

Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

Preliminary input and criteria for analysis of topics for Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

25 April 2006

Introduction

The first meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Athens will set the stage for future IGF events. The global business community, represented here by ICC/CCBI, has prepared this preliminary input to comment on a few critical issues to make this first IGF a success and to ensure that it can have positive impact and result in tangible benefits from the discussions.

We believe that careful selection of the agenda, consistent with a few defined criteria, will be essential to meet the goal of a successful IGF event in Athens. This preliminary input proposes a few of these criteria and demonstrates how these could be applied to a given topic.

The innovation, creativity and investment of business is the driving force behind the Internet, and to ensure its continued development, with the involvement of all stakeholders from around the world, we believe the calls for support to increase the ability of people to participate in the Internet's development is critical and must be addressed as a priority.

Agenda

Business firmly believes that the first IGF meeting in Athens, and future IGF events will be most successful, if the focus is limited to one topic, and perhaps a few closely related topics or sub-issues, a view that has also been expressed by some governments. The objectives of the IGF are, inter alia, to encourage dialogue, exchange of information and experiences, raising of awareness as well as fostering a better understanding of all dimensions, challenges, and the existing and ongoing work on a particular issue that could benefit from such global multistakeholder discussion. With the above in mind, in-depth discussion and exchange will be much more constructive than a broad range of topics discussed in a superficial manner.

We believe the criteria outlined below should be applied to any Agenda topic considered for the first IGF, and future IGF events, and should be evaluated, in light of the WSIS objectives and in particular the Tunis Agenda commitments. Business offers these criteria to help focus the discussion regarding the 'top ten list of topics' on the IGF website.

Criteria for selecting IGF event topic

Business believes that the following criteria would be beneficial if they were used to evaluate any potential topic for the first IGF event and future IGF events.

Any topic to be considered for the IGF Agenda:

- Should be important to continued development of the Internet and should help to bring the benefits of the Internet to all people concerned;
- Should truly benefit from further outreach and information exchange in order to build human capacity at the global level to foster a common understanding amongst all stakeholders;
- Should be ripe for discussion at the time of the IGF and would further the economic and social development objectives contained in the WSIS commitments from Geneva and Tunis; and
- Should respond to a primary reason for establishing the IGF, which is to respond to the need expressed by many stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, for assistance in building their involvement and participation in Internet governance processes.

The IGF consultations in February 2006 generated a number of suggestions concerning a broad range of possible topics for consideration as the focus of the first IGF event. While no specific topics have been selected, it is clear that the topics will require different experts and the selection of such experts for the IGF programme/agenda (i.e. speakers, panellists etc), must reflect the range of expertise required for the topic(s) under consideration.

Application of these criteria to possible IGF topic

Business would like to offer and endorse the topic of human capacity building raised in the Tunis Agenda and at the consultations on 16-17 February 2006 in Geneva. We suggest that it is the fundamental basis for progress on all other issues in the IGF and the Information Society. Human capacity building is essential to effect meaningful participation in Internet governance processes at all levels, and the exchange of information and experiences of all stakeholders to build human capacities through the IGF can make a substantive contribution towards improving the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly from developing countries, in Internet governance. In addition, human capacity building must be implemented at the national, regional and international levels by the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, and the multistakeholder nature of the IGF will support this objective.

Training and education regarding the Internet

If we apply the criteria listed above to the issue of bridging the digital divide, or increasing digital opportunities, particularly from the perspective of improving access and shaping policies to support this, we believe that meaningful participation in discussions on access and policies is essential to effective Internet governance. Therefore, if all stakeholders, from around the world, were to have a greater understanding of both Internet policies and Internet access technologies they would be better able to address such key Internet issues in the various fora and organizations addressing them. Education and training, i.e. human capacity building, are the cornerstones of success, not only in the use of ICTs but also for participating in meaningful and productive deliberations and decision-making bodies, thus promoting the beneficial goals of an Information Society for all----which lies at the heart of the Geneva and Tunis commitments.

While it seems like a logical requirement that all people must have access to basic education as a first step, followed by ICT related skills development, business recognizes the size of that task. In this regard, human capacity building in the area of ICT related skills can be advanced through partnerships amongst stakeholders that would ensure that ICT training is widely available which would help to apply the power and potential of ICT in the workplace. Indeed, such partnerships exist today.

