AFRALO NEWSLETTER

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April - June 2024

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

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Chair's Remarks
Hadia Elminiawi

Dear AFRALO members,

Welcome to the second edition of the AFRALO newsletter for the year 2024. This quarter, we take pride in Africa's role as the host of the ICANN80 high-level meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. This marks a significant milestone as it is the first ICANN meeting to be held in Africa since the meeting in Marrakech in 2019, and I take this opportunity to invite you all to participate in this hybrid meeting whether online or face to face.

During ICANN80. AFRALO will be organizing sessions and events centered around the theme: **Bridging Digital Divides, Connecting Cultures for Africa's Digital Empowerment**. AFRALO's ICANN80 events include two round table discussions aimed at providing recommendations to the ICANN community regarding the DNS infrastructure in Africa and the promotion of a multilingual inclusive Internet. AFRALO At-Large Structures have been invited to share their feedback in relation to both topics, to be shared during the roundtable's discussions in Kigali. AFRALO-AfrICANN statement will echo this theme and incorporate recommendations provided from the two roundtable panels. Africa space will present findings from the domain name industry study. And provide updates on the Coalition of Digital Africa (CDA) projects. Two networking events are also scheduled: an AFRALO cultural event on Monday 10 June and the CDA community networking reception on 12 June.

Currently underway are the UA (universal Acceptance) Days of AFRALO and AFRALO members. Many At-Large Structures have concluded their UA Days. Showcasing remarkable efforts from the AFRALO community in addressing UA adoption and readiness in Africa. AFRALO's UA Day comprises two sessions: the first was held on April 24th and included a presentation by Simon Mayoye, Regional Technical Specialist at ICANN, on a strategy for UA adoption followed by a brief discussion on the first draft of AFRALO's UA adoption strategy. The second session, scheduled for May 23rd features presentations by Yaovi Atohan from ICANN stakeholder Engagement Team and Simon Mayoye, along with discussions on the adoption strategy drafted by the AFRALO community. The aim of the adoption strategy is to outline actionable and measurable steps for the AFRALO community to adopt UA. We hope we can evaluate the implementation of the current strategy next year and develop a new UA strategy for 2025.

As AFRALO is currently in the process of updating its operating principles, I extend an invitation to all participants in developing the new operating principles. Finally, AFRALO 2024 elections are underway, and I wish all candidates the best of luck.

I would like to extend my gratitude to each and every one of you for your hard work and for keeping your engagement with AFRALO. Enjoy AFRALO's newsletter!

Best wishes,

Hadia Elminiawi
AFRALO Chair

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 consists of **74 ALSes** located in 32 countries and territories, as well as **16 Individual members** and 3 Observers.

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

Regional GSE Update
Pierre DANDJINOU,
Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement – Africa

GSE ready for ICANN80 with Africa space working session

We have been working in the second quarter of this year 2024 with the same energy and with the expectation to contribute with you as we can to the ICANN strategic goals through our Africa Regional implementation plan. We would like to share with you our participation in some regional events which were opportunities for us to share ICANN's work but also to meet diverse communities.

ICANN at iWeek@ZANOG

ICANN Africa sponsored and attended iWeek 2024 with the objective to strengthen the security of the Domain Name System and the DNS Root Server System and improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multi-stakeholder model of governance.

iWeek is South Africa's leading annual internet industry conference. iWeek 2024 was held in conjunction with co-host ZA Network Operators Group's (ZANOG) annual conference: ZANOG @ iWeek 2024 hosted in the Western Cape from 12 - 14 March 2024. The conference had a focus on technological

best-practices for local regional communities and peering networks as infrastructure is developed throughout Africa. ZANOG's mission is to optimize and streamline Africa's role within the global internet community.

Participation OSIANE 2024

This is a regional event ICANN has been supporting and contributing to in various ways. It brings a more business-oriented community, youth entrepreneurs, students, startups, and decision-makers. As a pre-event this year we organized a public lecture at University Denis Sassou Nguesso at Kintele on 22 April 2024. Both Students and lecturers listened to our messages and contributed to the sessions. A lot of discussions were around Domain names, availability of free institutional email addresses for students and acquisition of IP resources from a regional registry. Other ICANN activities included a workshop on Universal Acceptance of Domain Names on 23 April 2024. GSE team intervention was also highly appreciated at the opening ceremony as in other focused sessions. Participants also received information about the Coalition for Digital Africa through presentations and documents available at an ICANN Exhibition during the whole week of the event. More information is available at www.osiane.cg

Important topic as Universal Acceptance and other announcement

Our team has supported many Universal Acceptance Days evet in Africa. We would like to thank again At-Large structures who have organized activities for this initiative. Interesting to note that one of the activities was about making a website ready. We really encourage ALSes to continue the awareness but to also encourage various organizations to test their systems and move to UA readiness where needed.

