Working Group on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Questionnaire
ICC BASIS responses

ICC BASIS is pleased to provide the following responses to the CSTD Chair's working group on IGF improvements questionnaire. ICC BASIS members include companies and business associations from across sectors and geographies.

1.   Review of IGF vis-à-vis Tunis Agenda[1] – paragraphs 72 to 80

The IGF preparatory process has been successful in obtaining input from a diverse collection of stakeholders and implementing changes and enhancements to the IGF meeting on a continuous basis.[2] The IGF meeting agendas have evolved in response to community input and format changes have been made to accommodate remote participation and the emergence of regional and national IGF meetings.[3]

The IGF is addressing the items in its mandate in paragraph 72-80 of the Tunis Agenda, and facilitating multistakeholder dialogue that is inclusive and meaningful. It has also continually evolved and improved. The IGF's lightweight independent secretariat and decentralized multistakeholder preparatory process has proven to be effective. It serves as a process, which discusses, facilitates interfaces, advises, strengthens and enhances, identifies, contributes, promotes and assesses, helps and publishes.[4]

Substantive discussions take place on all issues including those that foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, and accelerate the availability and affordability of the Internet in the developing world, critical Internet resources, security and privacy issues and the use and misuse of the Internet.[5]

The IGF is, in and of itself an excellent human and institutional capacity building opportunity on a wide range of complex policy issues, best practices and the policy approaches and choices that impact them. And, every year new issues are being brought into the process. One cannot help but come to an IGF and leave having gained insight and knowledge.[6]

Every IGF brings together organizations engaged in cross-cutting international public policy issues, and participants learn about their work programmes and activities, the status of discussions on particular issues, and those on the horizon.

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[1] Tunis Agenda for the Information Society (WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev. 1)-E)
[2] Tunis agenda para 72
[3] Tunis agenda para 72
[4] Tunis agenda para 73, 74, 77, 78
[5] Tunis agenda para 72
[6] Tunis agenda para 72

A wide range of stakeholders who connected at the IGF are now actively involved in the work of other organizations. This is an important value add for all. Not easy to measure but still very real.[7]

Many stakeholders have commented that it is a 'one stop shop' for them to get information, make contacts, share experiences and develop their understanding. Excellent outputs include: the real-time transcripts of the sessions, the Chairman's report, substantive inputs and the synthesis and background papers. Additionally, the archives of information provide an important ongoing resource to all stakeholders.

This unique forum offers us all a chance to speak, but also to listen; it allows us to discuss all relevant topics candidly. It maximizes all participants' time by increasing their understanding instead of negotiating texts, which is a major strength.
The IGF is also a catalyst for change, and new opportunities for cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Participants have become more receptive to each others' perspectives and concerns. As participants have adapted to this open environment, we have seen rhetoric reduced. In turn, we benefit from more informed decision-making by all.

The mechanism by which the forum operations, consistent with paragraph 73 of the Tunis agenda enables an evolving framework that builds on existing structures, emphasizing the complementarity between all stakeholders, and ensuring a lightweight and decentralized structure, while enabling preparatory processes to make use of logistical support.[8]

We are pleased to see the UN Secretary General has periodically reported to UN Member states on the operation of the forum, and has through the UNGA resolution extended the Forum's mandate.

We believe the IGF's effectiveness stems from its unique constitution as a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process that enables the participation of all stakeholders. It has no oversight function and does not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations but does involve them to benefit from their expertise. Of course, it is important to also recognize that diverse matters relating to Internet governance continue to be addressed in other relevant fora.

The Tunis agenda was ahead of its time in recognizing that multistakeholder processes would evolve at the national, regional and international levels – and that these are an important contribution to the Millennium Development Goals.

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[7] Tunis agenda para 72, 79
[8] Tunis agenda para 73

2.   Improving the IGF with a view to linking it to the broader dialogue on global Internet governance as directed by the UN General Assembly Resolution on "Information and communications technologies for development" (adopted on 24 November 2010)

The IGF has to date played an important role improving collaboration, cooperation and coordination among a wide range of stakeholders. By involving existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organizations, it automatically links to all dialogues on global Internet governance, and provides a neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process for the participation of all. The evolving agenda is a demonstration how the process of the annual IGF, and the national and regional IGF initiatives in of themselves serve as a forum to linking all stakeholders and respective organizations into a network of networks of dialogues around Internet governance.[9] These efforts should continue to be built upon.

3.   How to enhance the contribution of IGF to socio-economic development and towards IADGs including enhancing participation of developing countries

The IGF has evolved to contribute to important social-economic developments and the IADGs, including enhancing participation of developing countries. And more can be done in this direction.

