Before the
NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20230

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Input on Proposals and Positions for 2016 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly	)	Docket No. 160509408-6408-01 RIN 0660-XC02
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	)	

COMMENTS OF
THE CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION
F/K/A THE CONSUMER ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

I. INTRODUCTION

The Consumer Technology Association ("CTA")[1] applauds NTIA for seeking input from stakeholders and interested parties to help develop its proposals and positions regarding matters that will be addressed at the upcoming 2016 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly ("WTSA–2016") of the International Telecommunication Union ("ITU").[2] As NTIA notes, the WTSA, which occurs every four years, sets the overall strategic direction and activities, among other things, for upcoming ITU Telecommunication Standardization Sector ("ITU–T") work.[3]

[1] The Consumer Technology Association ("CTA")™, formerly the Consumer Electronics Association ("CEA")®, is the trade association representing the $287 billion U.S. consumer technology industry. More than 2,200 companies – 80 percent are small businesses and startups; others are among the world's best known brands – enjoy the benefits of CTA membership including policy advocacy, market research, technical education, industry promotion, standards development, and the fostering of business and strategic relationships. CTA also owns and produces CES® – the world's gathering place for all who thrive on the business of consumer technology. Profits from CES are reinvested into CTA's industry services.

[2] *Input on Proposals and Positions for 2016 World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, Request for Public Comment*, Docket No. 160509408-6408-01, RIN 0660-XC02, 81 Fed. Reg. 30,518 (May 17, 2016).

[3] *Id.* at 30,519.

The WTSA–2016 is an important forum where the United States should reaffirm its commitment to voluntary global standards that are open and that facilitate the interoperability of communications and information devices and apps. The U.S. delegation to the WTSA–2016 should be vigilant to keep the ITU from taking any action, inadvertent or otherwise, that would disrupt this successful voluntary standards environment, which is bringing the benefits of the Internet to billions of people around the world.

CTA is deeply interested in the outcome of the WTSA–2016 because CTA represents the $287 billion U.S. consumer technology industry. Further, with an extensive Technology and Standards program that includes more than 70 committees, subcommittees and working groups and roughly 1,100 participants as well as American National Standards Institute accreditation, CTA is a champion of voluntary, consensus-based standards. The success of this U.S. industry and the people it serves depends on the continued availability of open, voluntary standards processes.

A positive outcome for the WTSA–2016 would be for the ITU–T to affirm a commitment to promoting industry-led, open, and voluntary global standards for communications and information technologies.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY GLOBAL STANDARDS

As CTA recently stated regarding the development of the Internet of Things ("IoT"), a certain level of standardization and interoperability is necessary to achieve a successful Internet ecosystem.[4] This has been the overwhelming experience of CTA's members as they have brought new Internet-based products and services to consumers worldwide. The consumer technology marketplace is both innovative and competitive in the United States and worldwide.

[4] Comments of CTA, Docket No. 1603311306-6306-01 at 8, http://1.usa.gov/1Y7tVEU.

The current voluntary global standards process reflects this competitive environment by promoting innovation and flexibility while providing for interoperability and security. This modern standard-setting process is far different from traditional ITU–T standard-setting, which historically addressed the needs of monopoly telecommunications administrations.

Voluntary global standards enable cost-effective introduction of new technologies while helping drive competition. Open standards that facilitate interoperability stimulate industry innovation and provide a clearer technology evolution path. To the extent that interoperability and reliability are related, enabling manufacturers and industry and consumers to interact through a voluntary standards process will better calibrate end-user expectations and lead to more useful, cheaper applications, than would any government mandate.

III. RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

A. Are There Overarching Objectives and Priorities that the U.S. Delegation Should Adopt for WTSA–2016 and the ITU–T (Question 1)?

Because of the importance of voluntary global standards as described above, the U.S. delegation to WTSA–2016 should keep the ITU from taking any action that would disrupt the voluntary standards environment. Instead, the U.S. delegation should urge the ITU–T to affirm a commitment to promoting industry-led, open, and voluntary global standards for communications and information technologies.

B. In an Environment with a Wide Range of Industry Led, Multistakeholder Standards Development Organizations (SDOs) Leading the Development of Telecommunications and Information Standards, Does an Intergovernmental Organization, Such as the ITU, Provide Any Unique Value (Question 2)?

The ITU should encourage, but not mandate, the use of commercially available solutions to accelerate innovation and adoption of information and communications technologies. Further involvement by the ITU in standard-setting is unnecessary. Numerous groups are hard at work developing standards related to the Internet. These include large international bodies like the

International Electrotechnical Commission ("IEC"),[5] international professional societies like the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers ("IEEE"),[6] and multiple international alliances and standards bodies like the Internet Society ("ISOC") and its Internet Engineering Task Force ("IETF"),[7] the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers ("ICANN"),[8] and the World Wide Web Consortium ("W3C").[9]

Through the work of these groups, the Internet has grown dramatically over the past two decades, bringing tremendous benefits to humanity. There is no obvious benefit, even of an incremental nature, that additional ITU involvement would bring to the continued growth and improvement of the Internet.

