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**BASIS**

Business Action to Support  
the Information Society

## **Opening Ceremony Speech** **Guy Sebban, Secretary General, International** **Chamber of Commerce**

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*Second Internet Governance Forum, Rio de Janeiro,  
12 November 2007*

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I am delighted to participate in the second annual Internet Governance Forum, in my capacity as the Secretary General of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and on behalf of ICC's initiative, Business Action to Support the Information Society, or BASIS, for short. Several BASIS members are serving on the multi-stakeholder advisory group which has helped to prepare this important event, and BASIS is very active at the IGF.

I would like to thank our hosts, especially President Lula da Silva and the people of Brazil; as well as Nitin Desai, Special Adviser for Internet governance to the United Nations Secretary General; Brazilian Minister Hadil Vianna, Director of Scientific and Technological Affairs; the Co-Chairs of the IGF Advisory Group and Markus Kummer, Executive Coordinator of the IGF secretariat. Thanks to their tireless efforts, we have a large turnout in Rio for a very promising forum.

When I spoke at the first IGF in Athens last year, we were looking forward to an enriching exchange among experts, civil society, business and government that would empower more people to participate, to find new ways of cooperating, and to identify the best way to address critical issues linked with Internet governance. The IGF in Athens was a great success.

Today, at the second IGF, we look forward to broadening and deepening these interactions and to identifying key opportunities and challenges for our task of building a more inclusive information society. These include capacity building and the urgent needs of developing countries, which are key topics we can also expand on at the next IGF in India in 2008.

As we forge ahead to achieve greater inclusiveness and understanding of Internet policy and practical issues, I find it appropriate that we are gathered in Brazil, one of the world's most dynamic economies. Brazil is one of the four "BRIC" countries that are expected to continue making strides in productivity and to play a dominant role in the world economy.

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Brazil has fulfilled the most important conditions for a vibrant ICT economy: it is a democracy and rates well in economic freedom, liberalized trade and protection of intellectual property rights. It is Latin America's largest economy and has a robust private sector.

Brazil has also made great strides in developing its ICT base. It has a transparent approach to Internet governance issues. It is a benchmark for efficiency. And it has a very large network of telecentres in poor communities, with free Internet access in many places, such as post offices.

Business around the world has played a pre-eminent role in the rapid development of the Internet and related technologies and services. Just to mention a few business achievements: quantum leaps in computing memory, through rapid advances in chip technology; powerful machines in units so small they are undetectable to the human eye – nanotechnologies; face-recognition software for better airport security; smart search engines; web 2.0 and social networking – the ties that now bind global communities; long-distance medical monitoring and long-distance learning; banking and crop monitoring by cell phone everywhere, including in developing countries. The list goes on.

Business plays a fundamental role in continuing development of the Internet and in providing the benefits of it to more people around the world. This is the reason business is actively engaged in the IGF.

We live in a new era of unparalleled progress in technology, affecting how we work, play and communicate. Yet approximately 1 billion people do not have access to these marvellous tools. The challenge is to bring them into the fold and to simultaneously ensure the security and stability of the Internet, which business and users from all groups depend on.

To increase access to the Internet and the infrastructures it runs on, global business believes the right regulatory, legal and policy frameworks must be in place to attract business investment. These essential conditions include: telecoms liberalization and an independent telecoms regulator, intellectual property protection, the rule of law, and a general climate of openness.

Governments, international business, and other stakeholders must all work together to increase access for more people.

There is another challenge which underpins the discussions on Internet governance: skills training and education. Without literacy and the right technical instruction, beginning in schools and continuing through a person's entire career, people cannot use these infrastructures and the Internet. This must be addressed – sooner rather than later.



The IGF is a rare opportunity to discuss these challenges and to listen to the needs of all involved. To enhance understanding of these issues, I am pleased to announce ICC's publication of a new inventory of policy positions and best practice guidelines. These guidelines will help policymakers and users, and are being distributed for the first time here at the IGF.

BASIS and business remain committed to the important work taking place at the IGF. Last year at the inaugural IGF in Athens, BASIS hosted a workshop with the Canadian government on how to increase awareness of Internet issues and develop the necessary skills to enlarge participation in Internet governance issues.

This year BASIS is expanding its participation by co-hosting two workshops. In partnership with the Oxford Internet Institute, ICC is holding a workshop on what various stakeholders can do to improve Internet security, with a special emphasis on authentication and digital identity management. Another workshop, co-sponsored with the French Foreign Ministry, the Association for Progressive Communications, the Swiss OFCOM, and CONGO, will deal with multi-stakeholder policy development processes.

As we start the second IGF, I encourage every participant to keep three thoughts in mind:

1. We are here to work together and to share experiences regarding important Internet governance related issues that can only be effectively addressed by the cooperative efforts of ALL actors.
2. Business has a fundamental role in the continuing development of the Internet. Nurturing this role at national, regional and international levels is essential to our common objective of bringing the benefits of the Internet and the information society to more people around the world.
3. The IGF is a special opportunity and we are all here to make the most of it and to ensure that it remains the unique forum that it is – bringing all of us together for a useful and rare exchange on Access, Openness, Security and Diversity.

ICC/BASIS members look forward to an enriching set of experiences with all of you this year in Rio. I would like to thank each of you – for your time, your energy, and your enthusiasm.

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