

Keynote address by
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Thank you, Mme Moderator.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Friends and Colleagues,

I am told I have only five minutes for this keynote, so I will try to keep it short, and welcome everybody by saying: "Thank you all for being here!"

As an active business representative in the IGF, I am often asked :

- What is at stake for business?
- Why should we be engaged?
- Does it cost us money?
- Is there a business opportunity?

Well, please allow me to introduce the subject by comparing the IGF to the pressure valve on a steam cooker. The pressure valve allows steam getting vented without the whole stew blowing up in your face. And the stew can be a thick one, and sometimes explosive. For those who have followed the debate over the years, especially during the WSIS I in Geneva and WSIS II in Tunis, they will know what I mean. For the others, there will be many opportunities during the coming two days to find out.

Phrased differently, one could also say the IGF is a good risk management instrument. There is an underlying assumption in many business models that focus on integrating the Internet into business operations. Just think about logistics chains for just-in-time manufacturing, or software distribution over the Internet, or other Internet-enabled transactions. That assumption is that the open, innovative and interoperable Internet as we know it today is going to remain more or less as it is.

That is: a highly innovative playground where innovation takes place at the edges, without central authority, with distributed responsibility, and with multi-stakeholder input into the many processes that develop, discuss and set standards and policies. And if this model changed, so would many business plans and earnings projections

built upon those assumptions. Many relevant public policy issues for national policy makers are affected by these business models as well, as they translate into job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, tax receipts, and so on.

So, what does this mean for business?

It means that business has a real interest in making sure we can resolve the challenges and questions and find the right balance between the different “goods”, “rights” and “values”. Issues regarding Internet Governance are business-critical, not only those related to Managing Critical Internet Resources, but also those related to Access and Diversity, to Security, Privacy, Openness and Trust. And there is not always a clear black-and-white answer.

The IGF has shown in the past two years that it is the right place for business, and others, to exchange views and experiences on such Internet Governance issues on a global level.

Key to the success of the IGF is the involvement of all stakeholders: governments, businesses, civil society, and the technical and academic community, working on an equal footing and without the pressures and dynamics of having to produce negotiated outcomes.

Business has always stressed, along with others, that this multi-stakeholder dialogue should not only be on the global, but also on the regional and national levels. And that all relevant stakeholders should be brought together in public policy formulation to ensure informed policy making at all levels in support of the continued development of the Internet.

And finally, we should never lose sight of what we are aiming at: to bring the benefits of the Internet and the Information Society to the next couple of billion people around the world. Going along with that aim is a continued focus on development, and particularly on building capacity for people and institutions, to deal with the challenges of development by taking advantage of the benefits of a globally interconnected world.

So, I am very happy that we finally have a multistakeholder European Dialogue on Internet Governance.

The IGF and now the Euro-DIG truly reflect this essential involvement of all relevant stakeholders in Internet Governance issues, and both demonstrate the understanding that no single stakeholder alone can do everything that it takes to resolve them.

Just think of some of the issues, and you will find that even the term "stakeholder group" can be confusing, as you may find yourself on the same side or even on opposite sides of the issues, regardless of your stakeholder group, but depending on where your interests lie.

If you just take the triad of security, privacy, and openness issues, and apply them to a specific case, you will find people from the same group, such as business, sitting on opposite sides. For example, everyone agrees that we need to reign in the abuse of children and prevent them from becoming victims of abuse, or of kids having access to inappropriate content over the Internet.

[Our moderator for this session takes a keen interest in this issue as well.]

So, we agree to the objective, the and aim at the same ends. But, whether the wholesale blocking of IP address bands is the right means to achieve those ends, and whether to oblige the ISPs to filter content and monitor user behaviour, -- that is an issue that is now being hotly debated in many places. Or take the rights of the music industry and the content providers who have similar requests and then, do try to square those with the interests of the ISPs and civil society stakeholders. Not easy.

More to my heart personally and to the interests of our company are the Access and Diversity issues, that is, how to bring the Internet to the next couple of billion users, and the associated challenges and opportunities. For example, regulatory and policy issues, frequency allocation, the distribution of the so-called digital dividend, interconnect arrangements and the introduction of IPv6 and of multilingual scripts in the domain name system. We need substantive exchange at the European level, to

help inform policy development at the regional and national level, and to contribute to global discussions on these important issues.

Our company and others have been actively involved in the IGF since its inception, and even before that, working together with other businesses and other stakeholders. We have been active through BASIS, the ICC initiative. We have also been working with governments to support efforts to reach consensus, because we and our customers believe this is important.

And we continue to engage with civil society and the technical and academic communities, because as an investor and as an innovator, we understand how standards and policy approaches regarding the Internet can have a profound long-term impact on our business across different sectors and regions.

In conclusion, I hope that the Euro-DIG will show how we work together, share practices, and find common solutions to the challenges we are facing. This is our chance to demonstrate a new dynamic multi-stakeholder framework at the European level. I also hope that this approach will encourage more interested European parties to get involved at the national, regional and global levels.

So, a few final guiding words, from one of the great men of history, and – fitting for the IGF in Hyderabad this year – an Indian, the “great soul”, Mahatma Gandhi, who is quoted as having said:

“We need to be the change we wish to see in the world.” And he also said: *“You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result.”*

So, now, I wish you and us a fruitful discussion! Thank you.