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[5] *See* International Electrotechnical Commission, About the IEC ("The International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) is the world's leading organization that prepares and publishes International Standards for all electrical, electronic and related technologies. Close to 20 000 experts from industry, commerce, government, test and research labs, academia and consumer groups participate in IEC Standardization work."), http://www.iec.ch.

[6] *See* Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, About IEEE ("IEEE is the world's largest technical professional organization dedicated to advancing technology for the benefit of humanity. IEEE and its members inspire a global community to innovate for a better tomorrow through its highly-cited publications, conferences, technology standards, and professional and educational activities."), http://www.ieee.org/about/index.html.

[7] *See* The Internet Society, Open Internet Standards ("The Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) is an organized activity of the Internet Society. We work to facilitate the smooth operation of and growing participation in Internet standards through the IETF."), http://www.internetsociety.org/what-we-do/internet-technology-matters/open-internet-standards; Internet Engineering Task Force, Mission Statement ("The mission of the IETF is to make the Internet work better by producing high quality, relevant technical documents that influence the way people design, use, and manage the Internet…. We make standards based on the combined engineering judgement of our participants and our real-world experience in implementing and deploying our specifications."), http://www.ietf.org/about/mission.html.

[8] *See* The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, *A Quick Look at ICANN* at 1 (noting that ICANN coordinates the allocation and assignment of domain names, Internet protocol addresses and autonomous system numbers, and protocol port and parameter numbers), https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/files/quick-look-icann-01nov13-en.pdf.

[9] *See* World Wide Web Consortium, About W3C ("The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international community where Member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop Web standards."), https://www.w3.org/Consortium.

Private industry is in the best position to develop the technological standards and solutions to address global Internet opportunities and challenges. Government, and international bodies like the ITU, should encourage industry to collaborate in global standardization efforts with open participation like the Industry Internet Consortium ("IIC") and Open Connectivity Foundation ("OCF") to develop technological best practices and standards.[10]

Similarly, neither the ITU nor any government should mandate security standards. Companies have a built-in incentive to protect data collected and used to provide Internet-based products and services. Just as much of the Internet's growth is attributable to the success of consensus-driven stakeholder processes to address policy issues,[11] industry already has a strong track record of working collaboratively, and independently of the ITU, to develop and implement best practices to protect the privacy and security concerns of consumers.[12] To address cybersecurity and privacy concerns, government must continue to foster industry-wide, consensus-driven self-regulation that is nimble and keeps pace with rapidly evolving

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[10] *See* About Us, Industry Internet Consortium, ("The Industrial Internet Consortium was founded in March 2014 to bring together the organizations and technologies necessary to accelerate the growth of the Industrial Internet by identifying, assembling and promoting best practices. Membership includes small and large technology innovators, vertical market leaders, researchers, universities and government organizations."), http://www.iiconsortium.org; OCF-About, Open Connectivity Foundation ("The Open Connectivity Foundation (OCF) is creating a specification and sponsoring an open source project to make this possible.... OCF will help ensure secure interoperability for consumers, business, and industry."), http://openconnectivity.org.

[11] *See, e.g., Executive Office of the President of the United States, Consumer Data Privacy in a Networked World: A Framework for Protecting Privacy and Promoting Innovation in the Global Digital Economy*, 23 (2012) ("the Administration believes that multistakeholder processes underlie many of the institutions responsible for the Internet's success"), http://1.usa.gov/1FQW1XF.

[12] For example, the National Cyber Security Alliance and the WiFi Alliance, both of which share some members with CTA, have developed the following resources: http://www.StaySafeOnline.org and http://www.wi-fi.org/discover-and-learn/security. The President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee allows industry to provide the U.S. Government the best possible industry advice in areas of national security. *See* Department of Homeland Security, *About NSTAC*, https://www.dhs.gov/about-nstac. Similarly, the Automotive Security Review Board initiative works to codify best practices and design recommendations for advanced cybersecurity solutions and products to benefit the automobile industry and drivers. *See* The Automotive Security Review Board, http://intel.ly/1RWEjIk.

technologies. The U.S. delegation to the WTSA-2016 should call for the ITU to endorse this approach.

