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-As Prepared for Delivery-

Russia Internet Governance Forum:
Bridging the Digital Divide and the Future of the Internet
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I would like to thank the Coordination Center for the country code, .RU, and the Ministry of Telecom and Mass Media of the Russian Federation for the invitation to join you here today. Last year I had the great honor of addressing the first U.S. Internet Governance Forum and it is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to do the same thing here in Moscow.

Last November, President Obama held an unprecedented town hall meeting with students in Shanghai, China. He was asked a question about the openness of the Internet and in response the President called himself a "big believer" in technology and the free flow of information. He referred to the lack of censorship by our government as a "tradition," and added that "the fact that we have a free Internet or unrestricted Internet access is a source of strength, and…should be encouraged."

One of the primary missions of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the agency I run, is to develop and build consensus around policy approaches to realize the President's vision of an Internet that is open for innovation and social progress, both domestically and globally. The Internet's open, end-to-end architecture and the freedom of individuals to make full use of that architecture have fueled tremendous creativity, innovation, and economic growth.

What has made the Internet the amazing communications and information system it is today was the process by which it evolved and grew – particularly the involvement of key multi-stakeholder institutions. As the importance of the Web grows, it is imperative that we take maximum advantage of those successful Internet organizational models. The challenge for governments today is to build on that cooperative, global, voluntary spirit. Government needs to find ways to help the growing list of Internet stakeholders participate in the development of not only technology, but also public policy solutions that address the Internet's leading challenges.

Preserving, enhancing and increasing everyone's access to an open, global Internet is an urgent policy priority for the Obama Administration and, we know, for governments and communities all around the world, including here in the Russian Federation. To that end, NTIA and others within the U.S. Department of Commerce recently announced the formation of an Internet Policy Task Force whose mission is to identify leading public policy and operational challenges in the Internet environment. Today I would like to share with you the agenda of the Task Force as well as update you on some key NTIA activities related to the Internet domain name system (DNS).

The starting point for our agenda is the recognition that it is imperative for the sustainability and continued growth of the Internet that we preserve the trust of all actors on the Internet. For example, if users do not trust that their personal information is safe on the Internet, they will not use it. If content providers do not trust that their content will be protected, they will threaten to stop putting it online. If large enterprises fear that their network will be breached over the Internet, they will be reluctant to take full advantage of the ability to link to their suppliers and customers. If governments around the world do not trust Internet governance systems, they will threaten to balkanize the DNS which will jeopardize the worldwide reach of the Internet.

Let me quickly run through our agenda. On the policy side we are focusing on five issues: privacy, cybersecurity, copyright protection, child protection and Internet trade. In each of these areas there are competing interests that need to be considered. For example, with privacy our focus at NTIA is to answer the question how can we enable the development of innovative new services and applications that will make intensive use of personal information, but at same time protect users against harm and unwanted intrusion into their privacy? In mid April, the Internet Policy Task Force released a broad-ranging Notice of Inquiry and just last week held a public symposium.

Similarly, in the area of copyright protection how do we protect against illegal piracy of copyrighted works and intellectual property on the Internet while preserving the rights of users to access lawful content? NTIA and our sister agency at the Department of Commerce, the US Patent and Trademark Office, are beginning a comprehensive consultation process that will help the Administration develop a forward-looking set of policies to address online copyright infringement in a balanced, Internet-savvy manner.

In addition to the policy issues I just identified, NTIA is also busy with a series of tasks related to the Internet DNS. In our role administering the U.S. government's relationship with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), we are working with global stakeholders to ensure that ICANN serves the public interest and conducts its activities with the openness and transparency that the global Internet community demands. Last fall, NTIA and ICANN set forth a permanent framework for the technical coordination of the DNS and I am currently engaged in the first of those reviews to ensure that these commitments are carried out in full. In addition, we are busy working with stakeholders on issues related to deployment of Domain Name Systems Security Extensions (DNSSEC) at the Internet's authoritative root zone as well as the adoption and uptake of IPv6.

In setting our agenda, how we approach these topics is just as important as the specific issues we are addressing. All of these efforts must involve collaboration – among governments, the private sector, civil society, academic and the technical community. Our approach, as the U.S. Administration, to answering these questions will be to engage the key constituencies and serve as a convener. We will be flexible in terms of outcomes, we're not looking to legislate or regulate, and if our discussions result in individual actors accepting new processes, so much the better.

Finally, I want to address the importance of continuing the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in its current form. The IGF has proven to be a valuable venue for information sharing and international dialogue on Internet related issues, but its initial five-year mandate expires this year. Some have suggested that the IGF should continue, but in a modified format that would inevitably elevate the role of governments. I am concerned about this as changes that place one stakeholder group above another will ultimately undermine this model. The United States government remains dedicated to working with global stakeholders to ensure that the global IGF continues as a truly multi-stakeholder venue.

In conclusion, the policy challenges we must deal with are far broader than what we have previously faced. In addition to continuing the necessary technical innovation of the Internet, all stakeholders need to work together to help the world face the social and public policy challenges of the global Internet environment. With that in mind I would like to congratulate you for convening the first Russian Internet Governance Forum, as events like these in addition to the continuation of the global IGF are critical to the future of the Internet.