



International Chamber of Commerce
The world business organization

An ICC initiative
BASIS
Business Action to Support
the Information Society

ICC BASIS intervention
Informal preliminary consultation on CSTD working group
On 16 September 2010, Vilnius

Thank you, Chair, for sharing your proposals.

My name is Herbert Heitmann, and I am Executive Vice President for External Communications for Royal Dutch Shell, and the Chair of ICC's Commission on E-Business, IT and Telecoms. On behalf of the members of the International Chamber of Commerce and its BASIS initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society, I am pleased to provide our comments on the composition, modalities and working methods of the CSTD working group on IGF improvements. You will notice that we very much agree with your proposal.

ICC BASIS strongly supports the IGF and its continuity and we have been actively engaged in the IGF since its inception. The fact that the IGF brings together governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, business, civil society and the Internet technical community to exchange information and discuss important Internet governance policy issues is of great benefit to us all. Likewise, we believe that the multistakeholder and inclusive spirit and principles of the IGF have been extraordinarily successful and should continue to guide the composition, modalities and working methods of the working group you will convene. As important to the many achievements of the IGF in its short lifetime has been the voluntary, non-binding, and relatively informal nature of its discussions, which has permitted frankness and collaborative outcomes that are rarely possible in UN and other more formal international fora.

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Composition

The IGF has had impact on how all of us think about Internet governance policy issues as we go about doing our daily business. The IGF has consistently built upon the experience of each previous IGF event and its preparations have been enriched by the involvement of all stakeholders. Thus, as this working group will consider further ways to improve the IGF, we believe it is critical that it be composed of an equal number of representatives from the IGF participant stakeholder groups; governments, IGOs, business, civil society, and the technical community. All groups have experiences to share that will help to continue to build the IGF as a responsive forum for all. Participants who have been a part of the IGF are best placed to share their experiences and work on improving the IGF further. Thus, a working group that did not include stakeholders who have actually actively participated in the IGFs would not have the substantive experience needed to address its improvements effectively. It is also important the group include stakeholders from diverse regions and particularly from developing countries.

The group needs to be of a size that will allow work to get done. We suggest that experience shows a group of 30-40 can be comprised with representatives from all of the relevant stakeholders and work effectively.

Modalities

The working group's modalities should ensure inclusivity and the range of stakeholder viewpoints and experiences. This could be best accomplished by having both open consultations and meetings, and online consultations. Like the timing of this informal preliminary consultation, we believe that the meetings/consultations should take place in conjunction with the regular IGF preparatory and MAG meetings to facilitate participation by IGF participant stakeholders and also remain sensitive to the limited time, human and financial resources of all. We welcome your proposal for these meetings to take place in Geneva in February and May around the IGF related meetings.



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Working methods

Getting substantial feedback from relevant stakeholders in writing and in oral inputs will help everyone to understand the different concerns or recommendations to improve the IGF further in its next mandate. This kind of exchange and discussion will be useful as we have all found that reading and hearing from others helps us to be creative about finding workable and acceptable solutions.

We support your proposed timeline for online consultations to gather input from stakeholders including those who may not be able to participate in in-person consultations. The group should hold open consultations in a format that allows for real exchange and not simply formal interventions. We also believe the group will need to have in-person time in addition to an online email list in order to digest the inputs, discuss the options, and make recommendations for broadening the reach of the IGF, and, as a result, making the dialogue even more inclusive and robust.

We also strongly encourage the use of real-time scribing and audio cast for the open consultations of this group to allow stakeholders that cannot be physically present to follow and contribute to the discussions. This has been very helpful in the IGF consultation processes.

To conclude, Mr Chair, ICC BASIS believes that a CSTD working group that is comprised in and works in the spirit that has made the IGF such a success will be an effective group to discuss IGF improvements for the future. We look forward to actively participating in the work of this group and remain available to support your efforts in this regard.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of the views of global business.

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