

May 7, 2014

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman:

We believe it is of critical importance that the Internet remain the open and dynamic vehicle for innovation, freedom, and empowerment that it has been since its inception.

For that reason, we support the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) recent announcement that it plans to transition its stewardship of the Internet Assigned Names Association (IANA) functions to the global, multistakeholder Internet community. These technical functions enable updating and operation of the Internet, and have been performed by ICANN since 1998. The United States has long been a strong supporter of the multistakeholder model of global Internet governance – one in which governments, civil society, private industry, academia, and the technical community all have a voice in critical global Internet policy debates. Indeed, the proposed full transition of the IANA functions to a multistakeholder mechanism was originally contemplated 16 years ago when the U.S. Government release its "Statement of Policy" in 1997. This step of transitioning the U.S. Government's legacy stewardship role, if effectuated successfully, will simply further the U.S. commitment to the multistakeholder model of governance

Critically, NTIA has laid out several key criteria that must be fulfilled before any transition can take place. One of those key criteria is that the transition cannot allow a governmental or inter-governmental body to replace NTIA in its oversight role. This important condition should allay fears that the transition will result in control of the Internet by any government, whether friend or foe. And NTIA's other conditions are no less important – if observed, they will ensure that the transition preserves the Internet as an open, secure, stable, and resilient platform for global commerce, innovation, and information exchange.

Thus, recent headlines that the United States has suddenly decided to give up control over the Internet have it wrong: the United States has always supported *multistakeholder*, not intergovernmental or unilateral, governance of the Internet; the Internet is already governed through a multistakeholder model; and this transition – if conducted carefully and thoughtfully – is one more way to support that model.

Moreover, the recent announcement of progress toward this transition has been supported by democratic governments throughout the world. Abandoning

NTIA's proposal would damage U.S. credibility worldwide and embolden governments seeking to censor content on the Internet and enhance their own roles in Internet governance debates.

The undersigned represent a wide range of technology companies that are dependent on a well-functioning Internet, free of government control or censorship. Precisely because we depend on the Internet, we support NTIA's proposal to implement its long-standing plan for broad, multistakeholder stewardship of the IANA functions, provided that NTIA's own conditions are met.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Black
President & CEO
Computer & Communications Industry Association



Christian Dawson
Chairman
I2Coalition

