ICC-BASIS preliminary feedback on the draft IGF India programme and schedule

Introduction

This contribution provides preliminary feedback from the global business community of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and its initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS) on the draft programme and schedule for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Hyderabad, India, in response to the IGF secretariat's call for input ahead of the 13-15 May 2008 consultation and multistakeholder advisory group meetings. ICC and BASIS include members from companies and business associations from around the world, across sectors and of all sizes.

General comments

ICC-BASIS members support the evolved approach taken in the draft programme which responds to several stakeholders' feedback that the IGF in India should build on the IGF in Athens 2006, and in Rio de Janeiro in 2007 and continue to provide an open and informative forum for discussion on Internet governance (IG) issues among all stakeholders.

It is essential that the IGF continue the successful multistakeholder approach. The Indian host country organizers provided a helpful presentation regarding the facilities and arrangements, and ICC-BASIS hopes that additional details regarding logistical arrangements including visas, registration and hotel booking, Internet access (at the event venue and in the main recommended hotels), and on the ground transportation will be made public by May 2008. The Indian hosts' efforts to ensure that there are reasonably priced hotels and other accommodations are greatly appreciated.

ICC-BASIS reiterates its strong encouragement for the speakers and programme for the main sessions and other events to be finalized and posted by September 2008.

Basic structure for the Hyderabad meeting

ICC-BASIS members are encouraged by the new approach for the Hyderabad meeting, and the emphasis on interaction in all sessions. The IGF offers a unique opportunity for discussion and exchange and the focus should be more on interaction with and by the audience in the main sessions and other events.

Main sessions

The alternate proposed schedule included in the MAG summary from February is a good starting point, but will need further clarification and detail. ICC-BASIS supports the general evolution of the main sessions as outlined in the alternate proposed schedule. The main sessions are an important part of the multistakeholder discussions that raise the range of viewpoints on these topics, and offer a focal point for the topic. The schedule should take into consideration the experiences of the past two IGF events and ensure that there are no conflicts between main sessions and parallel workshops.

The main sessions should draw and build on the related workshops and we reiterate the recommendations from our reflections on the IGF in Rio submitted ahead of the February 2008 consultation and meetings. Specific innovations to improve the interaction at the main sessions, and attendance should be implemented so that these sessions truly add value at the IGF in Hyderabad and attract better participation:

Efforts to deepen the discussions could be accomplished by the following:

1. Focus the main session discussions on specific questions or issues, and best practices/lessons learned instead of general presentations on high-level issues;
2. Vigilantly limit the number of panellists and their remarks, and increase the time allocated to interactive discussion with the participants;
3. The main session descriptions should be simplified, and confirmed much earlier than in 2007. The main session questions or issues to be discussed should be identified in the descriptions, and be faithfully held to by the panellists and moderators;
4. The more focused topics of the main sessions should also be selected based on the criterion that they are likely to generate useful interaction with the audience;
5. Invitations to speakers and confirmation and announcement of their participation must be finalized at least by June 2008;
6. A complete programme with speakers listed must be made available by September 2008;
7. The number of other events should be reduced or efforts undertaken to eliminate all other events in parallel to the main sessions;
8. Ensure the main session topics are reflected in the workshops before and after the main sessions to create discussion threads that build on each other and are easily identifiable across multiple events; and
9. Explore new approaches to encourage the active participation of stakeholders with different viewpoints and experiences, and who may not have participated actively in previous IGF events. These new approaches should also include creative efforts to actively engage remote participants.

Cross-cutting theme of Capacity Building

Discussions in all the main sessions should emphasize the specific issues that are of concern to developing country stakeholders within Internet governance topics, and human and institutional capacity building measures that are necessary to strengthen

involvement of all stakeholders in Internet governance issues and institutions. This should not be mistaken for converting the IGF to another ICT4 development forum, but discussions should restrict themselves to the intersection between ICT 4 development and Internet governance, and the cross-influence of both of these discussions.

Emerging issues

The emerging issues session in Rio was a good model that should be used again in Hyderabad. It was very interactive, and a valuable opportunity to raise issues that were not discussed during the other main sessions. In India, the emerging issues session should emphasize issues on the horizon.

Digital literacy and IT training should receive more attention in the discussions at the IGF in Hyderabad. The policy and governance approaches that promote skills development and other resources necessary to get the world online should be a part of these discussions to emphasize the cross-cutting development and capacity building themes.

Workshops, Open Forums and other events

ICC-BASIS recognizes the efforts of the IGF secretariat to post a call for workshop proposals much earlier than in previous years, and supports continued efforts to finalize workshops, and other events in the schedule to ensure that a comprehensive programme is available by September 2008 with speakers identified to facilitate participation.