An example of existing contributions includes the dialogue around internationalized domain names (IDNs), and the eventual evolution of their implementation. The awareness created at the IGF events, the partnerships for workshops with UNESCO and other entities enabled a dialogue around the issue, which in turn was worked on by ICANN to ensure implementation. The implementation of IDNs is an important and critical contribution to social-economic development and the creation of content.

The participation of developing countries has improved over the years, with more work ahead. Through the generous contribution of several entities, fellowship programmes have been put into place, enabling participation from respective stakeholder groups. Additionally, remote participation, remote hubs, transcription, and the archives of information, enable both real-time participation and non-real time review of information. The national and regional IGF initiatives are additional important contributions to enhancing the participation of all stakeholders from anywhere on the globe. The input and dialogue around IGF issues is an added contribution to this evolving process.

Additional improvements can of course be made – including improved consolidation of materials from IGF events for better research and use; additional funds for developing country participation and improvements to the remote participation capabilities and archiving of information.

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[9] Tunis agenda para 80

An ICC initiative

BASIS

Business Action to Support
the Information Society

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International Chamber of Commerce

The world business organization

4. Shaping the outcome of IGF meetings

The IGF is a non-binding, and non-duplicative process, as established by the Tunis Agenda.

➢ The Chairman's summary of each IGF has been comprehensive. This should be built upon along with the reports from workshops and other sessions to capture the substantive discussions

➢ Consideration should be given to developing a 'glossy' takeaway that is published after the IGF that captures the key issues discussed, highlights information about policy choices and options on the range of issues

➢ Better use of the website to ensure it serves as an ongoing outcome of the IGF would be a useful improvement.

5. Outreach to and cooperation with other organisations and fora dealing with IG issues

The participation of representatives from various international and inter-governmental organizations and processes in the IGF and the regional initiatives has been a useful way to create links, raise awareness about work programmes and activities, and has facilitated the exchange of information. It would be useful to build on this start by encouraging other organizations who have not participated in the IGF to do so, and creating a regular update to relevant organizations and processes by sending them the Chairman's summary of the IGF event, for instance. It would also be helpful to build on the work of other organizations addressing topics within the purview of their mandates to share information with the IGF to enable awareness of respective organizational processes and work programmes.

6. Inclusiveness of the IGF process and of participation at the IGF meetings (in particular with regard to stakeholders from developing countries)

➢ Continue to increase remote participation opportunities at the IGF and at all of the preparatory meetings

➢ Ensure transcription and the well-organized archiving of IGF proceedings, in an easily accessible manner.

➢ Continue to build the website as a comprehensive resource to raise awareness and provide relevant information for all

➢ Build on IGF national and regional initiatives to raise awareness and create more inclusive and active participation in the global level IGF

➢ Seek feedback from stakeholders on what the obstacles or challenges are to participation

7. Working methods of the IGF, in particular improving the preparation process modalities

➢ Continue to build opportunities for remote hubs and remote participants to contribute throughout the preparations

➢ Use community projects such as Rural Information Centres equipped with Internet service to promote remote and active participation in IGF at all levels

- Devote resources to the website to develop it further as a 'one stop' educational and training resource of substantive information and also information about the regional and national IGF initiatives
- Continue to build on and encourage local, national and regional IGF dialogues to also contribute to the preparation process and to deepen awareness and inclusivity

7.1. Current modalities: open consultation and MAG

- The open consultations with real-time high quality transcription provide transparency, and an excellent record of proceedings
- Remote participation facilities are essential at open consultations
- The recent opening of the MAG meetings is critical for transparency and inclusivity, this must remain
- The use of real-time transcription and remote participation facilities at the MAG meetings is key
- Ensuring that MAG meetings are always open to observers and that their quality opinions when expressed count

7.2 IGF Secretariat

The IGF secretariat should continue to be independent, and funded through a voluntary contribution mechanism into a centralized funding repository. The ability for large and small funds should be feasible, with limited overhead costs to ensure the most effective use of all contributions made, including for developing country participation and engagement. In kind contributions should be recognized, with an estimated value amount. The secretariat should have sufficient additional funding to retain staff, interns, and continue to improve the efficient and effective website portal and archiving of events to ensure an effective and ongoing resource for all stakeholders.

To ensure efficient use of resources and administrative functions, the secretariat should be in Geneva as the post-WSIS processes and many other ICT related international processes are anchored in Geneva.

We believe the current IGF model is uniquely successful as:

- A body that **does not negotiate decisions**: without this fundamental characteristic, it would not be possible to have a free exchange and learn from different stakeholders' positions.
- Supported by **multistakeholder voluntary funding**: voluntary funding acts as a feedback mechanism; multistakeholder funding demonstrates that the IGF is of value.
- Led by an **independent secretariat based in Geneva** where the Internet policy networks and the history of the WSIS lie: it is important for stakeholders to feel they can trust the secretariat to be unbiased and not unduly influenced by any one interest.