Training and education regarding the Internet affects all users, all constituencies, and is multi-dimensional and could benefit greatly from a global level exchange of information, best practices and experiences. Training and education, to be effective, must benefit from the expertise of all stakeholders thus multistakeholder discussions and exchanges will increase the potential for improved implementation. It could also benefit from more partnership initiatives that could be initiated or forged at the IGF. Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, business supports a focus on capacity building, education and skills training as essential elements to promote an Information Society for all, as the ideal first topic upon which to focus IGF attention.

Application of criteria

Would Internet governance be ameliorated by a global multistakeholder discussion about human capacity and training regarding the Internet?

- Yes, it would greatly benefit from a solid and in-depth discussion amongst stakeholders from around the world. Participants could examine why human capacity building is central to good Internet governance, needs of different stakeholders from different region and explore means of improving the situation.

Will raising awareness about the best practices, guidelines, technical solutions, policy, legal and regulatory framework matters, and work of existing organizations regarding the expansion of education, training and skills training related to the Internet and Internet governance processes help to build human capacity more effectively around the world?

- Yes, since this is the first building block towards increased access to information and technology and to increased meaningful participation in Internet governance related issues at the national, regional and international levels, as well as in existing processes.

Is this an essential issue to discuss at this time, particularly for developing countries?

- Yes, this is the most critical issue that will assist all stakeholders from all countries, particularly developing countries, to benefit from the Internet and participate in its continued development.

Is this topic sufficiently linked to the urgent development issues regarding the Internet to qualify it as a productive topic for the first IGF event?

- Yes, the multi-dimensional, cross-cutting and fundamental nature of human capacity building, education and training on issues related to the Internet, make it the most critical issue to address in furthering the economic and social development objectives of the IGF and the WSIS. It is THE ISSUE from which all progress flows.

Is the topic being sufficiently discussed and is there adequate exchange of information and capacity building efforts being undertaken at the global level in other fora, which reduce the need for an IGF event to focus on it?

- Business is not aware of a of a global multi-stakeholder forum working on human capacity building, education and training issues related to the Internet Thus, it would not be a duplicative or redundant effort.

WHAT IS THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF BUSINESS INTERLOCUTORS (CCBI)?

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held during the week of 8 December 2003 in Geneva, culminating in the Summit segment on 10-12 December 2003. The second part of this Summit took place from 16 to 18 November 2005 in Tunisia.

Principals of the Summit host countries and executive secretariat invited the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to create the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) as a vehicle through which to mobilize and coordinate the involvement of the worldwide business community in the processes leading to and culminating in the Summit. ICC and the CCBI group led the private-sector effort to provide substantive input into the first phase of the Summit, and mobilized the private sector to participate in the preparatory phases and at the Summit itself.

The business community has decided to maintain a role for CCBI with regard to follow-up from the WSIS and its outcomes.

Among the organizations actively involved in the work of the CCBI, in addition to ICC, are: Asociacion Hispanoamericana de Centros de Investigacion y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones; Brazilian Chamber of Electronic Commerce; Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD; CABASE; CompTIA; E-COM LAC; French Publishers Association; Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce; Global Information Infrastructure Commission; International Publishers Association; Latin-American Information Technology Association; The Computer Society of Kenya; United States Council on International Business; World Information Technology and Services Alliance.

For further information regarding CCBI, please consult the WSIS website at: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html>
the CCBI website at www.businessatwsis.net
or ICC's website at: <http://www.iccwbo.org/policy/ebitt/id2343/index.html>
or contact wsis@iccwbo.org

ABOUT ICC

ICC is the world business organization, a representative body that speaks with authority on behalf of enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world. The fundamental mission of ICC is to promote trade and investment across frontiers and help business corporations meet the challenges and opportunities of globalization. Business leaders and experts drawn from the ICC membership establish the business stance on broad issues of trade and investment, e-business, IT and telecoms policy as well as on vital technical and sectoral subjects. ICC was founded in 1919 and today it groups thousands of member companies and associations from over 130 countries.

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