AFRALO NEWSLETTER

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The latest news from the African At-Large Regional Organization (AFRALO)

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Chair's Remarks
Seun Ojedeji

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the AFRALO Leadership (myself, Aziz Hilali and Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong), I welcome you all to our first newsletter after our General Assembly (volume 12) which puts together Q2 updates for the year 2023. My statement will be unusually longer this time around, please bear with me.🙂

We started planning for our General Assembly by setting up the GA organising committee (GA-OC) which comprised the AFRALO officers, a representative from ALAC, newsletter group and the social media lead. Among the GA-OC plans was a pre-GA webinar which was designed to get our members prepared for the GA. I am happy to report that the General Assembly which was held between 24 and 25th of July was a success. Among many progress achieved, here are some of the notable ones:

• Over 55 member representatives from 32 African countries physically participated at the General Assembly while we also had some of our other members participating remotely.

• AFRALO was the first RALO to fully implement the reviewed ALAC rules as it concerns ALSes and individual members. However there is still need for the overall review of the AFRALO Operating Principles, the AFRALO leadership tasked the Review Committee to do the exercise in two phases. However, after the report of the committee during the GA and much deliberation within members, the Assembly then tasked the committee to do an overall review of the Operating Principles with a target delivery date of the final document by June 1st 2024. The committee shall be communicating their implementation timeline to members in due course.

• We received reports from various committees which included the newsletters committee, outreach and engagement and the Social Media working group. Some of the challenges were highlighted and ways to address them were deliberated upon.

• Our past leaders since the last GA were celebrated and we also paid tribute to Mr Pierre Ouedraogo who had passed away prior to our GA. Pierre was a father figure to the Africa Internet and Open Source community. He will be greatly missed.

• We received a report on happenings at AFRINIC and they raised great concern for the membership which resulted in the members drafting a communique to note our concern and recommend a way forward.

• We established informal mentor/mentee relationships among our members. The meeting helped us to build relationships and mend bridges amongst each other.

• Capacity building of our members also featured at the GA

I would like to thank everyone that participated and contributed towards the success of the General Assembly. Special thanks to At-Large Staff for their support and to the Africa Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team.

AFRALO actively participated in the ICANN 77 in DC and as usual we hosted the AFRALO-AfrICANN session where the topic "Improvement of African Participation in ICANN" was discussed and a statement was drafted. A major highlight from the statement which also caused points of clarification in various fora was the need for the reconsideration of the composition of the board. I will use this opportunity to further reiterate the message we are trying to pass; The Africa community by the statement is of the opinion that considering ICANN board is over 15 members, a truly global ICANN should not have a minimum of 1 board member from each region and recommended that for a start it should be increased to 2 minimum per region.

In my Q1 update, I reported our great performance at the global Universal Acceptance Day, where over 10 At-Large Structures (ALSes) and members across our Regional At-Large Organisation (RALO) participated in organising various events to mark the UA Day. I am happy to inform you that our participation was noticed by the entire ICANN community, especially At-Large and the model will now be applied towards an ALAC outreach and engagement initiative termed "At-Large Loop." As communicated during our General Assembly (GA) by the Chair of ALAC, Mr. Jonathan Zuck, the programme will be starting up as a pilot effort during the second half of the year. Lets watch out for more updates on this programme.

We held our elections during this quarter. First I would like to congratulate Sarah Kiden who has now joined ICANN staff. Sarah served as AFRALO Secretary and was an ALAC member until her ICANN job appointment. We had various position filled and you can find more information about this at the following url: https://community.icann.org/display/atlarge/2023+AFRALO+Regional+Selections

Also, I would like to thank all our outgoing leaders and congratulate our incoming leaders as well. Look forward to our continued working relationship for the growth of AFRALO.

