

ICC BASIS IGF 2010 Opening Ceremony Speech
Mr S. Ramadorai, Vice Chairman, Tata Consultancy Services, Chair of ICC's BASIS initiative

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen.

I am honoured to address you today as the Vice Chairman of Tata Consultancy Services, the Chair of ICC's Business Action to Support the Information Society initiative, or BASIS, and long-time supporter of the IGF. I would like to thank the government of Lithuania for hosting the forum and also thank the IGF Secretariat and multistakeholder advisory group for their tireless efforts in striving to make the IGF a success.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of businesses worldwide BASIS brings business expertise to and encourages business participation in the IGF. Like the IGF, business firmly believes in the vast potential of the Internet and other electronic communications tools to drive positive social and economic changes. There has been a huge democratisation of the Internet. People the world over are accessing the web through different devices from mobile and smart phones, personal digital assistants, interactive video and multimedia systems, voice response systems, kiosks and even certain domestic appliances. In a country like India mobile phones are available at 30\$ and on line services reach the masses at a cost of few pennies through government kiosks.

But there is a long way to go. Global statistics on Internet users per 100 inhabitants, reveal the disparity between developed and developing countries. 66 out of every 100 inhabitants in the developed world compared with 18 in every 100 inhabitants in the developing world have access to the Internet. In developing countries there are also glaring disparities. In India for instance, of the 51 million 'active' Internet users, 40 million reside in urban areas as opposed to only 11 million in rural areas. There is a huge investment being made in India to provide broadband access to 626,000 Indian villages by 2012. This will bring millions into the Internet family. Internet access combined with mobile technologies will spawn a wave of local entrepreneurs and create greater access to social services, transport, education, finance and healthcare. In India business is partnering with government to make this possible.

The world is in collaborative mode because we are increasingly becoming interdependent. The recent economic crisis and challenges of climate change have demonstrated it. They have also demonstrated that the solution to such problems lies in a joint effort involving all stakeholders.

The Internet belongs to all, to the poorest, to the richest. Therefore the governance of the Internet concerns all and getting governance right is more crucial than ever. All stakeholders must keep working through issues together so that we avoid conflicts and barriers that could impede growth and the development of the Internet. The future development of the Internet must include the engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

The IGF provides us all with a unique opportunity for the generation of new partnerships, ideas, discussion of real experiences and challenges, and the sharing of best practices, which are all necessary for the successful development of Internet-related policies. Over the past 5 years the IGF has made a lot of progress. Policy discussions of key governance issues such as critical Internet resources, access and diversity and security/privacy and openness have taken place and built on previous discussions. There has also been a greater focus on developmental issues. The range of stakeholders participating in the IGF has not only become larger but more diverse, and looking ahead business recognizes the need to continue working together, addressing new issues and expanding participation.

In a global economy with global supply chains and markets the Internet is critical for businesses around the world. Working with all stakeholders we can establish the right environments and new business models to help the Internet, and those using it, reach full potential. Allow me to share an example from India.

People at Bagepalli village in India feel they are blessed. The turning point in their lives was the creation of a business process outsourcing centre in town enabled through internet connectivity. Such rural BPOs offer jobs to young people who would otherwise have migrated to bigger cities. By training them in communications skills, soft skills and processes for six-eight weeks they are ready to take up assignments. More than 50% of the employees at the rural centre are women. Working at the centre helps the employees to save money for their marriage, pay off debts, buy sewing machines and cows and buffaloes for their families. This is social transformation in action.

Today I have a platform to share this story with you, because here at the IGF we can engage in candid and open exchanges on a range of existing and emerging Internet issues. Cloud computing for example promises to empower developed and developing countries alike. However, like many other issues we discuss here at the IGF, cloud computing raises an array of policy issues from access and security to applicable law and jurisdiction. To consider the many benefits of cloud computing

and the challenges to its adoption join us for our workshop jointly hosted with the Government of Kenya on Thursday morning in room one at 11.30.

We also extend an invitation to our open forum on data protection and privacy on Wednesday at 11.30. For the first time we will showcase ICC's work to help address trans-border data flows and other data protection and privacy issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, business is a leading partner in establishing the kind of programmes and initiatives that are helping people in cities and rural areas extend use of the Internet for their economic and social benefit.

Business worldwide has come to trust the IGF as a venue to gain insights and new perspectives, and come away with ideas and best practices that will have an impact on our respective communities. There is no other forum that includes all relevant stakeholders and allows for the kind of exchange we have at the IGF, thus we strongly support the continuation of the forum with its founding multistakeholder principles intact.

We look forward to engaging with you all over the next three days and to truly develop the future together.

Thank you.