

ICC BASIS submission to enhanced cooperation consultation

Background

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Tunis, November 2005, Tunis Agenda outlines the establishment of an Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and enhanced cooperation amongst existing organizations that address Internet related issues.

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and its BASIS initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society have consistently urged that any process towards enhanced cooperation between existing organizations should be consistent with the Geneva Declaration and the Tunis Agenda which are consistent with the key principles described below. Governments already agreed in the Tunis Agenda that any enhanced cooperation “will involve all stakeholders in their respective roles”. Such cooperation must, of course, also be fully consistent with the WSIS mandate that Internet governance be “multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations.”¹

ICC and its BASIS initiative include companies and business associations from across sectors and geographies and of all sizes. A special effort has been made to outreach to small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) or organizations that represent SMEs for this submission, which reflects the views of a wide range of business interests.

¹ ‘Enhanced cooperation’

WSIS Tunis Agenda text **Paragraphs 69-71**

69. *We further recognize the need for enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, but not in the day-to-day technical and operational matters, that do not impact on international public policy issues.*

70. *Using relevant international organizations, such cooperation should include the development of globally-applicable principles on public policy issues associated with the coordination and management of critical Internet resources. In this regard, we call upon the organizations responsible for essential tasks associated with the Internet to contribute to creating an environment that facilitates this development of public policy principles.*

71. *The process towards enhanced cooperation, to be started by the UN Secretary-General, involving all relevant organizations by the end of the first quarter of 2006, will involve all stakeholders in their respective roles, will proceed as quickly as possible consistent with legal process, and will be responsive to innovation. Relevant organizations should commence a process towards enhanced cooperation involving all stakeholders, proceeding as quickly as possible and responsive to innovation. The same relevant organizations shall be requested to provide annual performance reports.*

This submission serves as ICC-BASIS' input ahead of the consultation which will be held on 14 December 2010. While we recognize the practical constraints that may exist for that consultation, and appreciate the fact that as an organization with consultative status to the UN ECOSOC, ICC will be present at this consultation, we note that this is not an open consultation which includes all non-governmental stakeholders from business, civil society and the Internet technical community.

The key business priorities regarding enhanced cooperation are outlined below.

Key business priorities regarding enhanced cooperation

Paragraph 71 of the Tunis Agenda clearly states that “all stakeholders” and “all relevant organizations” should be involved in the enhanced cooperation process. This principle of inclusiveness is critically important to success in achieving enhanced cooperation.

- We assert that enhanced cooperation refers to greater cooperation among existing organizations, not the creation of new entities or processes.
- Enhanced cooperation amongst the relevant organizations that address Internet related issues is guided by the objective of information sharing, creating more awareness and where appropriate, coherence in work programmes and collaboration.
- Enhanced cooperation is being facilitated across the spectrum of all relevant organizations including those that are private sector-led, those that are intergovernmental (IGOs) and those that are multistakeholder.
- The dynamic nature of the Information Society and the Internet are such that new or additional groups have emerged and will constantly emerge. These groups should be allowed to be part of this enhanced cooperation process. In keeping with the Tunis Agenda principle of inclusiveness, “(A)ll relevant organizations” should not be interpreted as a snapshot in time, but the relevance of organizations should be considered in the present.
- The fact that many of the organizations that are addressing Internet-related issues and their decision-making processes are already multistakeholder should be recognized and welcomed as an important foundation for enhanced cooperation.
- Business, given its expertise, expects to be involved on an equal footing, in any discussions or decisions regarding enhanced cooperation.

Note: The ICC interprets paragraph 69 which says “*We further recognize the need for enhanced cooperation in the future, to enable governments, on an equal footing, to carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, (...)*” as meaning that multistakeholder enhanced cooperation processes also assist governments in performing their duties, individually and collectively. The ICC does not interpret paragraph 69 as limiting enhanced cooperation to be related to cooperation among governments.

The importance of enhanced cooperation

ICC was accredited to participate in both phases of the WSIS, and engaged actively in the preparatory process and in the Geneva and Tunis Summits themselves. As a result we recall the ambitious goals agreed during the World Summit on Information Society and, as we explained during the WSIS process, **the Internet model of development remains relevant to successfully achieving enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders**. It is critical for governments, the private sector, civil society, the Internet technical community and intergovernmental organizations to continuously improve their cooperation, each in the area of their competence and mandate.

Since the conclusion of the Tunis Summit, ICC BASIS and its members have been actively involved in support of implementing the targets, recommendations, and commitments of the WSIS as they pertain to the Internet, and to Internet Governance, as well as in capacity building and support to Internet standards organizations.

ICC's cross-sectoral and geographically diverse membership includes businesses of all sizes. We continue to deploy efforts in a wide range of areas, working to enhance their cooperation and their contribution to the development of Internet-related public policy solutions around the world.

The UN Secretary General's outreach to several organizations in the past few years to get updates on their enhanced cooperation efforts show that productive and effective activities to enhance cooperation and participation are ongoing.

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has also motivated greater cooperation and collaboration among many organizations and stakeholders through the many opportunities at the IGF to showcase activities underway in Internet governance related organizations. This in turn has encouraged new collaborative efforts, reduced duplication and strengthened communication among stakeholders and organizations. The IGF is an excellent example of enhanced cooperation and catalyzes further enhanced cooperation efforts throughout its preparatory processes and at the IGF itself. We recognize and support the comprehensive submission by .auda on the IGF as an example of enhanced cooperation.²

Recommendations for enhanced cooperation

ICC would like to put forward three key recommendations to pursue enhanced cooperation.

- The first recommendation is that **all stakeholders should be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities to become more involved in the Internet technical organizations, where technical standards are developed and where public policy issues at the intersection of technology and policy are discussed**. The Internet brings technology and policy issues and experts together in ways not previously experienced. New approaches, new venues and new forums have arisen to respond to the opportunities and challenges that have been created. It is vital that all stakeholders in turn take up the challenge by participating in these new forums that are so critical to the Internet's responsible development.

² <http://www.unpan.org/dpadm/wsisisfollowup/>

- The second recommendation is **for governments and international institutions to make their Internet policy related and decision-making activities more open and inclusive of all stakeholders.** Governments, regional and international organizations that have been more open, and that have shown a commitment to enhanced cooperation have proven to be more effective in their work. ICC and its members welcome opportunities to participate in the policy development process at all levels. We suggest that the United Nations look to the OECD as an example and a case study of the benefits of increasing openness in its own organizations, and for recommending mechanisms that member states could implement locally and regionally.
- The third recommendation we offer applies to the process of enhanced cooperation at the broadest level. Whether speaking of enhanced cooperation in governmental, intergovernmental, non-governmental or international organizations, **it is essential that efforts to advance enhanced cooperation be founded on a commitment to openness, inclusiveness and outreach,** so that the entities that may be affected by decisions are able to participate in the development and implementation of those decisions. In this vein, the Internet technical community is an essential stakeholder group along with governments, business, and civil society, and should be recognized as such.

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, please visit: www.iccwbo.org/basis

