



John Higgins,
Public Policy Chairman

December 13, 2010

TO: Mr. Frédéric Riehl, Vice Chair; Commission on Science and Technology for Development
frederic.riehl@bakom.admin.ch

CC: H.E. Ms. Sherry Ayithey, Chair, Commission on Science and Technology for Development
c/o Mongi Hamdi: mongi.hamdi@unctad.org

FR: Mr. John Higgins, Public Policy Chairman
World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA)

Expression of Concern: Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

Dear Mr. Riehl,

I was saddened and disappointed to learn that the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) Bureau, at its extraordinary meeting on December 7, 2010, decided to limit participation in the new Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum to governments only.

Resolution 2010/2 of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which mandates the working group, asks "the Chair of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to establish, in an open and inclusive manner, a working group to seek, compile and review inputs from all Member States and all other stakeholders on improvements to the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), in line with the mandate set out in the Tunis Agenda". Industry has applauded the multistakeholder nature of Resolution 2010/2, which calls for a continuation of the transparency and cross-sector cooperation which embodied the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) from the first World Summit on the Information Society in 2003 as well as the formation of the Internet Governance Forum following WSIS II in Tunis.

The future success of the IGF depends entirely on the continuation of its multistakeholder nature, with all parties interacting on an equal basis. Excluding other stakeholders from the working group goes counter to the collaborative efforts we are trying to build through the IGF initiative.

Please note that the ECOSOC mandate does not call for the establishment of another CSTD working group, but rather explicitly an independent multistakeholder working group convened by the CSTD Chair. On behalf of WITSA, and our industry members in 78 countries and economies around the world, I therefore strongly urge you to set aside the December 7 decision to block participation from business and civil society in the new working group. In order for the working group to be effective in improving the Internet Governance Forum, it must provide for an open and inclusive process that ensures a mechanism for the full and active participation of governments, the private sector and civil society from both developing and developed countries.

I am kindly requesting that WITSA's position is communicated at the December 17, 2010 meeting of the CSTD in Geneva, and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

John Higgins
Public Policy Chairman