



24 June 2016

The Honorable Ed Royce
Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
2170 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eliot Engel
Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
B-360 Rayburn
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Royce and Engel:

IEEE-USA is pleased to communicate our support for the Digital Global Access Policy Act of 2016 (H.R. 5537), legislation whose purposes align closely with the attached IEEE position statement on “Universal Access to the Internet” adopted unanimously by the IEEE Board of Directors on 19 June.

IEEE believes that the internet is an essential tool in providing and protecting the fundamental economic, social, cultural, civil and political human rights set forth in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that expanding internet access will contribute to the achievement of the recently adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Neither IEEE nor its constituent Organizational Units have taken a position on the proposed roles of specific federal agencies or the best means of achieving universal access to the internet. Indeed, it is likely that internet systems designed to optimally serve the needs of one developing country will not be optimal for others. Universal access may require different combinations of optical fiber, satellite, microwave, and/or wireless technologies in deployments adapted to the unique circumstances faced by each country.

Many of the engineers and scientists who developed the technologies and designed the systems that brought internet access to most of the world are members of IEEE. Working through its Internet Initiative, IEEE has pledged to tap that knowledge and expertise in partnership with the State Department’s Global Connect Initiative. If IEEE can be of any assistance to you or the Foreign Affairs Committee in support of your efforts to promote universal access to the internet, please contact Russ Harrison in our DC office at 202-530-8326 or r.t.harrison@ieee.org.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Eckstein
2016 IEEE-USA President