

**INTERSESSIONAL PANEL OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CSTD)
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**The overall review of WSIS
and its implications to the implementation of
and follow-up to the Summit outcomes**

Statement submitted by

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ICC BASIS remarks at the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) 2015-2016 Inter-sessional Panel

Budapest, 13 January 2016

Remarks delivered by Elizabeth Thomas-Raynaud, ICC BASIS Project Director and Senior Policy Executive, ICC Commission on the Digital Economy

Good morning,

I would like to thank the Chair and the UNCTAD Secretariat for this invitation, and add my appreciation to the Secretariat for the high calibre documents and the rich panel content we've had to consider and discuss this week.

I also wish to thank our kind hosts, the government of Hungary, for this pleasant opportunity we've had in Budapest – in addition to the photos from the dinner cruise I intend to take a sampling of some tasty Hungarian wine back home to France today.

For those of you I don't know yet, you may have seen the place card at my table says ICC BASIS. Before I share some reflections on WSIS review follow up I'd like you to know why I am here at the CSTD with you and what that means.

ICC is the International Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest – and most representative – business organization with over six and half million members from all sectors and regions in some 130 countries. So, when I gather or provide input on behalf of the private sector, I am not speaking to you from the perspective of a large ICT company, or a sectoral lobby or regional organization or even as an owner of my own business, I am acting as spokesperson for the trade promotion chorus of business voices in most of your countries blended with those of the companies that operate across many countries.

Created before the UN itself by business leaders from several countries, ICC was founded to promote peace and prosperity through trade and investment. For nearly 100 years, ICC has served as the voice of business. Today it is as engaged in its original mission as ever – serving as the convener or focal point for business to the UN on many topics – recently on the SDGs, the Addis Ababa financing for development agenda and the COP 21 in Paris among many others.



In addition to its other work assisting business with tools for global trade, ICC makes sure the private sector views inform government decisions to produce better policy and outcomes to serve our shared interests in sustainable economic and social development.

ICC was the focal point for business during the WSIS process. It created Business Action to Support the Information Society (ICC BASIS) to help business stay engaged and active in the follow up action lines as well as in the creation and fulfilment of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

Naturally, this brings me back to our task today.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the community I represent and to set out for our discussion some reflections from the private sector on the WSIS +10 review follow up.

Thanks to the skilled co-facilitators and the dedicated representatives of your governments, the process concluded successfully with the final 71 articles of the outcome document. With many speakers keen to follow, I do not have enough time to cover business views on all of them. But I will highlight some priorities and share views on the CSTD's task.

All stakeholders have been well served by the successful recognition in the outcome document of the important role connected ICT has played in advancing the previous global goals and how leveraging this further is essential to deliver on the commitments of this new 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda.

ICTs have an important role in contributing to each of the 17 SDGs. And to reinforce what we've heard others say – access is a pre-requisite but not an end in itself – we must also seek to ensure people can benefit from the Internet and not just use, but also create, the related technologies and services that are relevant to themselves, their communities, and their countries. So we need to continue our work together to advance policies and cooperation across stakeholders to better understand persistent barriers to Internet access and to targets those actions that will help people be empowered by using it to transform their lives and economies.

The emphasis placed by the draft WSIS outcomes on bridging the variety of digital divides including the “gender divide” in many countries is important. And as we've heard the value of addressing this particular concern is not just its ethical merit but also about the exponential benefits economic empowerment of women has been reported to have on community development and family health – because of how earnings are spent.



We commend the outcome of this review for reaffirming the importance of cooperative and collective action among all stakeholders in managing the global governance of the Internet.

And we concur that to maximize the potential of ICTs to promote sustainable and inclusive development it is crucial that the future of the Internet is shaped through an open, inclusive and truly multistakeholder process.

We applaud the extension of the IGF mandate for 10 years and embrace the call to implement the valuable contributions of the CSTD's multistakeholder Working group on IGF improvements, notably its recommendations to engage more stakeholders from developing countries to build on IGFs important strengths to enhance the community's ability to reflect collectively on the complex problems and the challenges of the future.

We intend to work with the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group to prioritise work on this in 2016 -- building and strengthening links, with national and regional IGF initiatives - to enable information sharing on practices that have successfully addressed these challenges.

Business notes with satisfaction that the important contributions of the CSTD to the implementation of the WSIS review and its value in reporting the annual analysis of progress has been recognized in the Review document and we see the Opportunity given to the CSTD to lend its expertise and value add to the follow up actions outlined in the review as a positive affirmation of the work it has been doing this far.

I won't elaborate specifically on all the items from the review but will touch on 3:

- 1) CSTD has a track record of convening experts and being ahead of the curve in demonstrating openness to meaningful engagement of stakeholders to strengthen its studies, reports and outputs.

Whether advising on the digital divides or the enabling environments needed to address them or reporting on the WSIS follow up, we look to CSTD to demonstrate vision and leadership again as it seeks to fulfill its role in an inclusive and open manner with stakeholders on identifying and promoting suitable actions.

- 2) We count on the CSTD within the capacity of its role as part of the new Technology Facilitation Mechanism established in the Addis Agenda to leverage its relevant experts and engage its community of stakeholders to fully and openly consider policy implications and options on this important topic.



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- 3) With regard to the call for the CSTD Chair to establish a working group to develop recommendations on how to further implement enhanced cooperation we look forward to discussing this undertaking and to ensuring suitable representation for private sector participants to engage and to ensuring transparency and to the best extent possible diversity of the interests represented among them. We feel confident in the ability of the CSTD to set up a group that is in keeping with a multistakeholder approach - ensuring the full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, taking into account their diverse views and expertise. As called for in the outcome document.

When establishing the working methods we encourage the CSTD to consider minimizing the cost and time barriers to participation with alternatives to in-person meetings and where absolutely necessary to align these with activities where a critical mass of participants may already be traveling.

Finally, as the review document is implemented across all the articles, we have requested that the UN Secretary-General and all the international organizations with a role in WSIS follow-up to intensify their efforts to develop effective mechanisms for full participation of non-governmental stakeholders to more fully integrate their activities within development frameworks and processes.

The Internet—underpinned by earlier WSIS decisions—has already had a transformational effect on our societies. ICC and the chorus of business voices we represent feel strongly connected ICTs offer great potential to work collaboratively towards the 2030 goals and deliver a brighter and more prosperous future for all.

Thank you.