

**Internet Governance Forum 2009**  
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**Opening speech**

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Excellencies, UN Undersecretary General Sha Zukang, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to be here with all of you at the fourth Internet Governance Forum in Egypt. I would like to thank His Excellency Doctor Ahmed Nazif for hosting this unique forum in Egypt. I would also like to thank Minister Tarek Kamel and all our Egyptian hosts, the IGF Secretariat and multistakeholder advisory group for all they have done to ensure this will be yet another successful IGF.

As the Vice Chairman of Tata Consultancy Services, Asia's largest IT services company, and the Chair of ICC's BASIS initiative or Business Action to Support the Information Society, I bring to you a perspective of a technocrat as well as a spokesperson for global business.

I come from a land that is home to 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the world's population. Allow me to share the story of Gopal, a poor farmer in the interiors of an Indian village. Each year Gopal prayed to the rain gods, not surprising because his daily income depended on the crop he produced. The previous year, several farmers had committed suicide when crops failed. He worried that he too would be driven to this bitter end? But this year seemed different; everybody in the village was talking about the 'magic kiosk' that was providing advice on weather, tips to increase productivity of farm land, better seeds and fertilizers and even where to get the best prices for produce. His hopes rose he imagined his children being fed and schooled and his wife buying the new clothes she dreamt of. For many like Gopal, new technologies can make the difference between life and death.

The internet took 40 years to reach Gopal and today envelops 1.7 Bn people across the globe. Given that the theme for this year is "Creating opportunities for all" I would urge us all to consider that 70% of humanity still remains unconnected. While 79.4% of Australians and 74% of North Americans have internet access only 15% of Asians and only 4% of Africans have access to the internet.

These differences between developed and developing countries mean that their needs from the internet vary greatly. In less developed countries, connectivity has a direct correlation with positive social and economic changes. By bringing it into rural clinics, school and mobile devices, it impacts basic needs like education, healthcare and agriculture. On the other hand consumers in heavily penetrated markets are

already addicted to broadband, and are looking for new applications and content, primarily entertainment (such as Internet video content and games), Internet Protocol television (IPTV) and home networking, which will bring devices and services into one integrated system within the home.

The have's and the have-nots have different needs but both offer great potential to business. In fact my own company Tata Consultancy Services has experienced that equal if not more innovation is happening at the bottom of the pyramid. Against the backdrop of the IGF, I was very interested in the concerns and recommendations of CIO's and Technology experts across major global enterprises in India. So we did a survey and I would like to share with you some key findings.

The survey has found key concerns to be: low level of awareness of Internet Security, low penetration and affordability in developing countries, bandwidth issues faced by Service Providers due to spectrum allocation delays. Some academics expressed concern about the outdated material on the net.

Their recommendations include - offering of discounted services by the Government to internet subscribers based on income levels.... investments in rural infrastructure development to drive wireless access technology..... bundling of services versus Standalone or Single Services.... fewer entry regulations for new service providers that would lead to competition and innovative pricing strategies and greater use of Cloud Computing Services. Finally making Broadband and GPRS as standard offerings with fixed download charges would encourage mobile platform services. They also recommend Research Grants to Universities by Governments to create inexpensive access technologies.

In terms of policy recommendations their suggestions are providing tax incentives to telecom service providers to ensure wider coverage, innovative pricing and servicing options. They recommend discussions on Net Neutrality and guiding principles to manage the intersection between off-line IP rights and internet governance. Push towards IP Telephony for local and national calls and clarity around data confidentiality.

I would like to stress that developments in networking and mobile technologies and applications must be underpinned by investments in infrastructure and increased technical literacy. They must also be supported by informed policy frameworks at national level that promote innovation. Regulatory frameworks should avoid hampering a company's ability to compete, which in turn slows innovation. In India we have seen that when policies and regulation support the ability of companies to compete, innovation and entrepreneurship thrive.

Perhaps some of these recommendations could be considered by all of you as you deliberate over the next few days. In fact it is forums such as the IGF that enable the voice of all stakeholders across the world be heard. The IGF is critical because it is that special place where we all come together to share, learn and listen. Governments, businesses, civil society, technical experts, academics, international and intergovernmental organizations, and individual users, we all have roles to play in this development.

The IGF has catalyzed increased communication between relevant stakeholders in India. The same is true of many other regions and countries. One of the reasons business supports the IGF is because it is a unique opportunity for exchange, building relationships, and understanding each other better. That is why business is here to participate in this IGF, and to support its continuity.

The Internet is young and offers exciting new possibilities for the future. As we do so let us keep in mind the 4A's that will play a key role - Access, Affordability and Appropriateness of Applications - as we engage over the next few days, let us remember the millions of Gopal's of the world waiting hopefully on the sidelines to whom we all have a responsibility.