Remarks by

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The Future of ICANN: Toward a Global Internet

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Thank you. What a pleasure it is to be in Moscow! It is one of the world's most inspiring cities. I thought of Pushkin's famous words as I passed through its streets this morning: *"Moscow...how many strains are fusing in that one sound for Russian hearts! What store of riches it imparts!"* **(Moskva… kak mnogo v etom zvuke | Dlia sertsa ruskovo slilos! | Kak mnogo v niom otozvalos!**)

Not just for Russian hearts but for all those lucky enough to visit, I think.

I am delighted to join you and the Russian Internet community at the opening of the Russian Internet Governance Forum. Your outstanding leadership and active support for the Internet ecosystem and for ICANN's global work is much appreciated, and your friendly welcome today means a great deal to me.

It's particularly fitting that I address the future of ICANN, the Internet and its governance at the Russian IGF. There is an old Russian proverb: [*без пастуха, овцы не стадо – **bez pastuha, ovtsi ne stado***] ***without a shepherd, sheep are not a flock***. Russia has taken a leading role in the advancement of the global Internet, and has just achieved a milestone by becoming the first country to be approved for a Cyrillic internationalized domain name.

It is evidence of Russia's rising importance within the global Internet community. Another mark of its increasing engagement is its decision to join ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee, ensuring that the country's voice is heard in an important consultative body within that community. A Russian was also elected for the first time to one of ICANN's policymaking bodies, the GNSO Council - my colleague, Andrei Kolesnikov, whose leadership of the Coordination Center for the *dot ru* domain and the *dot rf* Cyrillic IDN ccTLD has made a major contribution. I am delighted that Andrei is here with us today.

Internet impact
ICANN and its governing bodies were created to keep the Internet secure, stable and interoperable, and this is critical to ensure that the world stays connected.

But the Internet is a work in progress. It feeds and grows off ideas, and new ideas greatly affect its direction. Its most influential contributors are those who can see the possibilities that others don't. And the most powerful are those whose ideas trigger the imagination of others – millions of others.

Through the Internet, ideas can blanket the world in a way that was virtually unimaginable only a decade ago, allowing competition and cross-fertilization of commerce, culture and technology among connected

individuals and countries. *Anyone can connect to anyone anywhere*, spreading ideas beyond borders. This is a sea change in the way we have traditionally communicated, both personally and organizationally.

Cross-fertilization is occurring on a massive scale, and the Internet is driving it.

Commercial cross-fertilization generates economic growth via e-commerce, Internet-based advertising, greater market access, an increasing reliance on web infrastructure, and in many other ways.

Cultural cross-fertilization expresses itself in greater communication and understanding - much of it driven by social media - that is breaking down cultural barriers and has made information readily available on virtually any subject, changing forever the way we teach and learn.

Technological cross-fertilization can be demonstrated in countless ways. Digital Sky Technologies, the largest Internet investor in the Russian and Eastern European markets, invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Facebook. Google co-creator Sergey Brin was born in the Soviet Union. Through the Garmisch forum on information security, ICANN played a significant role in bringing Russia, the US and other global stakeholders together on issues of cyber security.

International companies like IBM, Cisco, SAP, Orange Business Solutions, Alcatel, Microsoft, Oracle and others have offices and R&D centers in Russia, bringing the latest technologies to Russian users and using Russian engineering skills for the global development of the Internet.

Commerce, culture and technology are shared across borders, across continents, across cultural divides. In many countries, the Internet has

become a critical component of the infrastructure, as basic to daily life as transportation, water and power systems.

How do you control a force like that?

ICANN's role: what we do, and why we do it

I have been asked to offer some thoughts on the future of ICANN and on governance of the Internet.

Before I do that, it's important to understand what we do, why we do it, and what we don't do.

We owe today's Internet to some very wise people, among them our colleagues Ira Magaziner, Alexey Soldatov, Vint Cerf, George Sadowsky and Esther Dyson, who is well known in Russia for her investments but also for her training to fly to the International Space Station.

Forty years ago they launched an experiment to address a narrow problem: how to improve communication within the US defense community. And in doing so, they gave birth to what is arguably the most powerful communications tool in history. The Internet changed the world forever. And its long-term global impact is not yet fully felt.

Rising demand

The Internet will eventually touch almost everyone on the planet. Indirectly it already does, through our increasing reliance on it to run electricity grids, phone networks, health services, transport systems and other major infrastructure.

Internet users access about 100 billion web pages every day. This and other activities involve more than one trillion lookups in the domain name system – the Internet's technical backbone - everyday.

Almost two billion people – around twenty-five percent of the seven billion on this planet - access the Internet directly by computer, and even more through smart phones and other devices. The world population will continue to grow, but Internet penetration is growing even faster.

As we speak, people who have never used the Internet before are joining this world movement. We are all becoming connected through this amazing global system.

A poll recently found that 71 percent of non-Internet users believe they should have the right to go online. Eighty percent of those surveyed consider it a fundamental right. Here in Russia, the poll also noted that about three-quarters of respondents said they "could not cope" without Internet access.

