

**Internet Governance Forum 2009**  
**15-18 November, Sharm el-Sheikh**

**Opening speech**  
**By Jean Rozwadowski, ICC Secretary General**

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce and our initiative Business Action to Support the Information Society or BASIS, I would like to begin by thanking the Government of our host country, Egypt, particularly his Excellency Doctor Ahmed Nazif, Minister Doctor Tarek Kamel, UN Undersecretary General Sha, and the Chair of the multistakeholder advisory group, Mr Nitin Desai. Thank you also to Mr Markus Kummer, members of the multistakeholder advisory group and the IGF Secretariat for their tireless efforts organizing this event.

I am honoured to be here today as a newcomer to the Internet Governance Forum.

With a network of local representations in over 120 countries, ICC is the world business organization, working on behalf of business everywhere to promote cross-border trade and investment. This year is a particularly special year for ICC, as it marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding in 1919. Today, our membership spans fortune 500 companies, small and medium enterprises, as well as chambers of commerce, business and trade associations. It is the diversity, vision and leadership of our organization, and BASIS initiative, that make us credible contributors to the IGF process.

Ladies and gentlemen, the internet is a gateway to abundant resources of knowledge and information. Harnessed appropriately, it has an important role to play in helping us address an array of challenges, ranging from economic recovery to climate change.

Business has long contributed to the success of the internet as a key innovator, investor, content creator and user. We are able to use the internet to communicate in our daily activities because business designs, builds, operates and maintains its part of this network of networks. Under the umbrella of BASIS, global business contributes to a more inclusive, people-centred information society, and helps the internet reach its full potential, as the people connected to it strive to reach theirs.

The evolutionary nature of the internet continually brings us new choices and new challenges. Because the internet is a global phenomenon, a holistic approach to internet governance must be taken to ensure that the right decisions are made. No one group can or should address internet governance issues alone.

Many of our members are involved in regional and national initiatives – from e-banking in Kenya to pollution control measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in India. Coherent and informed policy approaches help them to reach more people. BASIS recognizes the value of working together with all stakeholders – governments, civil society, technical experts and intergovernmental organizations – to build smart, sound internet policies that allow us to play our parts effectively.

This is why we strongly support the continuation of the IGF in its current format with all of us participating on an equal footing in all aspects.

The implications of IGF discussions to date have been far-reaching. Because we do not meet here to negotiate, community leaders can participate in frank and open discussions that have ultimately led to more informed policy and decision-making within their respective communities and organizations.

There is no existing alternative to the IGF.

Without it many of us would have no occasion to exchange views and experiences. Appreciation of the needs of others would be greatly undermined. The IGF spurs

cooperative efforts and reduces duplication. It also links people, topics and other forums and processes.

Over the last four years we have seen rhetoric give way to substantive discussions. We have witnessed many of the ideas generated and best practices exchanged at the forum applied in practice at national and regional level.

In turn, the involvement of local sources of knowledge and expertise in internet governance issues has been strengthened by the emergence of IGF-related initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen, business is proud to have a strong representation at this year's gathering. We bring a wide range of experiences to the discussions. Because we want to exchange with as many of you as possible, I encourage you to visit our booth in the IGF village. I also invite you to attend the workshop we are hosting on Tuesday in partnership with the Government of Lithuania.

The workshop will be looking at internet governance and economic recovery.

Uniting us so that we can work together is a hallmark of the IGF. Having converged here from the four corners of the globe, let's make the very most of this unique opportunity.