

**Reflections on the World Summit on the Information Society,  
Geneva from the Coordinating Committee of Business  
Interlocutors (CCBI)**

6 February 2004

The members of the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors for WSIS have compiled some of their thoughts regarding the Geneva phase of the WSIS and recommendations for the preparatory process and second phase of the Summit in Tunis.

These comments are meant to provide insight into the experiences of the business representatives and to highlight the business priorities going forward in the process.

This paper is a compilation of some of the thoughts and reflections of the CCBI group following phase 1 of the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva, December 2003. The reflections are intended to provide information to be considered for phase 2 of the WSIS in Tunis, 2005.

**1. The positive aspects of the Summit from your company's or organization's perspective:**

- Business representatives from the CCBI member companies and organizations identified the following as some of their objectives for WSIS:
  - a) Exchange of views between political and industrial leaders and ICT users to create awareness of the needs of the future information society;
  - b) Commitment to create a legal and commercial framework to stimulate investment in information society infrastructure and contents; and
  - c) Adoption of a worldwide agreed, concise and realistic Action Plan based on the Principles of the Information Society.

Many agreed that most of these objectives have largely been achieved though certain of the key business priorities in terms of the enabling environment to create the conditions that attract investment, both local and foreign, were not included as commitments by governments in the outcomes documents of the Summit.

- A growing understanding by governments of the private sector's critical role in the information society, though more integration of this understanding is needed and more work needs to be done.
- The CCBI meetings held at both the Prepcom and the Summit. The CCBI did a very good job of ensuring that many business interests and priorities were covered and voiced.
- The ICT 4 D Platform was a great idea and a good vehicle for business and civil society to present their priorities, initiatives and positions beyond the rather limited official programme opportunities.
- The press facilities were very well organized. Organizing press conferences was easy, the use of the internet to publicize them was a welcome addition to the summit media process, the provision of pigeon holes for the distribution of materials was an excellent idea, the position we were granted for the business centre relative to the media centre could not have been better.

- Exhibit space and the ability to exhibit.
- The business centre provided a gathering place and the ability to make informal contacts.
- Roundtables provided good discussion and interaction.
- Side events organized by various organizations provided places to interact, exchange views and be updated on various initiatives.

**2. The positive aspects of the preparatory process from your company's or organization's perspective:**

- Business, civil society and international organizations were invited to contribute and cooperate in an intergovernmental process.
- Excellent coordination role of ICC/CCBI.
- Good cooperation established between some national government and regional government groups and business representatives.
- Ability for observers to be in meetings and engaged in process.
- Ability of observers to make interventions.
- Ability of observers to review drafts and submit written comments.

**3. What should be improved about the preparatory process in the next phase?**

- Fewer physical meetings, each with a clearly defined focus subject; preparation of drafts by email working groups with well-defined terms of reference.
- The dates, times, location, and agendas for preparatory meetings should be made available well in advance and last minute meetings should be avoided
- The focus of this next phase of preparations should be to assess and evaluate progress on the commitments that came out of the first phase before starting to address anything further in terms of substance. If the first objectives are not widely met, lengthy discussions on any more detailed substantive issues will not be useful.
- Preparatory meetings should be shorter and more efficient.

- Observer participation in any preparatory meetings should be articulated well in advance to allow for clear preparations and participation. Develop clear guidelines for observer participation.
- A well-defined and realistic schedule for document to be produced and commented on.
- The process for gathering input should be more organized to ensure that important changes/suggestions are in fact added.
- Allow observers into all working groups and allow them to make interventions and remain throughout the meetings.

#### **4. What should be improved about the Summit in the next phase?**

- Try to find early compromise on what critical issues should be left to existing institutions such as OECD, WTO, ....; WSIS II then shouldn't deal with these contentious issues anymore.
- We felt a growing understanding throughout the preparatory process that inclusion of the business community/private sector is an essential element to make the Information Society a reality for all Member States. We hope that the next phase will continue this understanding and encourage business participation, not only in preparation for Phase 2 of the Summit but within each country.
- Single track company outreach efforts would avoid numerous individuals in a particular company being approached which in Phase I caused confusion.
- The programme and speaking opportunities for business representatives in the official events need to be planned well in advance to facilitate the participation of high-level business representatives.
- Logistics need to be organized much further in advance and the sound proofing of rooms where side events will occur should be ensured.
- Transparency of process: means of participation should be much clearer.
- Transparency of proceedings: during the Prepcoms and Summit, it should be possible to know what meetings are underway, the official status of those meetings, who is able to attend, the agenda and the specific results.
- Use of experts: recognized experts should be given a formal role and used appropriately.

- Registered observers should be permitted in all official meetings.
- Events directory: an up to date directory should be available showing details of all meetings which are underway at all times during the Prepcoms and Summit. This should be available online.
- More opportunities for meaningful dialogue amongst stakeholders.
- Reports on progress should be published online and made available in a timely fashion.
- Expand exhibit area.
- Continue side events.
- To ensure an efficient process, a single individual should be appointed to support and allocate CCBI activities and tasks. This will ensure that confusion between duties at the executive and host country secretariats are avoided.
- The programme and speaking opportunities for business representatives in the official events need to be planned at least one year in advance to facilitate the participation of high level business representatives whose agendas are generally filled one-year to six month in advance.
- The logistics of the event need to be organized in a coherent manner well in advance of the actual event to ensure that adequate sized rooms and equipment are still available for CCBI events and activities. A logistics manager should be appointed to manage these responsibilities well in advance.
- The treatment of business VIP's should include an official welcome protocol, dedicated meet/work areas, plenary interventions at decent hours of the day when there will be an audience to actually listen to them.
- Business VIPS should have access to express accreditation/badging.

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## **WHAT IS THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF BUSINESS INTERLOCUTORS (CCBI)?**

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was held during the week of 8 December 2003 in Geneva, culminating in the Summit segment on 10-12 December 2003. The second part of this Summit will take place in 2005 in Tunisia.

Principals of the Summit host countries and executive secretariat invited the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to create the Coordinating Committee of Business Interlocutors (CCBI) as a vehicle through which to mobilize and coordinate the involvement of the worldwide business community in the processes leading to and culminating in the Summit. ICC and the CCBI group led the private-sector effort to provide substantive input into the first phase of the Summit, and mobilized the private sector to participate in the preparatory phases and at the Summit itself. The CCBI, is constituted of the following organizations and their members: Among the organizations actively involved in the work of the CCBI, in addition to ICC, are: Asociacion Hispanoamericana de Centros de Investigacion y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones, Brazilian Chamber of Electronic Commerce, the Business Council of the United Nations, Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD; Global Business Dialogue on Electronic Commerce; Global Information Infrastructure Commission; Money Matters Institute; United States Council on International Business; World Economic Forum; World Information Technology and Services Alliance; French Publishers Association; International Publishers Association; and Gobierno Digital.

For further information regarding CCBI, please consult the WSIS website at: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/index.html>  
the CCBI website at [www.businessatwsis.net](http://www.businessatwsis.net)  
or ICC's website at: [http://www.iccwbo.org/home/e\\_business/wsis.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/home/e_business/wsis.asp)  
or contact [wsis@iccwbo.org](mailto:wsis@iccwbo.org)

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