The last decade saw 174 percent growth in access to the Internet in North America. But it saw 1360 percent growth in Russia. Great progress, but despite that huge number the Internet is currently available to only 32 percent of Russians. So here, as elsewhere, much work remains to be done.

ICANN is one of the very few places where the Internet becomes tangible. You have to have a numerical IP address to connect to it, and as humans we need names to make sense of those numbers. You can only have one name on a network or your browser would end up at a different website each time and your email would pop up in someone else's inbox.

So how does ICANN actually do this?

Here is a very oversimplified answer. Imagine the Internet as a big three-layer cake. The bottom layer is the pipes and protocols that connect devices and define how communication takes place.

The second layer is the traffic, where devices are identified with specific addresses that are turned into names so that we humans can navigate around the Internet. This is the layer ICANN is involved in.

And the top layer is applications and content: your company's website, your child's computer games, your email program.

Living as we do in layer two, ICANN does not engage in how ISPs build or run their networks in the first layer, nor do we get involved with the content and applications of the third. By providing a functioning, evolving and neutral second layer, we facilitate changes in the other two, independently, accurately and often extremely swiftly. We make sure that addresses are unique and connect you to the person or website intended. And that means that the Internet works reliably, predictably and smoothly.

The ICANN model: structure and values

Many people don't know much about ICANN, the domain name system and IP addresses.

We're a bit like the phone company. When your phone is working, you don't call customer service to tell them, "thank you, my phone is working". But if something goes wrong, you immediately complain. And ICANN is a bit like that: with the Internet running smoothly, no one pays much attention to us.

ICANN was set up in 1999 by the US government with support from the Internet community because both recognized that they needed an organization to manage this complicated relationship between machines and humans.

With great insight, it was decided that ICANN would be private sector led and multi-stakeholder, while recognizing the legitimate role of governments in public policy. It was not your typical organizational structure. A series of groups representing different stakeholders was created, including a Government Advisory Committee, with a policy-setting Board of Directors made up of elected representatives from each group.

So ICANN is a bottom-up organization. Ideas are generated in the broadest and most inclusive segment and work their way up, gathering support along the way. Or not.

We are also a community, with a consensus-driven approach and solid commitment to a series of ideals:

Universality, because the Internet is global and we must be, too.

Inclusiveness, because everyone using the Internet has a right to be heard in its governance. Interested? You're welcome at ICANN. There is no other requirement.

Unity and connectivity, because the ability of anyone to connect to anyone anywhere depends on keeping the Internet whole.

Transparency, because you can't have real accountability without it and ICANN is accountable to its constituencies.

Innovation, because the Internet is changing rapidly and the domain name system must keep up.

Security, stability and reliability are our core values, because the Internet must keep running. Too much is at stake for us to fail.

ICANN works closely with groups such as the Internet Engineering Task Force - an incredible network of engineers that developed most of the

Internet Protocols we rely on today. We have agreements with a wide range of organizations, from UNESCO to the African Telecommunications Union, the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization, Universal Postal Union and many others.

Here in Russia we have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute for Information Security Issues. Our work with Colonel General Sherstyuk is very fruitful. And we are continuing to sign agreements with country-code top-level domain administrators throughout the region. We have relationships with the ccTLDs for Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The ICANN model continues to evolve. Following the Affirmation of Commitments signed last autumn with the US Department of Commerce, we are globalizing, echoing the increasingly global nature of the Internet.

As I mentioned earlier, the Russian Federation has joined the Governmental Advisory Committee. The Chinese government has also recently rejoined and Russia's dot-ru is joining the Country Code Name Supporting Organization.

The ICANN model now represents a unique form of governance: global reach and outlook; bottom-up decision-making; decentralized control; inclusive and at times unruly processes; and attention to voices of the community as much as voices of power.

The next billion users will arrive, and soon, and we must make it as easy as possible for them to do so if the Internet is to be truly global.

About 45 million Russians – 32 percent of the population - had access to the Internet in 2008. That number has been ratcheting up in recent years.

The government of Russia and the Russian Internet community have ambitious plans to bring Internet service to the entire country, and they consider high-speed access the most important issue. Some might argue that domain names are not decisive factors in making the Internet more accessible, but internationalized domain names will open the door to those whose primary language is expressed in a non-Latin script, such as Russian speakers who use Cyrillic.

And that means many of the 96 million Russians not currently online could be among that billion.

Governance of a virtual world

One of the toughest things to understand about governance of the Internet is clarifying what the term actually means to a Russian or other non-English native speaker. It is not governance in the sense of government. Many countries mistakenly translate the term in the context of "governments govern, therefore Internet governance means the Internet is run by governments".

For the Internet, it's more about managing than governing in the government sense.

In the early days, presentations that explained the way information was sent between computers invariably showed a wire coming out the back of a PC, connecting to a server and then entering an amorphous cloud labeled simply "Internet". Out of the other side of this cloud came a second wire connected to a second server and finally a second computer. Stuff happened in the middle.