Finally, the General Assembly has come and gone, I would like to call on our members and partners to ensure an improved effort towards a better AFRALO participation within ICANN. My appreciation once again to our At-Large staff members, Africa GSE team lead by Pierre Dandjinou, all our AFRALO members and colleagues within the ICANN community for your work and support so far. Here is to wish us all the best for the rest of the year 2023.

About AFRALO

African Regional At-Large Organization
… *Engaging Africa for Development*
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AFRALO is the home of the individual Internet user community for the African region. It provides news, key resources and interactive information sharing tools for individuals and end-user groups in the African region who are interested in ICANN and in shaping the future of the Internet.

AFRALO aims to:
- Strengthen users' participation in ICANN decision-making structures.
- Help ensure that its members will actively encourage more direct participation by end users.
- Build Internet policy making capacity in the region.
- Reach out to Internet users on the issues in the scope of ICANN.
- Represent users' interests and define public interest aspects of Internet governance with specific focus on the areas of **privacy, transparency, and accountability.**
- Strengthening consumer protection in ICANN policies
- Identify social impacts of technical infrastructure design.
- Take cultural diversity into account when formulating technical standards (e.g. IDN implementation)

AFRALO currently consist of **ALSes** located in 32 countries and territories, as well as individual members and some observers.

To learn more about the ongoing work of AFRALO, you are welcome to check out the AFRALO **workspace**.

Regional GSE Update
Pierre Dandjinou, VP, Stakeholder Engagement - Africa

Africa Engagement Forum'23: The Outcome

The second edition of the Africa Engagement Forum took place on July 25-27, 2023, at the Marriott Hotel in Accra-Ghana. under the theme, 'Fostering Engagement for a Flourishing Digital Africa.

This event brought together 170 in-person and 207 virtual attendees mainly from across Africa. They included representatives of the academic and research communities, civil society, and regulatory, governmental, and technical stakeholder groups.

One important event before this forum at the same venue was the General Assembly of AFRALO, a Regional At-Large Organization (RALO) that our GSE team is always pleased to be supporting. This Assembly deliberated on 24 July and also in the morning on 25 July 2023. We took note of important feedbacks from the participants not being able to fully stay in Accra through the end of the Engagement Forum.

We also noted active participation in two parallel events which also took place in the morning of 25 July 2023:

1.A technical Workshop on DNSSEC validation: More than 30 participants on DNSSEC validation during 3 interactive hours

2.A meeting of the partners organizations of the Coalition for Digital Africa: This was the first-time face to face meeting with representation from ISOC, ITU, NSRC, AAU, AFTLD and AfricaCert (joined remotely). Participants have agreed to continue joining effort on common projects to achieve the objective of the coalition.

Key sessions during the Africa Engagement Forum were:

-An update from African leaders in various supporting Organizations and advisory committees

-An update from the Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team on the regional implementation of ICANN strategy

-A presentation and discussion on topic such as the new generic Top Level Domain (gTLD) next round, geopolitical impact, the ICANN grant programme

-A Community Forum which gave the opportunity to ICANN senior Staff and represented board member to interact with the community. Some of the issues discussed are related to Increased participation from Africa, and Country Code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) management.

All these activities demonstrated the specificity of such Engagement Forum compared to the Africa DNS Forum whose tenth edition took place recently in Nairobi. The Africa DNS Forum is focused on DNS development related topics with a more technical oriented audience. The Africa Engagement Forum has a totally different format where all the stakeholders discuss about more global topics for the ICANN Community. At the Africa engagement forum, ICANN meets Africa and listen to Africa's needs.

I want sincerely to thank all in person and virtual participants to the Africa Engagement Forum for their active participation and contribution.

Finally I want to express the recognition of our team and the community to the Association of African Universities which has contributed a lot to the success of this event, as our local host.

