



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20580

Prepared Remarks of Chairman Joseph Simons¹
ICN 2020: Opening Remarks
September 14, 2020

On behalf of the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”), it is a pleasure to join International Competition Network (“ICN”) Chairman Andreas Mundt and Assistant Attorney General Makan Delrahim in welcoming you to the 2020 ICN Annual Conference.

This year has been a year like no other. I wish all of our ICN community good health and strong resiliency. I would like to start by talking about how incredibly proud I am of the FTC staff. They have remained hard at work during the pandemic. Despite the difficult circumstances, the FTC’s law enforcement, policy, investigative, and international work continues. I also would like to commend the ICN and our sister agencies in responding to the pandemic and its economic consequences. In this time of emergency, with enormous strain on all our domestic operations, it is a vote of confidence in the ICN and the value of international cooperation that we all remain active in the network.

That brings us to today’s event. Let me begin with a few thank you’s. This event was made possible by a collaboration between the FTC and Antitrust Division and so many of our friends and partners around the world. I would like to thank Randy Tritell and his expert ICN team in our Office of International Affairs—including Liz Kraus, Cynthia Lagdameo, Maria Coppola, and Paul O’Brien. I also would like to thank the many other FTC and Division staff,

¹ These remarks reflect my own views. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission or any other individual Commissioner.

and all of this week's panelists, who made this conference happen. An incredible amount of work went into transitioning from the planned conference in Los Angeles to executing this event, and I am very grateful for that effort.

The working groups have developed a great agenda for the next four days. An impressive slate of speakers from around the world will discuss our work across a wide range of timely competition issues. Importantly, this includes a running theme throughout the conference on competition and the digital economy. We also invite you to watch the recorded submissions from agencies and academics that provide additional background and perspectives on this theme.

But as wonderful as it is to be able to gather virtually this year, we will certainly miss the in-person opportunities to meet and exchange new ideas. This year, more than ever, I encourage everyone to embrace our shared connection as a network. Don't let the virtual nature of this event dampen our shared experience.

On a personal note, it is a privilege for me to participate in the ICN. I was the Director of the Bureau of Competition at the FTC in 2001 when the ICN was founded, and I attended the ICN's second conference in Mexico in 2003. The FTC has been an active participant since the ICN's inception. The ICN has energized growing collaboration, cross-fertilization, and consensus building around sound antitrust principles.

The ideas, guiding principles, and framework of what has become "international antitrust" were crafted and built by the ICN and sister organizations like the OECD Competition Committee. Over the last two decades, the ICN has seen calls to relax antitrust standards and defer to industrial policies and doubts as to whether agencies can keep up with dynamic changes in the economy and new technologies. Throughout, the ICN's growth and shared commitment to

consensus-building have reaffirmed the value of the network and its antitrust mission as a counterweight to these challenges.

As the ICN turns 20 next year, the network will conduct a comprehensive review to ensure and enhance its effectiveness as it enters its third decade. The FTC, with our colleagues at the Dutch and German competition agencies, will lead this project. One topic we plan to discuss is the ICN's role as a global advocate for competition. Especially at a time when the value of competition policy is being challenged, the ICN can use its leading platform to help agencies advocate procompetitive policies and to speak out for competition as a driver of economic recovery, innovation, and growth. We will hear more about this project on Thursday, and I encourage everyone in the network to take part in this exercise.

As for today, we begin with the showcase panel on competition enforcement in the digital economy. First, you will hear keynote remarks from antitrust scholar Herbert Hovenkamp, and I want to thank you, Herb, for your contribution to our discussion. After that, I am pleased to join Assistant Attorney General Delrahim, Executive Vice President Vestager, Professor Bill Kovacic, and Dr. Cristina Caffarra for our panel discussion.

With that, I would like to thank all of you for joining us this week. I hope that you enjoy the conference.