As the Internet grew bigger and more important to us all, we had no choice but to stick our heads into that cloud and try to design a structure that we could then figure out how to govern, or at least manage.

I gave a speech in Washington a couple of months ago, and I asked the audience "who's in charge of the Internet?" After a short pause, a man shouted, "You are!" I went home scared that day.

No one can control the Internet. ICANN works toward a common good – a stable and secure global Internet - but without the central authority of a government or governmental body.

And you know what? It works.

The Internet is governed indirectly through consultation, consensus and the contributions of a broad and diverse community of people around the world. The key to success in this networked world is to have as many people as possible contributing to that process.

One of the most important things ICANN does to keep the system working is to stay out of the way.

We say in the US, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", and I understand that in Russia there's a comparable phrase: "*rabotaet, ne trogai*", "работает, не трогай": "if it is working, don't touch it", which I believe is a good representation of the best model of Internet governance.

When I say, "stay out of the way", I don't mean, "don't engage" - quite the opposite. The ICANN model allows any stakeholder to participate on an equal footing in ICANN policymaking. Each has the same value and can

contribute to making the Internet run better. At the same time, ICANN is neutral and does not engage in local, regional, or international arguments.

European Union Commissioner Viviane Reding said last year that the real world and the virtual world are converging, and she was right. This interdependence has implications for the world and for the Internet.

The management of technology is a challenge for both. Today's global and Internet governance problems are not going to be solved by individuals, not even groups of individuals, working on their own.

Huge governance issues are on the table: the unity of the Internet's root system. Privacy. Sovereignty. Accountability. Security.

Think about cyber security. If an individual is located in one country and uses a computer in a second country to conduct malicious actions in a third, who is responsible for finding and prosecuting him?

Threats to the security of the Internet affect every user and every potential user; it is a global challenge of immense proportion and requires a solution at the global level. Russia and many other countries have come to understand that. With the Russian National Security Council, the US State Department, the European Union, China, India and others, talks on further cooperation in cyber security field are ongoing.

Accountability
The Affirmation of Commitments, the agreement signed last autumn that has strengthened ICANN's status as a global organization, will help ensure that our role in Internet governance is based on transparency, accountability and fact.

With the US Department of Commerce - and with thanks to Assistant Secretary Larry Strickling, who is with us today - ICANN has drawn up a series of commitments to the global Internet community to ensure we do our job properly, neutrally and effectively.

Underlying those commitments is a recognition that we need to continually question how effective our methods are. How should we change our processes and work? How can we provide even greater accountability? How can we better explain the decisions we make?

And to check if our answers are satisfactory, written into the Affirmation is a series of reviews of ICANN's performance, placed in the hands of its global stakeholder community.

The reviews assess ICANN's progress toward four key objectives:
- Ensuring accountability, transparency and the interests of global Internet users;

- Preserving the security, stability and resiliency of the domain name system;

- Promoting competition, consumer trust and consumer choice; and

- Ensuring the effectiveness of policies on WHOIS, the database of domain name registrations.

Under the Affirmation, the US will continue to participate in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee, or GAC, which advises us on a wide range of policies.

When it joined the GAC in 2009, the Russian Ministry of Telecom and Mass Media noted that with the Affirmation of Commitments, ICANN

became responsible to all governments, not just one. This has always been our goal: to be accountable to all our stakeholders.

The next benchmark in this gradual maturation of the global domain name system will be the September 2011 expiration of the IANA contract with the US government, through which ICANN coordinates the Internet's addressing systems at the top level.

Global reach

The next few years will be pivotal for the Internet's development. What changes will be needed to expand the reach of the global Internet, two, five or ten years into the future? This is something the ICANN community has already begun addressing.

Russia's achievement in securing the first approved Cyrillic internationalized domain name indicates the potential of these new extensions to profoundly transform the Internet and how we use it.

The numbers are staggering: five of the top ten languages in use on the Internet today rely on a non-Latin script: Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Russian and Korean, in roughly descending order. That represents 647 million users. And another 310 million fall into the broad category of "other" languages – not in the top ten – and many of them will also rely on non-Latin scripts.

For the first time, these people will be able to write Internet addresses completely in their own script. IDNs are the greatest advance in the use of names on the Internet since its inception 40 years ago.

The ICANN community has also made good progress in developing new generic top-level domains, which will encourage competition, consumer

trust and choice in the domain name space. An "applicant guidebook" that talks people through the process is in its fourth revision, each incorporating extensive public comment and the recommendations of experts.

Conclusion

The Internet Governance Forum has been a critical place in which to advance the international Internet ecosystem and ICANN in particular. It has become a consistent and constructive platform for making the Internet more international and forward-looking in every respect. I thank you once again for the opportunity to address you today.

There is a generation alive today that has never known life without the Internet. For them, and for their children, it is the foundation of their future, and its development is in our hands. It is for them that we dedicate our work to achieving one world. One Internet. Everyone connected.

Thank you for your attention.