- The Secretariat and support should continue to utilize the Donor's Fund to gather the contributions from countries, business, the Internet technical community and others to support the Secretariat with additional funding to support IGF participation
- Focus should be on broadening financial support for the Secretariat and creative ways of supporting participation by stakeholders who need support by encouraging national/regional partnerships to do this or other mechanisms.

8. Format of the IGF meetings

- The IGF meetings should be open, transparent, collaborative and inclusive.
- All stakeholder groups should have the ability to participate using the current registration model and not requiring any kind of accreditation process.
- Making physical participation easy and as financially feasible as possible by taking into consideration the limited time, human and financial resources of all stakeholders when selecting a venue is important
- Remote participation, high quality real-time transcription and archiving of audio and video files are important mechanisms to enable participation
- The format at present includes main sessions, workshops, best practice sessions and open forums
- Other skills enhancing and practical training sessions before, during or just after the event could be useful
- The IGF is currently 4 days long and the pre-events have been important additions. Discussion about the number of days of the IGF could be useful.
- IGF meetings must be open and inclusive, avoiding unnecessary protocol, and maintaining the greatest possible openness to all stakeholders to participate on an equal footing.
- This section of the report should also report on what has happened to date in the five global IGFs, what is consistent, what is unique, and what has emerged as possible congruent or consistent procedures.
- IGFs must include real-time reporting, transcripts, accessibility for persons with disabilities, remote access/participation. The format of the meetings will need to reflect sensitivity and accommodations to such features.
- A discussion about whether there should be consistent format structures, with the flexibility that is agreed by the MAG, or the host is a useful discussion for this segment of the report, and the past experiences should be reflected, so that the WG and stakeholder appointees, and then the broader CSTD community can review, and make informed comments when they receive the report.
- Each hosting country has unique contributions to share in this section of the report.
- Giving more weight to the national and regional IGFs: encouraging the continued expansion of local events, archiving their preparations and outcomes in a way to use them and take them into account when preparing the global IGF.

As well we recommend enhancing the bottom-up methodology of the IGF structure, organizing chronologically the discussion of issues at the local, provincial, national, then regional and global level to keep track of the history and the geographical parameters of issues discussed.

➢ Focusing the discussions: although the open, non-binding discussion format is adequate, too many issues are being discussed. Now that the Forum has reached a more mature level, sessions should not be taken up with talking about the basics of an issue but, instead, should be used to progress understanding of unresolved and more complicated issues.

➢ Balancing the main sessions and workshops/open forums: continued efforts should be made to increase interaction in the main sessions and balance the overall schedule to ensure active participation in main sessions and workshops/open forums.

9.   Financing the Forum (exploring further options for financing)

9.1   Review of the current situation

9.2   Options for ensuring predictability, transparency and accountability in financing IGF

It is important to have a fact based report on funding to date, which should include the outcomes of additional, or adjacent funding which has brought participants to the IGF, such as the Canadian government funding via the ITU's fellowship program. Additionally, if private sector mechanisms have funded attendance, that may be a useful self-reporting.

This section should identify the costs, and funding mechanisms, including any UN support to the funding of the IGF Secretariat. In many cases, voluntary contributions may not have been fully identified, and this report should enable a simple understanding of such contributions, without requiring extensive documentation.

The hosting countries make a significant financial contribution, which is not possible to fully document, but this should be noted in a useful but not burdensome manner. For instance, each host provides logistics coordination, and facilities, transport, and much more. It is difficult to impossible, and burdensome to document this, but there needs to be a recognition of this contribution.

Funding for the IGF secretariat should continue to be voluntary, and multistakeholder. In addition, there should be a mechanism that acknowledges in-kind donations. It is clear that national contributions from governments, supported by private sector contributions to the UN Secretariat Donor's fund are a significant contribution. This supports the hosting country contribution, but is the primary support to the Secretariat, and should remain so.

To ease contributions from all stakeholders, the funding process must be as simple as possible, including for small donations. To date, the IGF multistakeholder voluntary

funding model has been indicative of the support for the model itself, whether at the global or the national or regional levels. This is important to maintain.

This working group should focus its efforts on addressing the following key issues and improvements:

➢ Build on the IGF Chairman's and Secretariat's existing report with additional materials that capture the on-going dialogue and progress that is being made within the IGF process. This should include an online component and incorporate expanded reporting from regional and national IGF meetings. It also should expand the report on best practices issued by the Secretariat last year.

➢ Create new high-level summary materials that are designed to explain the IGF and its work to those who are not directly involved in the process.

➢ Expand on the successful outreach and participation efforts with specific proposals for increasing remote participation opportunities and increasing the level of participation, including governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

➢ Identify development topics and sessions that should be incorporated into the IGF planning process.

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

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