ALAC Policy Updates

- [Amendments to the Base gTLD RA and RAA to Modify DNS Abuse Contract Obligations - Topic(s): Contracted Party Agreements, DNS](#)

- [ALAC Chair Correspondence to the GNSO Chair re Latin Script RZ-LGR (.Quebec) - Topic(s): DNS, IDN, New gTLDs, Public Interest, Security/Stability](#)

- [Phase 1 Initial Report on the Internationalized Domain Names EPDP - Topic(s): DNS, IDN, New gTLDs, Security/Stability](#)

- [Bylaws Amendments and Documents to Implement the NomCom2 Review - Topic(s): Accountability/Transparency, Engagement, ICANN Board/Bylaws, Operations/Finances, Reviews/Improvements](#)

- [Proposed Renewal of the Registry Agreement for .NET - Topic(s): Contracted Party Agreements, DNS, New gTLDs, Public Interest, Security/Stability](#)

ICANN Updates

- [GNSO Guidance Process Applicant Support Guidance Recommendation Initial Report](#)
- [ccNSO Proposed Policy for a Specific ccTLD Related Review Mechanism](#)
- [ICANN78 Community Childcare Grants Program Application Now Open](#)

- [**ICANN Seeks Input on a Specific ccTLD Related Review Mechanism Policy Proposa**](#)
- [**Last Call: Nominations for ICANN's Dr. Tarek Kamel Award for Capacity Building**](#)
- [**ICANN Seeks Input on GGP Applicant Support Initial Report**](#)
- [**ICANN's 2023 Nominating Committee Announces Leadership Selections**](#)
- [**Mandy Carver Retires as SVP, Government and IGO Engagement**](#)
- [**ICANN Announces NextGen@ICANN78 Participants**](#)
- [**ICANN79 Fellowship Application Round Now Open**](#)
- [**ICANN Announces DENIC as Sole ICANN-Designated Registrar Data Escrow Agent**](#)
- [**ICANN Webinars Will Provide Information About Service to Request Nonpublic Data**](#)
- [**ICANN Ombudsman Announces Departure**](#)

ALAC Meeting Updates

MONTHLY MEETINGS: ALAC holds its monthly meeting and the agenda and call details are available at: https://community.icann.org/x/KwA5Dg

For next AFRALO monthly call, please check [here](#):
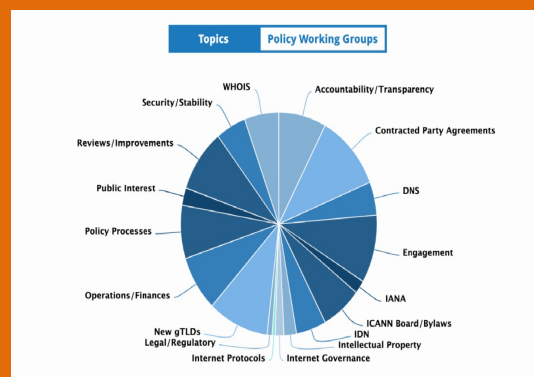
Do well to join!

ALAC Policy Comments & Advice

Some members of AFRALO and the At-Large Community were invited to contribute to ICANN Public Comment proceedings. For more information, please visit the [At-Large Policy Advice Development Page](#) or contact At-Large Staff.

This enabled them to have their say. To contribute to ALAC policy activities, always look out for such calls and comments on the At-Large workspace or **volunteer** as **penholder** and join the weekly At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) meetings.

For more information, please contact At-Large Staff or visit [At-Large Policy Advice Development Page](#)

Mapping At-Large Policy Issues

ALS' Activities

AFRALO, AEF23 standstill to honour late Pierre Ouedraogo
Remmy Nweke

At the just concluded fifth General Assembly of the African At-Large Regional Organisation (AFRALO) held in Accra-Ghana, members stood still to observe a minute silence in honour of the late Pierre Ouedraogo, who died on Thursday, 13 July 2023 in Burkina Faso.

The one minute silence call was made by the AFRALO chair, Mr. Seun Ojedeji in recognition of one of Africa's internet champions, Pierre Ouedraogo who passed away just a few days ago before the General Assembly (GA).

