November 9, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-elect of the United States

Dear Mr. President-elect:

Congratulations on your election as the 46th president of the United States. We also congratulate Vice President-elect Kamala Harris for her historic, groundbreaking election.

In your speech on Saturday evening, you spoke about bringing the country together to tackle the monumental challenges our nation faces. IBM is committed to working with your Administration to do its part. We share your vision of using science to control the virus, widening economic opportunities, achieving racial justice and combatting the climate crisis.

Throughout its history, IBM has supported the visions of presidents in times of crisis and profound change. When President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act, IBM served as the data processing backbone that helped establish records for 26 million workers. When President Kennedy announced the goal of putting a man on the moon, IBM built the computers that made the Apollo missions successful. And today, IBM is working to muster an unprecedented amount of computing power to help researchers find potential treatments and cures to COVID-19.

We believe technology can serve as a force for progress. In that spirit, I suggest here some policy initiatives to help all Americans benefit from the promise of technological innovation.

**Leverage Science and Technology to Fight COVID-19**

As you convene a COVID-19 task force, we recommend that your administration also establish a *Scientific Readiness Reserve* – a body of scientists and computing resources from the private sector that can be swiftly mobilized in times of crisis. IBM has already laid some groundwork by helping to form the COVID-19 High Performance Computing Consortium, which has advanced the pace of science focused on treatments for the virus.

As you know, Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems can play a key role in helping doctors to treat cancer and other illnesses. We therefore suggest that your Administration consider creating a *National Research Cloud for AI* that would provide the American scientific research community with access to AI tools from both the public and private sector.

Similarly, we stand ready to work with the National Laboratories to provide dedicated access for scientists to quantum computing systems which, over the long term, can help in the research and discovery of new medicines.

**Promote Unity, Inclusion and Close the Skills Gap**

On Saturday, you emphasized the vital role that education and educators play in America’s success. IBM agrees, and hopes to work with you, Dr. Biden, and your Administration to advance a *STEM For All* agenda, because a four-year college degree should not be the only path to success. To close the digital divide, pathways to fast-growing technology jobs should include non-traditional training programs such as apprenticeships and innovative six-year high schools that combine academic study with career-focused skills. We hope to work with you on this goal.
Importantly, we know that technological skills alone won’t erase barriers to advancement or alleviate systemic racism. This is why IBM supports inclusion and equality of opportunity for all Americans and has long advocated for passage of the Equality Act, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, restoration of the DACA program, and passage of the DREAM Act.

**Modernize Digital Infrastructure and Promote Sustainability**

The COVID pandemic and the widespread adoption of remote work have demonstrated the vital importance of America’s digital infrastructure. To fully embrace the promise that this era of rapid technological change offers, we recommend that your Administration encourage federal agencies to adopt a hybrid cloud IT infrastructure. The private sector, including the core banking and telecommunications networks that IBM helps to support, is already swiftly adopting this approach because it allows for better management of data and services.

In addition, we suggest that you take steps to promote an open, secure 5G ecosystem through open radio network standards. We also hope to work with you to pass a modern, national privacy law for the 21st century digital economy.

A more modern digital economy *can and should* lead to a more sustainable economy. To that end, IBM strongly supports the United States re-joining the Paris Climate Agreement, and we stand ready to work with you and the Congress to pass an economy-wide carbon tax.

**Build Trust in Technology**

You have spoken of the need to ensure that technology plays a responsible role in our society. We agree. IBM believes that a “precision regulation” approach by government can help create ethical guardrails for the use of new technologies without hindering the pace of technological innovation.

For example, IBM stands ready to work with you on measures to prohibit the use or export of facial recognition for mass surveillance, racial profiling, or violations of basic human rights and freedoms. IBM was among the first technology companies to advocate that Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act be updated, with a proposal for a “reasonable care” requirement to curb harmful and illegal online content. In addition, IBM supports clear rules in trade agreements to safeguard the free flow of data across borders, a goal that has enjoyed broad bipartisan support since the Obama administration.

Mr. President-elect, IBM looks forward with optimism to working with your Administration in the years ahead. May I once again convey to you my best wishes for your success, and for the prosperity of our great nation.

Sincerely,

Arvind Krishna

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