

## **WELCOMING REMARKS**

**Delivered by**

**The Ambassador of the United States of America,  
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On the Occasion of  
"Global Forum 2009" organized by  
Items International and the Government of Romania  
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**Mr. President, distinguished guests:**

**Thank you for inviting me here today to help inaugurate this impressive gathering. Information technology is one of the most powerful agents for change in America, Romania, and throughout the world. I.T. removes borders and barriers to the free flow of information, empowering our citizens and drawing them closer together. Just look at Iran and the Philippines; in Iran, we saw the power of social networking technologies to overcome the effort to suppress information, and in the Philippines to rally assistance to**

**the victims of natural disasters. The example the President gave us this AM, on how electronic payment can assist in coping with the so-called gray economy here in Romania.**

**It is particularly fitting that Romania is hosting this forum. It so perfectly reflects both the power and the potential of a robust I.T. and communications sector. Information technology has been a major driver of Romania's impressive growth over the past two decades, and I predict lead the country out of the current economic downturn. Romania's talented, tech-savvy workforce is a leading attraction for I.T. sector investors.**

**A few impressive statistics: I.T. employs more than 50,000 workers in Romania, with salaries and benefits ranking well above the national average. Annual business turnover for these companies exceeds 6.5 billion Euros. And the information technology and communications sector contributes nearly eight percent to Romania's GDP. Romania ranks third in the world for outsourcing**

**services and is recognized as a global leader in technical certifications and development. I spent 20 years as a lawyer in America representing these great companies--Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, HP, Intel, and Cisco--and they've been in Romania investing in its future by locating extensive operations here. This in turn makes Romania more attractive to foreign investment in other sectors. Success breeds success.**

**These companies spark innovation, encourage entrepreneurship, provide generous support to public education, and inspire the younger generation to strive for success and excellence in the future. But, there is much more to do. I.T. can help eliminate disparities between the haves and have-nots in society, but only if government works pro-actively with business to map out the strategies, and then invests in the infrastructure needed to extend the benefits of technology to everyone. Here in Romania, there are still many rural communities where Internet and mobile communications access are only just starting to penetrate. The**

**rural sector here holds tremendous potential to contribute to the growth and prosperity of this country. In order to tap this potential, a long-term national strategy for promoting I.T. is essential.**

**You have an ambitious schedule for this conference. I hope you will focus on how to adapt I.T. infrastructure to differing national needs; how to use I.T. tools to make us better stewards of the environment; and how to employ I.T. to make governments more efficient and responsive. Out of these discussions I hope will come a clearer vision for all of us not only of how we can use I.T. to make businesses and governments work better, but of how we can make people's lives better through these marvelous tools. Thank you very much.**