C. What are the Most Important International Standardization Public Policy Issues and Topics (Question 7)?

Standards bodies across the globe are addressing a wide range of public policy issues and topics. CTA highlights a few areas where standards setting bodies are making substantial progress without ITU activity and mandates. The U.S. delegation should support these efforts by urging the ITU to eschew standards mandates and similar top-down standardization efforts.

Internet of Things. There is no need for the ITU to get involved in IoT standards, other than to recognize the importance of voluntary global standards that permit interoperability.[13] Numerous groups are developing technical standards to speed the growth, adoption, and utility of the IoT. These include groups like IEC, IEEE, IIC, W3C, Wi-Fi Alliance, the Wireless IoT Forum, the Internet of Things Consortium, the ZigBee Alliance, the Z-Wave Alliance, the AllSeen Alliance, and many others.[14]

Over-the-Top Services. ITU standards for Over-the-Top ("OTT") video services are unnecessary. The technical standards for any OTT service provider to reach any viewer in the world are already in place. Industry bodies including MPEG and W3C host numerous experts and standards on OTT. Other bodies including 3GPP, ATSC and HbbTV are handling region-

[13] Although ITU-T is not the primary forum for this activity, NTIA should continue to encourage and participate in global spectrum harmonization, including offering the U.S.'s experience with spectrum sharing, and promoting intelligent allocation for multiple uses without losing sight of incumbents. For example, international harmonization allows CTA members and others to leverage the numerous 5G initiatives both here and abroad, reducing costs and increasing the speed to market for these new technologies. Focusing on frequency bands being considered internationally for mobile service thus conserves resources, expedites speed to market for deployment, and otherwise is a sensible and important consideration.

[14] *See, e.g.*, Federal Communications Commission Technological Advisory Committee, FCC-TAC IOT Working group standards (Dec. 4, 2014) (reviewing many IoT standardization efforts), https://transition.fcc.gov/bureaus/oet/tac/tacdocs/meeting12414/FCC-TAC-IOT-Working-Group-IOT-Standards-Filter-Final.xlsx.

and category-specific application of these standards. The WAVE Project at CTA is coordinating interoperability within the OTT ecosystem.[15]

Cybersecurity. Cybersecurity threats are constantly evolving and will continue to evolve. Users of the Internet will continue to develop measures to protect their data, and criminals will continue to try to circumvent these measures. Developing adequate cybersecurity standards is best left to those who can react quickly to new cybersecurity threats. ISOC and IEC, based on input from national bodies, have made significant progress on such standards. Further, as discussed above, the U.S. has taken important strides towards addressing cybersecurity risk.[16] The ITU is not the appropriate body for developing cybersecurity standards.

Internet Governance. CTA cannot discern any benefits that would come from increased ITU involvement in Internet governance. ISOC, IETF, ICANN, W3C, and other international groups are adequately managing the development of Internet standards, and overseeing the growth of the Internet. The words of CTA's President and CEO Gary Shapiro regarding a previous attempt to involve the ITU more thoroughly in Internet governance are true today:

> The Internet has been the greatest engine for social and economic progress the world has ever known. This success comes mainly because the Internet has been largely free from over-bearing government control.[17]

The U.S. should not jeopardize this at WTSA– 2016.

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[15] *See* CTA, Web Application Video Ecosystem Project: Announcing the WAVE Project for Internet video interoperability, https://standards.cta.tech/kwspub/wave; Press Release, CTA, *Internet Video Leaders Announce Interoperability Effort* (Dec. 22, 2015) (explaining that the project "will develop 'profiles' or specifications referencing key features of industry standards from IETF, MPEG and the W3C for interoperable, commercial video delivery. These profiles will provide the basic common understanding of interoperability from the streaming content provider, through the content delivery networks to the edge, and at the device player"), http://www.cta.tech/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2015-Press-Releases/Internet-Video-Leaders-Announce-Interoperability-E.aspx.

[16] *See supra* at 5.

[17] Press Release, CEA, *CEA Expresses Strong Concern Over ITU Actions Regarding Internet Governance* (Dec. 14, 2012), http://www.cta.tech/News/News-Releases/Press-Releases/2012-Press-Releases/CEA-Expresses-Strong-Concern-Over-ITU-Actions-Rega.aspx.

***Intellectual Property Protection*.** Developing adequate intellectual property protection standards is best left to those who can react quickly to new threats with evolving and diverse protection measures. The ITU is not the appropriate body for developing these standards. Theft of intellectual property is a problem and will continue to be a problem. Users of the Internet will continue to develop measures to protect their intellectual property, and others will continue to try to circumvent these measures.

IV. CONCLUSION

CTA urges NTIA to ensure that the U.S. delegation to WTSA–2016 advocates the continued use of voluntary, global standards rather than ITU-driven standard-setting as discussed above.

Respectfully submitted,

CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION F/K/A CONSUMER ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

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