Preparing for ICANN80

ICANN 80 meeting will take place from 10 to 13 June 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda. We expect a high participation from Africa either remotely or on site. This meeting is a policy forum, and we hope to have active participation from SO/SA and various community leaders from Africa. You are also welcome to the Africa Space Working Session where we hope to hear more about the implementation of various projects under the Coalition for Digital Africa Program

ALAC Policy Updates

1) [At-Large Policy Sessions @ ICANN Meetings](#)

2) [At-Large and DNS Abuse](#)

3) [The Consensus Playbook](#)

4) [At-Large Capacity Building Workshop - An Introduction to Policy Development at ICANN](#)

5) [At-Large Community Policy Issues - Why End Users Should Care?](#)

6) [ICANN Public Comment Proceedings](#)

7) [Upcoming ICANN Public Comment Proceedings](#)

8) [Published ALAC Advice](#)

9) [How does the ALAC develop advice?](#)

10) [At-Large Document Reference System](#)

ICANN Updates

- **[ICANN Publishes Fiscal Year 2024 Second Quarter Management Financial Results](#)**
- **[ICANN Announces Recipients of the ICANN80 Fellowship](#)**
- **[Middle East DNS Forum 2024: Shaping the Future of Digital Infrastructure](#)**
- **[Request for Proposal: ICANN Support Applicant Review Panel](#)**
- **[ICANN79 Schedule Now Available](#)**
- **[ICANN Seeks Input on Next Round Draft Applicant Support Program Handbook](#)**
- **[ICANN Seeks Input on String Similarity Review Guidelines](#)**
- **[ICANN79 Prep Week Schedule Now Available](#)**
- **[ICANN Seeks Input on Proposed Language for the Next Round Applicant Guidebook](#)**
- **[ICANN Publishes Additional Second-Level Reference Label Generation Rules](#)**
- **[ICANN Seeks Feedback on Proposed Top-Level Domain String for Private Use](#)**
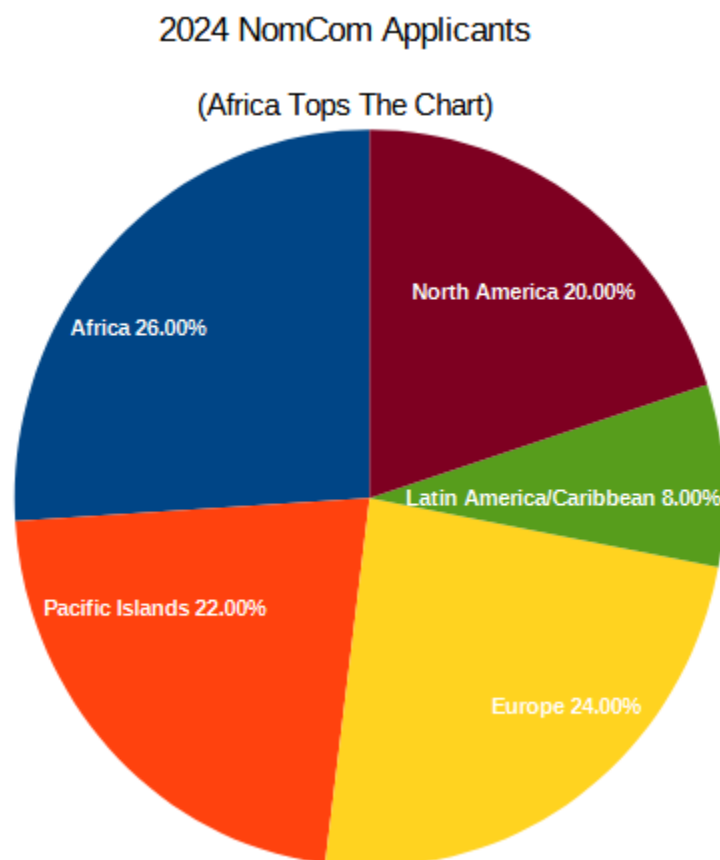
NomCom Report

Africa tops 2024 applicants @NomCom

Remmy Nweke

The African region has topped the responses to calls by the 2024 Nominating Committee for the leadership positions.

The 2024 Nominating Committee Chair, Dr. Amir Qayyum disclosed this in a blog post on Friday also confirmed by the AFRALO Representative to NomCom, Mr. Seun Ojedeji, informing that Africa had some 26 per cent of applicants out of the 78 received in total before the end of the call on March 15, this year.

"I am pleased to report that the 2024 Nominating Committee (NomCom) has received 78 completed applications for this year's open ICANN leadership positions," Amir said.

2024 NomCom Applicants

(Africa Tops The Chart)

Africa 26.00% — North America 20.00% — Latin America/Caribbean 8.00% — Europe 24.00% — Pacific Islands 22.00%

Africa was followed closely by the European region with 24 per cent of the total applications submitted, while Asia, Australia, or the Pacific Islands came third with 22 per cent.

The Latin America or the Caribbean region had 8 per cent of the applications, whereas 71 per cent represented male, 29 per cent were female in the applications under review.

