Colleagues, Organizers, Participants and Guests of the ITA 2017 Forum

I am pleased to be able to participate at the regular, ITA XXI Forum - the traditional open professional platform of the International Academy of Communications to discuss the current opportunities and challenges in the development of telecommunications and information and communication technologies in Russia and in the world.

The Forum topics fully correspond to the world trends in the development of the information society, global digitalization and its impact on a knowledgeable society.

It is very appropriate therefore to have on today’s agenda the digitalization of all aspects of society.

I believe that in general digitalization is one of the most fundamental periods of transformation we have ever witnessed. By the year 2020, an entire generation will have grown up in primarily a digital world. Computers, the Internet, mobile phones, texting, social networking — all are second nature to members of this ‘New Generation’. Their familiarity with technology, reliance on mobile communications, and desire to remain in contact with large networks of business contacts, family members and friends has transformed how we work, how we consume & how we in fact carry out daily activities in what today has become far more common that ever considered when the digital trend began.

In fact, I suggest the phenomenon of digitization is reaching an inflection point. The effects of an increasingly digitized world are now reaching into every corner of our lives, and while this clearly has benefited many, it also represents a danger that by utilizing the digital technology environment, this ‘New Generation’ expects to be always connected, is willing to share personal data, and is more likely to trust referrals from unknown sources rather than from well-known entities such that many of this ‘New Generation’ are influenced by this social media without challenging its authenticity or reliability.

On the plus side however, digital technology continues to expand its influence in many positive ways; for example, the infrastructure backbone of the digital world is bringing affordable broadband to billions of consumers. In parallel, low-cost connected devices are being deployed in every industry, and cloud computing, and the vast information-processing machinery it requires, is developing quickly.

It is therefore very clear that Digitalization has changed the rules of our everyday life, economy, and business and is one of the key mechanisms for achieving the goals of sustainable development of countries and peoples proclaimed by the United Nations.

One of the main driving forces of the new economic model is the rapid growth of information resources and knowledge, which can be effectively used only on the basis of a new, modern information and communication infrastructure. The specific topics related to this issue and proposed for consideration are of primary importance for the digital transformation of the economy and for future development. Public discussion of them at this Forum, dissemination of information on its results, will undoubtedly contribute to further progress on the way of solving the difficult tasks of forming a single digital space in Russia.

It is difficult to predict what future developments will evolve in the ‘Digitized World’ we live in today. We can however be certain that for those of us who began this journey 30 years ago it has been a great experience and one that we can be proud we were a part of making happen.

My best wishes to all participants of the forum for productive efforts and for success in achieving their goals.

Stanley Cramton (Стэнли Крэмтон)

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