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Contribution from the United States of America

The United States of America welcomes the opportunity to participate in this fifth World Telecommunication Policy Forum (WTPF). During the next three days, we look forward to exchanging views on the issues raised in the ITU Secretary-General’s report and the six draft opinions prepared by the Informal Expert’s Group (IEG).

The Internet is the great enabler for the modern world. It enhances individual productivity, prosperity, health, and education. It spurs innovation, opens global markets, and spawns new industries. The Internet helps promote democracy, entrepreneurship, and increased transparency between governments and citizens.

The United States believes in the multistakeholder approach to Internet policymaking and governance, and continues to support existing multistakeholder organizations including the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the regional Internet registries (RIRs), the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the Internet Society (ISOC) and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). The Internet is a diverse, multi-layered system that thrives when all stakeholders operate in an open, transparent and accountable manner and make consensus-based decisions. The multistakeholder model has promoted freedom of expression, both online and off. It has ensured the Internet is a robust, open platform for innovation, investment, economic growth and the creation of wealth throughout the world, including in developing countries. In a rapidly changing policy and technical environment, this model allows us to address issues in a manner that is as flexible, adaptable and scalable as the Internet itself.

The six draft opinions attached to the Secretary-General’s report were prepared with input from a broad range of stakeholders because the IEG was open to all those who wished to participate. As a result, the quality of discussion was enriched by the presence of individuals from the technical community, industry, and civil society. During the IEG, the United States expressed its belief that the WTPF should also be open to all stakeholders, and we recognize the steps taken by the ITU in that direction. Nonetheless, we continue to believe that the quality of our discussions here would benefit from a fully open and inclusive process.

During the next three days, we will consider the draft opinions forwarded by the IEG, by consensus, to WTPF-13 for further discussion. We believe that those discussions should focus on advancing the important issues before us – the build out and development of broadband and ensuring that the Internet is a robust, open platform for innovation, investment, economic growth, and the creation of wealth throughout the world.

In that regard, the United States is prepared to endorse the consensus achieved by the IEG and adopt the six non-binding opinions as presented in the annex to the Secretary General’s report. We take this approach based on our desire for a successful forum, despite some concerns with respect to the opinions on multi-stakeholderism and enhanced cooperation. But we recognize, as we hope all participants do, that to attempt to renegotiate the text or introduce new topics or opinions during this meeting would cause significant difficulties and upset the consensus already achieved.

The United States provides the following general comments on each of the six draft opinions:

***Opinion 1 (Promoting Internet Exchange Points as a long term solution to advance connectivity):*** The United States supports the creation of Internet exchange points (IXPs) at the national, regional, and international level. We believe that IXPs can be valuable tools to lower connectivity costs, improve speed, and encourage the development of local content. We also believe that IXPs are most effective in places that encourage marketplace competition, private investment, and the free flow of information online.

***Opinion 2 (Fostering an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity):*** We also applaud efforts by Member States to foster an enabling environment for the greater growth and development of broadband connectivity. Expanding broadband facilitates innovation, enhances health care delivery, improves education and public safety, and lays a foundation for long-term economic development in communities throughout the world.

***Opinions 3 and 4* (*Supporting Capacity Building for the deployment of IPv6;***

***In Support of IPv6 Adoption and Transition from IPv4*)*:*** The United States encourages the rapid adoption of IPv6. IPv6 represents a new generation of technology for network growth, development and innovation. The U.S. is steadfast in its support for the multistakeholder system of IP number allocation and management centered on the five regional Internet Registries (RIRs). As the ITU’s IPv6 working group stated, this system has met the needs of global stakeholders.

***Opinion 5 (Supporting Multi-stakeholderism in Internet Governance):*** The United States supports multistakeholder participation in Internet governance. The hallmark of a multistakeholder approach is the ability of any and every party to engage on an equal, open, and inclusive basis. The United States believes that the multistakeholder approach to policymaking and governance allows citizens around the globe to realize the full potential of the Internet.

***Opinion 6 (On supporting operationalizing the Enhanced Cooperation Process):*** The United States believes that the world has seen considerable progress toward the people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society as outlined in the WSIS text. The ITU is one of many organizations that has made contributions to the enhanced cooperation process. Plenipotentiary Resolutions 101, 102, and 133 acknowledge the need to explore ways and means for greater collaboration and coordination with relevant organizations when and if the ITU addresses issues related to Internet policy. This means actively engaging institutions such as ICANN, the RIRs, the IETF, ISOC and W3C as well as the stakeholders that participate in these and other Internet related organizations.

The United States looks forward to a valuable exchange of ideas on the topics raised in the Secretary General’s report and is prepared to endorse the six consensus opinions. By doing so, we believe that all participants will leave this forum enriched by the discussions and better equipped to achieve our shared of goal of an Internet that flourishes and provides the economic growth and social welfare we all deserve.