



August 30, 2007

Mr. Markus Kummer  
Executive Coordinator  
Internet Governance Forum  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva  
Switzerland

VIA EMAIL: [igf@unog.ch](mailto:igf@unog.ch)

Dear Mr. Kummer:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and comment on the program for the upcoming Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, November 12-15, 2007. The Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) appreciates the leadership of IGF Chairman, Nitin Desai, the ongoing services of the Secretariat, and the updated informational support to the stakeholders' participation that is provided by the IGF's website. We also thank the Government of Brazil for their willingness to host the 2007 IGF and to welcome the interested stakeholders to Rio, as we understand the significant commitment of resources required to host such a meeting

ITAA is a strong supporter of the IGF as a unique forum for fostering the ongoing dialogue on Internet governance issues among all interested parties. Therefore, we applaud the work undertaken by the Secretariat to ensure that our members, and all interested stakeholders can fully comment and effectively participate in the planning process for the upcoming IGF, understanding the challenges that the organizers face in coalescing the substantial input into the final program.

With regard to the program for the Rio IGF, we respectfully make the following comments.

The value of the IGF is its open and informative nature, allowing a variety of views to be expressed, and the full range of experience and expertise to be shared so that all can continue to learn more about how to use, grow and expand, and protect the key communications and information resource that the Internet has become. As such, the first recommendation we would make is that the organizers ensure that the IGF remain consistent with its mandate for facilitating a dialogue and not engaging in the negotiation of formal documents.

We also support the importance of the IGF's focus on engagement with developing countries and seek ways to encourage participants from those countries to participate in the IGF process and annual forum. Such participation is supported by continuing to ensure timely and frequent publication of useful and informative materials on the IGF website as well as participation in the annual forums.

We have noted the use of the term "fifth theme" in the Secretariat's documents regarding preparation and consideration for the Rio forum. It was our understanding that the informal consultations in May 2007 had resulted in the addition of a fifth session focused on Critical Internet Resources (CIR). The four

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themes for the IGF were set for the inaugural IFG in Athens as Access, Diversity, Openness, and Security to provide the thematic outline for the process of structuring and organizing the IGF program. While we support the addition of a new session on CIR, we strongly object to the characterization that this become a “fifth theme” for the forum.

It is our view that the fifth main session should remain flexible and open to change for subsequent forums. For example, IGF 2008 will include a new session on “Emerging Issues.” That session could result in proposals for additional new topics for consideration. Therefore, it is premature to select a new “fifth theme” for the program.

Generally, ITAA supports the addition of open and best practice forums as new sessions to the program for 2007. However, we recommend that any new category of session be evaluated for its effectiveness and addition to the dialogue before being added to the ongoing program indefinitely. One specific criteria for such evaluation would be to ensure that sessions are truly “best practice” in nature, for instance, and not showcases for parochial initiatives or academic proposals.

From a logistical, programmatic perspective, we would like to make a few recommendations for organization that will foster the greatest possible participation and interaction, as follow:

- Endeavor to accommodate all IGF participants in a single location for the Main Sessions as plenary sessions;
- Consider a track of ½ day or full day sessions for more in-depth educational workshops;
- Continue to support remote participation and provide real time transcription of the main sessions for those who cannot travel to the forums.

Finally, given that the IGF is an ongoing, informative process, we appreciate the “feedback” session held in early 2007 and its value in developing the program. We recommend that consultations regarding the final program for IGF 2008 be undertaken as early as January 2008, to allow for robust discussion, contribution from stakeholders, and evaluation of input. In addition, it would provide more time to add a third consultative session, as needed. In order to foster increased participation, we encourage the organizers to determine the specific city and dates for the IFG 2008 as early as possible so that stakeholders can plan for their attendance. Organizers should take care to avoid date conflicts with major meetings of other international organizations.

We would like take this opportunity to offer two IGF management recommendations. First, we note that the UN Secretary General has recently appointed a co-chair from Brazil as the IGF 2007 host country and reconfirmed the role and membership of the Advisory Committee. We believe that it is critical to the success of the IGF to maintain neutrality in the chairmanship position, as we have seen exhibited by Chairman Nitin Desai and the Executive Secretariat to date. We recommend that the co-chairmanship role also embody that neutrality and be clearly defined as an appropriate liaison between the IGF Secretariat and the host country in the organization of that particular IGF. As such, the representative in the co-chairmanship position should rotate in the preparation for each of the forthcoming forums to reflect the IGF host country. Therefore, the co-chair for the 2008 IGF would be from India, and the co-chair for the 2009 IGF would be from Egypt. When the host site is finalized for 2010, the co-chair can then be appointed from that country.

With regard to the Advisory Committee, we have considered the suggestion that there could be changes in its designation and participation. Overall, it is our view that the Committee should maintain its

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regional balance and inclusion across the full set of stakeholders, and any changes or additions could be focused on ensuring balance in geography and diversity (in gender, for example). In order to ensure an open, transparent, and inclusive process, however, we would recommend that any appointed advisors to the Chair (and new co-chair) be made known, and their responsibilities be clearly defined in a transparent manner. Further, as no single entity can fully represent the concerns of their specific stakeholder groups, it is important that members of the Advisory Council itself understand they need to seek to reflect an awareness of and the perspectives of a greater constituency from which they, as advisors, are drawn. If a change is to take place in the composition of the Advisory Committee, it would warrant further discussion and consultation regarding how to undertake such changes in membership; it should recognize that change need not be dictated if not desired by a particular constituent group.

ITAA will participate in the September consultation and in the IGF in Rio; we look forward to the dialogue among all the stakeholders on the important issues of Internet governance.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We would be happy to discuss any of these issues with you further at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,



Phil Bond  
President and CEO

Cc: Marilyn Cade, Chair, ITAA Global Public Policy Committee  
David Olive, Vice Chair, ITAA Global Public Policy Committee  
Liesyl Franz, Vice President for Global Public Policy, ITAA

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