He also informed that late Mr. Ouedraogo was a major contributor to Internet development in the region, especially within the Francophone community.

He prayed that his soul may rest in peace, while declaring that late Pierre will be greatly missed.

Reputed as former companion of Thomas Sankara in his heydays, Mr. Pierre Ouedraogo, a retired colonel in Burkina Faso's army, reportedly took an active part in the 1983 revolution.

In 2012, late Pierre Ouedraogo was awarded the prestigious Jonathan B. Postel Service Award for his technical leadership in the continent, mostly focused on the Francophone Africa. Of late, Pierre established the Francophone School of Internet Governance (FSIG) which he promoted with his usual passion.

Also at 2023 Africa Engagement Forum (AEF) in Accra, Ghana, an evening of tribute was hosted by the organisers led by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), in honour of late Pierre Ouedraogo.

Africa will surely miss late Pierre Ouedraogo. Rest in peace!

June Okal: I'll continue to build up this ecosystem

1. Congratulations on your new job, kindly introduce yourself briefly?

My name is June Okal, a qualified Technology, Media, and Telecommunications lawyer from Kenya and have extensive experience providing legal and policy support to global businesses and organizations across Sub-Saharan Africa, including at Meta (formerly Facebook), American Tower Corporation, ARTICLE 19 and Google.

Recognized as one of Africa's Top 50 Individuals Leading in Legal Innovation and Africa's Leading Women in Legal Innovation, I hold a Master of Laws (LL.M) Degree in Intellectual Property and Technology from the American University's Washington College of Law, Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) Degree from the University of Nairobi and Post Graduate Diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law.

2. How did you get here as a Stakeholder Engagement Manager, East & Southern Africa at ICANN?

I always wanted to have across the board experience in the tech industry in order to appreciate the unique challenges and nuances in each.

For instance, I started work in tech policy at the equivalent of an ICT Department, but for the Government of Kenya supporting in setting up ICT Standards to be adopted, then worked at the Copyright regulator where we ratified rules on copyright exemptions for the visually challenged as well as introducing the first Kenyan legal instrument on intermediary liability, then engaged at a leading Think Tank KICTANet that seeks to catalyze ICT reforms through a multistakeholder approach, to offering legal and regional client advisory at a boutique and specialist TMT law firm, to setting up the office and helping protect clients intellectual for one of the largest IP firms globally, shifting to a big tech service provider interfacing with a user base of +1B , then to a passive infrastructure telecommunications provider, then at ARTICLE 19 advocating for freedom of expression and information with a focus on the Domain Name System, to Meta Connectivity advocating for high speed connectivity for Africa's people and most recently at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society.

The transition at each point has been exciting, some more seamless than others, but because the foundation is the same, it is simpler to build upon it.

3. What does your job entail?

As Senior Manager, Global Stakeholder Engagement for Eastern and Southern Africa I am the primary representative of ICANN in the Eastern, Southern African and Indian Ocean countries and act as, what I like to call a translator between ICANN and our community groups including governments, internet industry, and media and communications professionals.

4. As far as AfrICANN is concerned, how does this position you as one of the ambassadors in the ICANN ecosystem?

As a member of the Global Stakeholder Engagement team and based out of our African regional office, I'm keen to act as a switchboard; listening to what the community needs and translating those asks and needs to the org while being an avid ambassador for Africa's growing digital transformation and showcasing our amazing potential especially in technology. I have been a beneficiary of the multistakeholder model and have been granted immense opportunities by the local, regional and global internet governance community – including AFRALO through ALS KICTANet and ISOC Kenya - and my hope is that, through this role, I'll be able to give back and continue to build up this ecosystem.

5. What does the future hold with regards to stakeholders' development in the Internet ecosystem?

"If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of many ancestors," - African proverb.

