



## **WITSA Resolution for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Hyderabad, India December 2, 2008**

### **WITSA's IGF Involvement**

The World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA), a consortium of national and regional IT industry associations in more than 60 countries around the world, has been an active participant at each of the annual United Nations Internet Governance Forums (IGF) from the inaugural meeting in Athens, Greece in October 2006 to the second one in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in November 2007 and now at the latest session in Hyderabad, India in December 2008.

### **WITSA's IGF Views**

The Internet has become an essential component of economic activity and will assume an even larger role in trade and commerce in coming years, deepening its reach; broadening its capability; embracing mobility and changing to further reflect the diversity of users and geographies that it connects.

The Internet is changing not only in access technology, but in the breadth and spread of its distribution, as well as in the applications that it is able to access and transport. Today, the Internet reaches a billion users. Our immediate challenge will be connecting the next billion users around the world in a stable, secure, and sustainable environment, and then finding ways to connect the next yet unconnected four billion users.

To date, the Internet has grown in a largely unregulated environment, and has shown an ability to thrive in a wide variety of market environments under competitive conditions. This freedom from centralized and heavy regulations has produced impressive results over a relatively short period of time, delivering innovation, productivity and opportunity to a growing numbers of users in all parts of the world. Notably, the Internet has grown fastest

in markets where there is competition for the provision of underlying telecommunications facilities, as well as for access and related services. Today, policy makers at both national and global levels are considering a wide number of regulatory approaches to dealing with the challenges of cyber security, access, management of spam and malware, protection of intellectual property and other issues.

WITSA believes that the Internet must continue to thrive in an open and competitive marketplace unencumbered by unnecessary regulations.

WITSA supports private sector initiatives to develop and deliver market based solutions to the challenges faced by the Internet and its users. For example, in addition to technological approaches to improving security of information and networks, increased cooperation with law enforcement and policy makers can address many of the issues of concern to both governments and end users in cyber security. Innovations in technology delivered by the private sector are bringing affordable options in access, and combined with an enabling environment of legal, regulatory, and investment policies can further improve the availability of Internet access. Concerns of some governments seeking a more centralized regulatory oversight of the Internet and the applications it delivers through international forums can be better addressed through a deepened industry-government dialogue and collaboration on solutions that maintain the largely unregulated commercially driven environment that has supported the Internet's initial success.

**WITSA has commented on the following IGF Issues:**

- Access: Access is vital to empowering more businesses and individuals to take advantage of the powerful resource that the Internet represents. An enabling regulatory environment at national level can do much to foster the deployment and growth of the Internet. National policies can encourage investment in capacity and growth, as well as support the local exchange of traffic including the establishment of local Internet exchange points (IXPs).
- Openness: Access to knowledge and empowering people with information and knowledge that is available on the Internet is a critical objective of an inclusive Information Society and to continued economic and social development.
- Security: Achieving its full potential to support commercial and social relationships requires an environment that promotes and ensures users' trust and confidence and provides a stable and secure platform for commerce.
- Diversity: Current efforts should continue to promote a multilingual Internet and local content and overcoming barriers to the development of content in different languages.

### **Emerging Issues at the IGF**

**With regard to other Emerging Issues, WITSA suggests the consideration of the following items for discussion:**

- **Considering Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for the environment;**
- **Importance of ensuring and leveraging innovation and creativity, including in non- traditional arenas;**
- **The impact of the changes to the Internet that will be driven by the massive increase in the role of wireless and mobile users;**
- **The opportunities and challenges of social networking applications; and other new and emerging innovations as applications.**

### **Looking Ahead**

WITSA continues its involvement in the **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)** and believes that all stakeholders should identify and focus on a set of priority issues that highlight the fundamental building blocks of an information society, including the Internet. Focusing on these priority issues will create a meaningful framework for demonstrable progress toward the long-term sustainability of a truly global information society.

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 IGF should remain consistent with its mandate for facilitating a dialogue and not engaging in the negotiation of formal documents or outcomes. WITSA supports the continuance of the multistakeholder nature of the IGF, with all stakeholders interacting on an equal basis.

WITSA also supports the importance of the IGF's focus on engagement with developing countries and seeking 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 enabling participation in the annual forums.

**WITSA re-affirms its principles to ensure the Internet's further growth and continued success and calls upon all stakeholders to work together:**

- **To keep the Internet open and accessible to all of society;**
- **To ensure reliable and secure access to information and communications networks and services;**
- **To promote the value of the Internet Governance Forum, in particular for emerging economies and developing countries;**
- **To recognize the multistakeholder nature of Internet Governance and to strengthen and broaden involvement and leadership of industry in relevant forums;**
- **To promote the transition from the current Internet addressing system (IPv4) to an addressing system capable of supporting continued Internet expansion and new applications for the foreseeable future (IPv6);**