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I want to thank The Media Institute and Dick Wiley in particular for inviting me today. It has been four years since I last spoke here, and it is great to be back again.

When I spoke here in 2010, I talked about the evolution of Internet policy making and the limited role of governments in that process. That debate has only become more intense in the last four years. We are committed in the U.S. government to policies that we believe will ensure that the Internet continues to grow and develop in the years to come to provide the opportunities for job creation, innovation and free expression.

Our core mission at my agency, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, is to ensure the Internet remains an engine for economic growth, innovation and free expression. We believe that the multistakeholder model of Internet governance has enabled the growth we enjoy today and offers the greatest assurance that the Internet continues to thrive.

When I refer to the multistakeholder process, what I am describing, as defined in Wikipedia, is a governance structure that “brings stakeholders together to participate in the dialogue, decision-making and implementation of solutions to common problems or goals.” By stakeholders, I am referring to businesses, civil society, technical experts and governments. The key attributes of the multistakeholder process are the full involvement of all of these stakeholders; consensus-based decision-making; and operating in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

These are basic but important values. Inclusion. Participation. Transparency. Accountability.

But there is a debate going on across the globe about whether the Internet should continue to be governed by this bottom-up multistakeholder model or whether governments should take control of Internet policymaking to the exclusion of other stakeholders.

In the current debate on multistakeholder Internet governance, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is playing a very important

role. Since its creation 16 years ago, ICANN has performed important functions in the domain name system (DNS), known as the IANA functions, pursuant to a contract between ICANN and my agency, NTIA. These functions include maintaining and updating the root zone file for top-level domain names, the so-called address book of the Internet.

From the inception of ICANN in 1998, the United States government envisioned that its role in the IANA functions would be temporary. Over the years, many stakeholders took comfort in the fact that the United States provided some level of stewardship over ICANN. However, many countries were irritated by our role because they believed that this relationship allowed the U.S. government to control the Internet.

We announced last March our goal to complete the transition of our role over certain aspects of the Internet's domain name system to the global Internet multistakeholder community. We did this to ensure that the multistakeholder model for DNS coordination continues.

When we announced this transition, we outlined some specific conditions that must be addressed before this transition takes place. First, the proposal must support and enhance the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, in that it should be developed by the multistakeholder community and have broad community support. More specifically, we will not accept a transition proposal that replaces the NTIA role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution. Second, the proposal must maintain the security, stability, and resiliency of the domain name system. Third, it must meet the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services. And finally, it must maintain the openness of the Internet.

Now that we are six months past our IANA announcement, it is important to take stock of where this transition stands.

We are pleased that the community has responded enthusiastically to our call to develop a transition plan that will ensure the stability, security and openness of the Internet. Acting as a facilitator, ICANN announced this summer the formation of a group representing more than a dozen Internet stakeholder communities that will help develop a transition proposal. In its charter, the IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group has pledged to "conduct itself transparently, consult with a broad range of stakeholders, and ensure that its proposals support the security and stability of the IANA functions."

The group got to work quickly. Earlier this month, the coordination group issued a request for proposals and released a tentative timeline for completing the process of drafting a plan. Under the proposed timeline, the community would submit its transition proposal to NTIA by the end of next July, which would allow us to review the proposal before the current contract expires at the end of September 2015. I

want to emphasize that we did not set a deadline for this transition. If for some reason the community needs more time, we have the option to extend the current contract for up to four years.

ICANN has also launched a process to examine how to ensure it remains accountable to the global Internet community. Specifically, this process will examine how ICANN can strengthen its accountability mechanisms to address the absence of its historical contractual relationship with NTIA. NTIA believes that this accountability process needs to include the stress testing of solutions to safeguard against future contingencies such as attempts to influence or takeover ICANN functions that are not currently possible with the IANA functions contract in place.

The two work streams on the IANA transition and enhanced accountability are directly linked and NTIA has repeatedly said that both issues must be addressed before any transition takes place. The latest round of comments on the accountability process ended last week and we are looking forward to seeing ICANN's response to the comments provided and the plan for how to move the community forward on this critical topic.

I am confident that engaging the global Internet community to work out these important issues will strengthen the multistakeholder process and will result in ICANN's becoming even more directly accountable to the customers of the IANA functions and to the broader Internet community.

As anyone paying attention to Internet governance issues knows, our announcement created a lot of discussion and a little bit of controversy. Overall, the international community has applauded the move as it demonstrates in a concrete way the commitment of the United States to the multistakeholder model of Internet governance. In June, leaders from around the world met for a high-level governmental gathering in conjunction with the ICANN meeting in London where leaders from countries ranging from Mexico to Egypt voiced support for the IANA transition. The head of Egypt's National Telecom Regulatory Authority told the meeting that Egypt "believes in having an open, transparent, inclusive, and bottom-up process to develop the transition plan that is multistakeholder throughout all stages."

The announcement has had a positive impact on our efforts to promote the multistakeholder approach to Internet governance more broadly. This has been an eventful year for the multistakeholder model beyond the ICANN transition.