ICC-BASIS supports the idea of having some workshops that are closely connected to the main sessions and that have a longer slot of 2 hours to encourage in-depth discussion and exchange. These could be extensions of the main sessions and expand on some of the major themes identified in the main sessions. Such main session workshops would be part of the official programme and they would be run more like a main session (moderated, careful selection of speakers, real interaction etc) than other workshops organized by various groups.

Best Practice Sessions, other workshops, etc.
- ICC-BASIS continues to question the utility of 'Best practice' sessions given that the main sessions and workshops should be providing concrete examples of practices that have worked, how challenges in implementing policy approaches have been overcome, and offering practical information for participants on the range of issues. We continue to urge that best practices should be integrated into the main sessions and workshops, and not broken out into separate events in many cases.
- Recognition should also be given to the fact that learning often comes from "worst practices", and avoiding mistakes is often the better path to improvements than trying to copy a "best practice" that may have worked in one setting but may be unsuitable in another.

- Overlapping workshop proposals should continue to be encouraged to merge efforts as appropriate, and workshops supported by multiple groups/stakeholders should be given preference if choices between workshops have to be made.

A limit to the number of workshops that will be included in the programme/ schedule should be announced early on, assuring that the IGF remains focused on some of the key aspects and not diverted into a plethora of events which are all competing for attendees' attention.

- Consideration should be given to limiting the number of workshops proposed by the same group/stakeholder, and efforts should be made to ensure a broad range of panellists that have the opportunity to participate in workshops, main sessions, and other events.
- Workshop reports should be very short, and should be vetted by the moderators and panellists <u>before</u> being presented in the reporting sessions and posted. This will also ensure that the workshop reports are consistent with the range of viewpoints expressed during the discussion, and that they are a true report and not an advocacy opportunity for one approach or perspective or description of the workshop in general. [see reporting sessions section below]

Open Forums
- The open forums are basically a different kind of workshop, and should be clearly identified in the schedule and programme earlier. Organizers should be required to provide details regarding the speakers or presenters, and the focus of the sessions much earlier than was the case for the IGF in Rio. Many best practice and open forums did not have details regarding speakers and sessions, and were incomplete until the start of the IGF in Rio.
- The topics and speakers at these other events should be publicized early to encourage participation and allow participants to better plan and prepare.
- IGF branding should not be used in the name, logo or materials of best practice forums, open forums and workshops. To allow IGF branding gives the appearance the workshop or other session has the imprimatur of the IGF. The IGF secretariat should develop a disclaimer for use on the workshop and other events' reports, related documents, and websites that states that the materials, documents and information on the website are not endorsed by the UN or the IGF.

Dynamic Coalitions
- Dynamic coalitions should be opportunities for stakeholders from a range of perspectives to come together to discuss and work on issues between IGF events. Meetings can be organized during an IGF event, and reports on the status of their work can be presented at such meetings or in the reporting back sessions.
- Accepting one particular viewpoint should not be a criterion for belonging to a Dynamic coalition, nor should it be the goal of a Dynamic coalition to advance one particular viewpoint and use the IGF as a forum for such advocacy.
- Dynamic coalition meetings should have an interactive format, and should be an opportunity to draw upon the range of stakeholders present at the IGF to make the Dynamic coalition more inclusive of different viewpoints.

- These meetings should not be workshops, advocacy sessions, or seminars, but should be run as meetings to help define the Dynamic coalitions focus in the year to come, and consider the related issues that are important to new participants who may not be active in the coalition.
- Dynamic coalitions should be able to propose workshops, but if the event is called a meeting, it should be a true meeting instead of a seminar or workshop.
- IGF branding should not be used in their name, logo or materials. To allow IGF branding gives the appearance that the coalition has the imprimatur of the IGF. The IGF secretariat should develop a disclaimer for use on the Dynamic coalition reports and other related documents and websites that state that the materials, documents and information on the website are not endorsed by the UN or the IGF.
- IGF participants should clarify the role and objectives of Dynamic coalitions generally.

Reporting Sessions
- The 3 minute time limit for reports on events should be strictly adhered to. The reporting sessions would be more productive and would attract more participation if that was the case. A template should be provided for the report to assure there is a common framework.
- Many reports seemed to be advocacy opportunities instead of a reflection of the range of viewpoints expressed in the workshops or events, and this must be discouraged in Hyderabad.
- With multiple events happening simultaneously, the reporting back sessions are important opportunities to summarize discussions and keep all participants informed.

IGF 2008, Hyderabad, India (3-6 December 2008)

ICC-BASIS encourages concretization, announcement of partnerships launched, and commitments to be part of the IGF in India. The IGF is stimulating many exciting initiatives, and they should be captured in the programme and highlighted in a main session. Such a session would capture the developments in the past year and the discussion about useful partnerships and alliances would help identify people and initiatives that could be replicated in other regions or for other issues.

