

ICC BASIS statement on WSIS action lines Forum 2011 consultation on “Expression of views on venue for WSIS action lines forum 2011”

On behalf of members of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and its BASIS initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society, we are pleased to submit this statement to the WSIS action lines Forum 2011 consultation on ‘Expressions of Views on the Venue for 2011’. ICC BASIS members include companies and business organizations from around the world and across sectors. ICC BASIS and its members have regularly participated in the WSIS action lines Forum events over the years.

ICC BASIS has consistently encouraged the WSIS action lines Forum and facilitation process to build on sessions that provide concrete examples of initiatives being taken by a range of stakeholders to fulfil the action lines goals, which requires broad participation from across stakeholder groups and geographies. We have also consistently stressed the importance of multiple hosts for the WSIS action lines Forum and have recognized the efforts of the lead facilitators, ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.

The WSIS action lines Forum events in Geneva have drawn upon the fact that many key organizations are located in Geneva, and the participation of many stakeholders, business included, has been facilitated by the fact that other WSIS related activities take place around the same dates. This has enabled participation by many because it took into account the limited time, financial and human resources of many across stakeholder groups. Organizing the WSIS action lines Forum 2011 in New York risks decreasing participation because it would require extensive travel for those participating in the other WSIS related activities in May in Geneva. Feedback from ICC BASIS members and other stakeholders indicates that obtaining visas for the US is extremely difficult for many particularly from developing countries. This would in turn decrease the range of participants.

ICC BASIS supports having the WSIS action lines Forum 2011 hosted in Geneva, or by the next lead facilitator, UNESCO in Paris. Either of these options would be more sensitive to the resource constraints of all stakeholders. We strongly encourage once again that efforts be made to select dates that allow stakeholders to participate in the other WSIS related activities that take place in May each year, namely the IGF consultations and the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) meetings. It has been noted in the past that business participation from across sectors and regions could be improved. We submit that organizing the event in New York next year will not further this objective.

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

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