Earlier this year, Brazil hosted the successful NetMundial conference, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders including technical experts, civil society groups, industry representatives and government officials, all on an equal footing with each other. At this meeting not only did participants agree that Internet governance should be built on democratic multistakeholder processes," the entire

meeting was a demonstration of the open, participative, and consensus-driven governance that has allowed the Internet to develop as an unparalleled engine of economic growth and innovation.

A month later, a High-Level Panel, headed by the president of Estonia, Toomas Ilves, released a report once again affirming the power of multistakeholder policy development. The panel said it “recognizes, fully supports, and adopts the Internet governance principles produced in the NetMundial Statement.”

Out of NetMundial and the Ilves panel report came various recommendations for how the Internet governance process might be improved. And now the question is, will these recommendations sit on a shelf and collect dust or will the community implement any of them?

There is hope that there will be a process for the multistakeholder community to consider these recommendations and to build consensus to implement some or all of them. Recently, the World Economic Forum (WEF) announced that it would convene stakeholders to work on ways to move the NetMundial principles forward. The WEF initiative hopefully will provide an international platform to bring together government, business and civil society leaders as well as technical experts to discuss how to sustain and strengthen an effective multistakeholder approach to Internet governance. The United States is an early supporter of the effort and will work with the WEF to ensure that the process is open and transparent and complements existing Internet governance organizations such as the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

Speaking of the IGF, it met in Istanbul at the beginning of September with the theme of **"Connecting Continents for Enhanced Multistakeholder Internet Governance."** As evidenced by the turnout in Istanbul, global interest in these issues is surging as 2,000 persons attended in person another 1,100 participated online.

Looking ahead, debate over the future of Internet governance will once again be in the spotlight when the International Telecommunication Union meets in October for the Plenipotentiary Conference in Busan, Korea. We expect some countries may attempt to change the ITU's mandate to give governments greater control over the Internet.

I would like to make three points about these efforts. First, the U.S. delegation, headed by Ambassador Danny Sepulveda, will strongly oppose such efforts. And we hope and expect that the growing acceptance of the multistakeholder approach by nations, especially those in the developing world, will offer a strong rebuttal to proposals to give governments control over the Internet.

Second, there is more at stake here than just growth and innovation. Free expression is also at risk. Nations that favor government control of the Internet tend

to be countries that censor or control Internet content. For example, a Freedom House study of the voting by nations at the World Conference on International Telecommunications (WCIT) in Dubai in 2012 concluded that two-thirds of states voting for more governmental control of the Internet censor political, social or religious content within their borders.

Third, some that have not studied the history of this issue have argued that these efforts by authoritarian governments to seek greater governmental control of the Internet were encouraged by our announcement in the spring to transition the IANA functions. That simply is not true.

It is a historical fact that Russia has long argued for more governmental control of the Internet. This is nothing new. It is not the case that Russia started to argue for greater governmental control only after our announcement. It has consistently done so for years. What is new is that other countries are rejecting Russia's arguments and demonstrating support for the multistakeholder model. For example, as reported in the press, Russia spoke out against the NetMundial consensus in Brazil last April. What was not as fully reported was the fact that only one other government, Cuba, joined it in open opposition to the outcomes statement endorsed by the NetMundial participants.

Efforts by Russia and others to limit access within their own country to information online and offline began long before our announcement. As the Freedom House noted in its 2013 Internet Freedom report, "Blocking access to information on entire websites, IP addresses, and particular webpages has become the most common means in Russia to restrict user activity on the Internet." Similarly, for years, Russia and other countries have used our role with ICANN as an excuse to push for the ITU or another intergovernmental organization to play a greater role in Internet issues. By taking the steps to remove ourselves from our historical role over the IANA functions, we have undermined their arguments for greater government control.

We firmly believe that our announcement will help prevent any government or group of governments to take over the domain name system. Leading human rights groups agree. In a letter to Congress earlier this year, the Center for Democracy and Technology, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch and others said that the transition "could help thwart government overreach in Internet governance, which would have devastating implications for human rights worldwide."

Let me close by addressing what comes next for the United States with respect to Internet governance once the IANA transition is completed. While we seek to transition out of our limited, largely clerical, role with the IANA functions, we are not walking away from ICANN or exiting from the debate over Internet governance. We will continue to be vocal and active players in all Internet governance forums including ICANN.

Like other governments, the United States is active in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). We have been and will continue to be vigorous advocates within the GAC for policies that promote the openness and freedom of the Internet. As one group of stakeholders in the ICANN process, governments have unique power to speak to the public interest when they speak as one based on consensus positions. I want to emphasize this point. The Internet does not respect national boundaries. No one country, no two countries, no ten countries can claim to speak on behalf of the public interest. This fact is reflected in the ICANN bylaws in which governments can provide advice on public policy matters to the board. However, such advice only has true power when it is presented as the consensus advice of governments; in other words, when it reflects a global view and not just the parochial view of a handful of governments.

We will continue to be active participants in other multistakeholder processes around the globe, including the IGF, and we will work with the WEF and the international community to establish additional platforms, where there is a consensus to do so.

In all these forums, the United States will remain a steadfast champion of the Internet and will work to ensure it remains an open platform for innovation, economic opportunity and free speech.

Thank you for listening.