We are encouraged to see that "Innovation" and how to promote it can be easily integrated in the main sessions and workshops particularly as part of the "Expanding the Internet-How to reach the next billion" theme events. Discussion about new developments, applications, and services that affect Internet governance issues and that might provide solutions and improvements in each theme's area, would add an important dimension to the discussions and what participants learn from the IGF events.

ICC-BASIS is proposing a workshop on convergence issues and the human and institutional capacity building needed to address the new policy challenges it brings. This is an integral part of the "Expanding the Internet, access and innovation" topics.

The IGF in India can build on the discussions on the main themes in Athens and Rio by looking at the relationships between access and diversity, and between openness and security, which would be beneficial to participants and explore real challenges and choices in these areas and successful ways to address them. Particular emphasis on the perspective of developing countries should be integrated into the discussions.

The main session on "Expanding the Internet - how to reach the next billion" should be a focussed discussion on Access and Diversity. The main session on "Managing the Internet" and its title will need further elaboration and clarification. This session could focus on the issues of security and stability of the technical infrastructure. The discussions on security, privacy and openness issues should focus on the delicate balance to be struck between security and privacy and openness, and the moral, legal, and policy choices society will need to make.

We propose deleting the session called "Debate" as the suggested topics will be covered in main sessions, and likely in workshops, which should be interactive discussions on those topics. Further clarification is needed to avoid duplicative discussions.

Informal networking opportunities
We support the proposed breaks in the schedule that will allow for more opportunities for informal networking. The lunch and networking breaks must stay part of the final programme given the critical opportunity the IGF offers participants and the concrete joint endeavours that result from these interactions. For business, this is a real value add, and a real outcome of the IGF that is shared by many stakeholders which should be protected. No other events should take place at these times.

The host country's reception and other social events at the IGF are equally appreciated and important to give participants who may not interact in any other forum throughout the year the chance to forge new and strengthen existing relationships, and to share their views.

Host country, India, Logistics
The host country, India, has an important logistics and organizational role for the IGF in 2008. We strongly encourage the Indian government to work closely with Mr Desai and the IGF secretariat to ensure that essential organizational issues are confirmed promptly and made public to facilitate participation.
Specifically:
- The hotel and visa costs should be negotiated to ensure that participants can afford to be at the IGF in India.
- Preferably, there should be a visa fee waiver in place to allow participants from developing countries in particular to participate more easily.
- A rapid visa processing service in Geneva at the September IGF consultation would be a very helpful improvement.

Statements
ICC-BASIS members support the <u>exclusion</u> of prepared statements in the main sessions, and welcome the opportunity to record such statements in the specially equipped AV studio which will be shown in selected areas of the forum venue, and made available on the IGF website. Information about how participants can take advantage of this opportunity to present prepared statements should be provided by September 2008 to allow participants to make necessary arrangements, and to facilitate the use of this important tool by a wide range of stakeholders from around the world.

IGF Village
Considerations should be given to the idea to provide for sufficient space for the "IGF Village" so that participants can use the lunch break to visit the booths of the various organizations with an interest in Internet governance and to expand the networking capabilities in this area. ICC-BASIS is pleased to see that the IGF Village is planned to be set up next to the main meeting room hall, which will facilitate greater interaction and give more people the chance to benefit from the information and networking opportunities that the IGF village is designed to provide.

Remote participation
We recognize the efforts that are being made to provide translation, transcription and web-casting. As many stakeholders have pointed out, remote participation facilities will play an important role in allowing richer input and for more people to benefit from the IGF. We hope that this will be addressed by September 2008 to allow early notification to those who are unable to travel to India for the IGF.

Conclusion
ICC-BASIS greatly appreciates the efforts of the host country of India, the IGF Secretariat and its Executive Coordinator, Markus Kummer, and the MAG Chair, Nitin Desai, to prepare this important event. We look forward to contributing to the preparations and the event, and to working with all stakeholders to make the IGF 2008 a real success.

What is Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS)?

ICC created BASIS to serve as the voice of business in the global dialogue on the Information Society, following the two World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS) held in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005). BASIS participates in UN-linked forums set up to continue the dialogue, such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID), and the WSIS follow-up and implementation processes.

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 the Summits in Geneva and Tunis.

To promote the environment in which global business will continue to thrive as an innovator of these technologies, BASIS will mobilize business to help shape the agenda and participate in these global discussions. The initiative aims to unite the business community, to raise awareness among the public, governments, civil society, intergovernmental organizations and technical authorities of what business requires continuing to the development of the Information Society. BASIS relies on policies developed in ICC's Commission on E-business, IT and Telecoms (EBITT) as the foundation for its efforts.

For further information regarding BASIS, the founding partners, members and activities, please consult the BASIS website at: http://www.iccwbo.org/basis.

About ICC

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its thousands of member companies in over 130 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