survey of initiatives. We were very impressed by the number of government initiatives in all action lines, while recognizing that it is very challenging to capture private sector only initiatives of relevance.

- So many activities that are related to the spirit of the WSIS and inspired by the action lines are going on all around the globe, in all regions and motivated by all stakeholders in so many countries. It is important to recognize that many stakeholders work each day on activities, initiatives, projects and partnerships that are fulfilling the objectives of the action lines every day. Not all of them may be captured but it is important to recognize these important efforts.
- ICC-BASIS strongly encourage that the WSIS Action Lines Forum and associated side events focus closely on the Action Lines and implementation. There is a rich range of issues and initiatives to be covered, and it is duplicative to address issues that are within the scope of the CSTD or the IGF as a policy discussion forum.

In response to questions from the ITU moderator on the following topics – responses from Marilyn Cade, mCADE llc

- Statement from ITU facilitator: it has proposed to the IGF Secretariat that the IGF May consultation be held at a different time, perhaps the week before. There is no information yet.
- Marilyn Cade for ICC-BASIS: it is our view that the consultation needs to be held during WSIS week. It is extremely challenging for business and others to take the time and devote financial resources to participate in the IGF consultation and in the WSIS 'Action Line' Forum. If they are co-scheduled, it is possible for business to participate in both. Moving the IGF consultation to an earlier and separate date will limit the ability of business to participate in the WSIS Action Lines Forum.
- This view is our position into the IGF consultation as well. We believe this is the situation for more than business.
- Statement from ITU facilitator: there is a CSTD consultation on 18 May 2012 on enhanced cooperation. The facilitators need to meet on Friday and so we are planning to propose that the CSTD consultation be limited to only three hours.
- Marilyn Cade: speaking individually; I am not so confident that this is a possible change. This consultation is established by UN General Assembly (GA) resolution and is already noticed publicly on the CSTD website. I think that it is likely that already at least business and civil society are planning to participate. Is it perhaps possible for the facilitators to hold their consultation from 8-10 May 2012, so that the CSTD consultation can take place as announced. This is an important topic, and of course the report will be presented at the following week's CSTD meeting. Perhaps the facilitators could hold their session earlier in the morning. This would enable participation in both, but allow full time needed for the CSTD consultation, as called for in the UN GA resolution.

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