IGF 2017 DAY 0 Report

Session Title:
Leveraging Business Expertise to Foster an Enabling Environment for the Digital Economy

Date:
17 December 2017

Time:
11:30-13:00

Session Organizer:
International Chamber of Commerce Business Action to Support the Information Society (ICC BASIS)

Chair/Moderator:
- Chair: Ms Ellen Blackler (The Walt Disney Company, USA)
- Moderator: Ms Carolyn Nguyen (Microsoft, USA)

Rapporteur/Notetaker:
- Ms Timea Suto (ICC BASIS, Romania)

List of Speakers and their institutional affiliations:
- Mr Omar Mansoor Ansari (TechNation, Afghanistan)
- Mr Bobby Bedi (Kaleidoscope Entertainment, India)
- Mr Charles Bradley (Global Partners Digital, UK)
- Ms Jennifer Chung (DotAsia Organization, Hong Kong)
- Ms Ankhi Das (Facebook, India)
- Ms Hoda Dahroug (Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Egypt)
- Mr Jivan Gjorgjinski (Permanent Mission of Macedonia to the UN, Geneva)
- Ms Dominique Lazanski (GSMA, UK)
- Mr Juuso Moisander (Ministry of External Affairs, Finland)
- Mr Robert L. Strayer (US Department of State)

Key Issues raised

Business expertise
Businesses in developed and developing countries contribute expertise and experience to support the digital economy in multiple ways. This includes through capacity building, education initiatives, promoting innovation, public-private research and development partnerships and improving understanding of how ICT works in practice. But to reap the benefits that information and communication technology (ICT) and private sector activity have to offer, policymakers must create legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage investment and support innovation.

Layered ICT ecosystem
A seamless ICT ecosystem is built on three core components: a flexible and affordable infrastructure that enables the development of applications and services coupled with the ability of the user to actively and independently use the technology. Private sector activity and investment supports this ecosystem across all three components through developing and deploying ICT infrastructure, content services, and developing and leveraging ICT solutions for societal benefit and across many areas of development.

Holistic policy approach
This layered ecosystem can only function if supported by effective policy and approaches and legal frameworks that support innovation. Discussions at the event focused on four key policy areas that shape

such an enabling policy environment: technical, socio-cultural, economic, and governance factors that help ICT reach potential. See more detailed summary of these four policy areas in the below sections.

Multistakeholder cooperation
Policy issues can be overlapping and need the experience and expertise of relevant stakeholders: business, civil society, technical community and government to be addressed effectively. By consulting all relevant stakeholders, including business, civil society and technical community, governments will be better informed about issues and policy options.

Summary of discussions:
This event convened business leaders and government representatives familiar and new to the IGF for an interactive discussion on the efforts needed to ensure and an enabling policy environment for the digital economy.

The background for discussions was provided by the policy paper on ICT, policy and sustainable economic development recently launched by the International Chamber of Commerce Commission on the Digital Economy. The paper aims to raise awareness of the impact that policies on infrastructure, applications, services and user-engagement have on the ICT ecosystem. Greater understanding of these issues can equip policymakers with a framework to identify appropriate policy approaches and leverage ICT for realizing the SDGs.

The event was opened by the session chair, Ellen Blackler (Disney), who presented the vision on enabling environment as per the ICC policy paper. Four interactive panel followed, moderated by Carolyn Nguyen (Microsoft), each discussing one of the four core policy areas surrounding ICT:

Technical considerations
Participants highlighted that technology and continued innovation is what makes possible the digital transformation that stands at the heart of the agenda for growth and the SDGs. Collaboration between government and business is necessary to establish an informed and results-based legal and policy framework. The involvement of the technical community from the earliest stages is also very important, so that multifaceted and appropriate solutions can be found.

Socio-cultural considerations
Participants highlighted the importance of inclusion and obtaining policy input from different stakeholders, including local communities and at grassroots level.

Economic considerations
Realizing the SDGs and the potential for transformation requires the same level of investment from government, industry, international organizations, development banks, and other institutions. Without growth, investment is not sustainable, and by consequence, realization of the SDGs would be seriously hampered. Economic considerations would have to be taken into account to promote sustained investment and encourage entrepreneurship.

Governance considerations
Public-private partnerships and international cooperation can provide a way to reap the benefits and tackle the challenges posed by digital transformation faced by different societies and communities.

For a media report of the event with highlighted quotes please see here.

Gender Reporting

- Estimate the overall number of the participants present at the session: 80

- Estimate the overall number of women present at the session: Around 40%of attendees and 50% of panelists (6 out of 12) were women.

- To what extent did the session discuss gender equality and/or women's empowerment?
It was addressed in speakers' comments and cited as an example for best practices in multistakeholder cooperation but was not a focus of the discussion. Initiatives mentioned:
- [TechWomen Afghanistan](#): a network of women in technology helping to develop the leadership of women in technology as well as their technical skills, through organizing events where information and insight can be shared.
- [TechWomen Asia](#): the purpose of the techwoman.Asia portal is to connect Asian women in technology to share resources and information, and provide mentorship and coaching in order to enhance the cross-border collaboration within the Asia-Pacific region.

- If the session addressed issues related to gender equality and/or women's empowerment, please provide a brief summary of the discussion:
N/A