The Coalition for Digital Africa is an alliance of like-minded organizations committed to building a robust and secure Internet infrastructure to bring more Africans online. One of the projects we're working on at the Coalition, is the Africa Internet history project which seeks to map past and current milestones made in Africa's internet governance sphere. One of the key anchors of our ecosystem, especially in Africa, is our Baobabs – these are the people who have been instrumental in the growth of the development of the internet ecosystem across all stakeholder groups. They set up the foundation for internet governance and built it up, while they remain actively involved in offering strategic guidance and advisory, they have passed the baton to continue with that good work. The future is bright; it holds immense promise, great potential, and an undeniable opportunity for increased multistakeholderism and collaboration.

NIRA elects Remmy Nweke, Mary Uduma to BoT
Nkem Nweke

The membership of the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA) have elected Mr. Remmy Nweke and Mrs Mary Nma Uduma to the Board of Trustees along three others at the 15th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos.

Mr. Nweke is currently the Lead Consulting Strategist at DigitalSENSE Africa, an At-Large Structure (ALS) and the Group Executive Editor of multiple award-winning ITREALMS Media group as well as co-chair/editor, AFRALO Newsletter, while Mrs Uduma, a former president of NIRA, and current chairperson, Multistakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) at West Africa Internet Governance Forum (WAIGF). She is AFRALO member through the Internet Society (ISOC) Nigeria Chapter and frequently attends AFRALO monthly calls.

Other three elected into NIRA board alongside include the former pioneer technical contact person on .NG, Mrs Ibukun Odusote; former Financial Secretary of NIRA, Mr. Biyi Oladipo; and Executive Director, Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD) Mr. Yunusa Zakari Ya'u.

NIRA, founded on 23 March 2005, oversees Nigeria's country code top-level domain, .ng, just as registration of domain names are handled by NiRA certified registrars, under its Registry–Registrar–Registrant model in operating and managing the top-level domain.

Additionally, the AGM saw to the election of Mr. Adesola Akinsanya and Mr. Murtala Abdullahi as new President and Vice President respectively, whereas other members elected into NIRA Executive Board of Directors (EBoD) included the Editor of TechEconomy, Mr. Peter Oluka, Mr. Ebenezer Dare of Hostlag Limited, and Seun Kehinde of QServers Networks Limited.

AFRALO Community Voices

My ICANN experience, five years after
Amina Ramallan

Five years ago, if you had told me I will become an active participant in Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), I would have looked at you funny.

I remember not having the slightest clue about the discussions and series of acronyms at my first meeting, ICANN 62.
Despite the confusion, I stuck around, not only because of my job description, but because I have a career aspiration to directly contribute to driving Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Nigeria.

As a new comer to ICANN, it was a lot to struggle with, until my supervisor suggested I apply for the ICANN fellowship programme.

In 2022, I applied for a fellowship to ICANN 75, and was excited when I got the acceptance email. My participation as a fellow made a huge impact to my understanding of the ICANN ecosystem and its complexities. As a young woman from an underserved community in Northern Nigeria, one takeaway as a fellow is to be a role model for young girls and women from my part of the world, who want to be involved in ICANN and the Internet Governance space, but are restricted due to gender limitations and lack of awareness.

One of the things I learnt about ICANN is that even though it may seem like a tech space, it consists of end users, lawyers, civil society members, ICT-media practitioners among others; coming together to ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. ICANN has provided me with the platform to boost my expertise in Internet Governance, articulating strategies and tactics for ensuring broadband penetration in Nigeria.

Therefore, some of the things I will say to newcomers is:
1. Visit the "ICANN for beginner's link" on the ICANN website;
2. Apply for the ICANN fellowship or Next Gen program;
3. Register on the "ICANN learn" platform to take courses on the ICANN ecosystem;
4. Join your "Regional At Large Organization" which is the main coordination point for each region.
5. Volunteer on working groups.

Finally, I will say that even though I cannot call myself an ICANN expert, I have come a long way from the end user who logged onto her first ICANN meeting five years ago.

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