



International Chamber of Commerce

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BASIS
Business Action to Support
the Information Society

Internet Governance Forum November, Sharm el-Sheikh

CLOSING SPEECH

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Minister Kamel, Under-Secretary-General Sha, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to second all the previous speakers in thanking the people and government of Egypt for hosting this year's event and their great hospitality.

As Chief Communication Officer for SAP, it is my pleasure to address you today as businessman and also as the Chair of the Commission for E-business, IT and Telecommunications of the International Chamber of Commerce, the global voice of business. And I am a member of ICC's business action to support the Information Society initiative, called BASIS.

The ICC created BASIS following WSIS to contribute business expertise and perspectives to the IGF.

Like the IGF, BASIS and ICC's EBITT commission are no strangers to mobilizing stakeholders with varying perspectives, with the intention of finding common ground and of working towards a common goal.

Once again, the IGF has successfully brought together an extensive range of community leaders, this time under the umbrella theme of Internet governance, creating opportunities for all.

The last four days have provided us with a unique opportunity to undertake frank and open discussions on a wide range of issues. More importantly, we have been able to do this with interest groups that we might otherwise have had no chance to engage with.

Constructively, we have exchanged best practices and considered the best policy approach options that will have resonance long after we conclude our time here in Sharm el-Sheikh.

From looking at ways to extend Internet access and diversity, to identifying emerging issues such as online safety in Web 2.0 environments, there is nothing that cannot be discussed here.

The IGF never fails to underscore how vital the Internet is as a vast resource of information, tools, knowledge, services, with enormous potential. We have heard how tapping into these resources can help us find solutions to many of the issues we face in today's fast-paced global economy. From climate change to health, from bridging the digital divide to education and economic recovery.

For example, in a workshop we hosted with the government of Lithuania yesterday, we witnessed how appropriately addressing Internet governance issues can stimulate economic recovery and growth.

The future of this intricate network of networks requires the attention of us all: Business, governments, the technical community and the civil society. This is why business has long been a supporter of the unique IGF multistakeholder format, which sets all of us on an equal footing.

Business appreciated the range of stakeholders who contributed to, and enriched the discussions. We valued interactions with so many of you. We have not only addressed challenges but also pinpointed the opportunities that the Internet provides all of us with.

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As a major contributor to the success of the Internet, business knows that effective, Internet-related policies can bolster the Information Society and bring more benefits of the Internet to more people. We also know that the most effective policies are those that are well informed. Informed policy approaches are pro-competitive and consider issues such as free flow of information, data protection, and security.

We came to Sharm El Sheikh not only to have our say but, equally important to us, to listen and learn from others. Over the last four days, the forum has provided us with insight into the priorities and concerns of the others. We come away better informed about who is doing what in technical areas and other Internet-related matters. This one-of-a-kind environment of multistakeholder exchange helps us to find new understandings, common interests and opportunities.

Because our focus has been on substantive exchange instead of negotiated text, our time here has been put to good and practical use.

This is very important to us.

Our discussions, many initiated at previous IGF meetings, will enable us to take a more informed policy approach to Internet governance. They will move us towards collective solutions that are both coordinated and comprehensive.

This is why the continuation of the IGF in its current format and based on its founding principles, is crucial.

The IGF is a great success, and today we have seen overwhelming support for its continuation. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then the national and regional IGFs that we have seen emerging pay testimony to the value of the IGF. Business applauds these budding initiatives which enrich bottom-up global IGF discussions.

Lack of multistakeholder involvement has often led to ill-informed decision-making, resistance in society, suspicions among the different players. The Internet Governance Forum as we know it today has fortunately prevented these shortfalls so far. It has helped to make the Internet a universally applauded, appreciated and heavily utilized medium globally. Business wants the IGF to be continued and strongly opposes changes to its founding principles.

Given the fast-paced evolutionary nature of the Internet, keeping momentum and building on discussions in a timely and effective manner is crucial. Over the past four years, we have seen how the IGF can be extremely responsive and adaptive in its annual format. The event as we have come to know it today has evolved from cautious beginnings to balance interactive workshops and main sessions that respond to relevant Internet policy topics of the moment. Business has witnessed this evolution and has been a proud participant since the days its forums' inception.

The closing of the fourth IGF gathering presents us with an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments here and to think ahead to the things we will do when we return home to make an impact and create opportunities for all. For business, I can say our homework is clearly defined. We have to increase participation. We want to be present at the next IGF with more business representatives from Asia and Africa, from small and non-IT business because that's our job to make sure that we have a fair representation in our group.

In the IGF spirit of working with other stakeholders, BASIS has already begun working with the government of Lithuania for our participation next year in Vilnius. We look forward to seeing you all there.

Finally, our special thanks go to the host country, Egypt, Minister Tarek Kamel and his formidable team. And we also thank Under-Secretary-General Sha, Nitin Desai, Markus Kummer, and the IGF Secretariat team as well as the members of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group who have made this event such a tremendous success.

Thank you.