

## **SECOND PHASE OF WSIS, 16-18 NOVEMBER, TUNIS**

### **STATEMENT BY GUY SEBBAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC)**

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The WSIS organizers invited the International Chamber of Commerce to create a vehicle to coordinate private sector input. The result is CCBI, a network of business organizations whose members include companies of all sizes, in all sectors, from all over the world. The Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) is the voice of business at WSIS.

The private sector comes to WSIS in a spirit of cooperation, ready to lend our significant expertise in order to spread the benefits of an information society to as many people as possible.

The first part of the summit, in Geneva two years ago, produced many good ideas. The focus of this summit here in Tunis and the path forward should be on the realization of those ideas. Tunis must be about turning words into action.

Action will most effectively be realized if full use is made of the multistakeholder approach.

Each of the stakeholders have a role to play in the creation of an information society. Each of us - whether we represent business, government, civil society - have specific talents, expertise and capacities. What we need is the freedom to properly execute those roles to their greatest effect.

What business brings to the table is a vast resource of invaluable market experience, built up over years working in the field. We know what works and what doesn't.

Moreover, creating an information society for all will rely heavily on the financial and technical capacity the private sector has especially in investment matters and R/D.

The role of governments is also particularly crucial. Without the appropriate enabling environment at a national country level, many of the high ideals of this summit will simply never be achieved.

Governments need to recognize that ICTs have transformative qualities for economies. They need to understand that ICTs will only flourish in certain conditions - among which are a transparency of institutions, a predictable legal system, a commitment to the liberalization of the marketplace, and generally speaking good governance.

Both developing and developed countries need to take stock of the entrepreneurial environment in their countries and wherever possible, streamline procedures and bureaucracies which otherwise inhibit innovation.

This spirit of flexibility should guide all of us here when we take position on Internet governance.

The genius of the Internet - and the underpinning of its remarkable potential as a tool for development - is its decentralized nature. The fact that it is not controlled by anyone or any single institution.

If we want it to perform to its optimum, if we are serious about it being used as a tool for economic growth and poverty reduction - the Internet must be allowed to continue to develop as it has to date: open and unencumbered by unnecessary bureaucratic interference.

Under its current, distributed governance structure, the global number of users of the Internet has grown in the last seven years from 106 million to over one billion - a remarkable growth rate by anyone's standards.

For the sake of all of those in the world currently exploiting the myriad benefits of the internet, and, more crucially for those who are yet to be exposed to its remarkable transformative qualities, the current security, stability and consistent functioning of the Internet must not be jeopardized.

Business welcomes the development at this Summit which will see the convening of an international, multi-stakeholder forum to discuss issues of importance to the Internet. Moreover, we look forward to contributing to its creation and eventual work.

As a complement to existing organizations, such a forum can further enhance the level of debate about the Internet, facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences and finally, contribute to the ultimate aim of this Summit - the spreading of the many benefits of the Internet to as many of the world's inhabitants as possible.

Fundamental to the creation of a truly inclusive information society is so-called "capacity building" - both human and technical.

Education and training programs - jointly created and implemented by governments, the private sector and civil society - are crucial to ensuring those who log on are able to properly exploit the full potential of the tool to which they have been given access.

It is clear there needs to be a greater diversity of users - more people from more parts of the world logging on more regularly. Business hears this message, understands its importance and pledges to work with governments and other stakeholders to develop and disseminate the education and training which is vital to greater global participation in the internet.

The scientific community was instrumental in the Internet's creation, the business community has been crucial to its development and expansion, now both communities stand ready to help governments in its widespread distribution.

Let's not waste this historic chance to ensure the Internet, with all of its enormous potential, remains a potent tool for development. It must be delivered into the hands of those whose lives will be the most impacted by its evolution.

Thank you for your attention