Noteworthy is that open leadership positions, according to 2024 NomCom announcement included that they are seeking to fill some seven open vacancies.

"We have accepted applications for the following key leadership roles; Three members of the ICANN Board of Directors; Two regional representatives to the At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) – one each from the Europe region and the North America region; One member of the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO) Council; and One member of the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) Council" he confirmed.

On NomCom next steps, the chair noted that currently, they were in the assessment period, which allowed NomCom delegates to undertake a series of steps to evaluate the applications., stressing that from 5 to 8 April 2024, NomCom held the first assessment meeting.

"The committee reviewed all submitted applications for each open leadership position and evaluated candidates' skills, qualifications, and experience based on the specific criteria for each role. From this meeting, the committee selected a first short list of candidates," he said.

The NomCom has formed deep dive groups that will conduct virtual interviews with the short-listed candidates, using assessment tools and summary reports to evaluate each candidate equally and fairly.

The NomCom will hold its second assessment meeting in May 2024. Afterwards, the committee will select the final short list of candidates. The final short-listed candidates for the ICANN Board seats will be called for face-to-face interviews during ICANN80, whereas the final short-listed candidates for the ALAC, ccNSO Council, and GNSO Council positions will be asked to submit video or written responses to a few questions via the online portal.

The NomCom will facilitate a due-diligence process for the final short-listed candidates for all open leadership positions.

The NomCom delegates will then meet for the final deliberation process before and during ICANN80. Delegates will conduct live interviews with the final short-listed ICANN Board candidates and will vote on and confirm the final selection of candidates and alternates for the ICANN Board, GNSO Council, ALAC, and ccNSO Council positions. Our goal is to announce the NomCom selectees by August 2024.
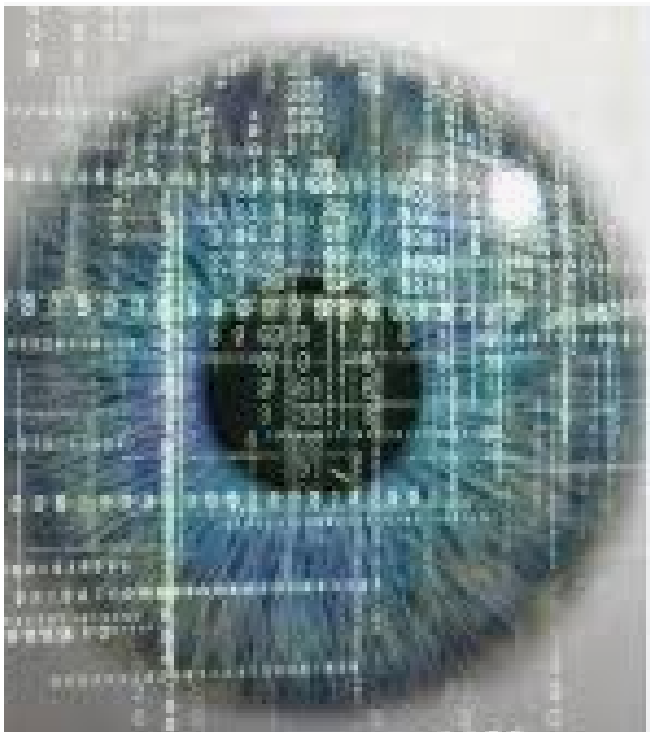
e-Health
… in memory of Olivie Kouami

Computer Vision Syndrome: Prevalence of eye strains in digital era

By Remmy Nweke

Recently, a young boy of about 10 years was seen with eye glasses. On further inquiry, the mother said that he stays on the computer screen most of the day, which caused the boy to now have a medical condition known as eye strain.

In this edition, we shall be sharing common symptoms to watch especially to safe-guide your eyes as part of our larger campaign for better healthy-living for technologists.

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is the name given to eye problems caused by prolonged computer use including: Eye irritation dry eyes, itchy eyes, red eyes; blurred vision, headaches, according to Penn Medical School.

As said by the experts at Cleveland Clinic you could strain your eyes by reading, driving long distances and constantly using digital devices. Treatment could also involve using lubricating eye drops frequently and changing how you work, which must start with an eye examination.

Eye strain, also known as eye fatigue and or asthenopia, the experts said, could cause uncomfortableness; usually not seen as a serious condition, but there are several things one could do to reduce or prevent eye strain.

These steps, opticians said that if one could not relieve their eyes strain with some lifestyle changes, including the use of artificial tears, as there's a chance that it may be a symptom of something more serious than just eye fatigue, stressing that is one major reason getting an eye examination is always a good idea.

The use of computers or other digital devices, such as cell phones or tablets have been largely attributed to the common causes of eye strains in recent times, which have given birth to what is now known as 'digital eye strain' among medical professionals.

For the experts, eye strain could be temporary or long-lasting, thus it's common to have eye strain as most people suddenly find out that their eyes are tired after a long day. As such, digital eye strain is equally very common.

For instance, an estimated 2 out of 3 people in the United State report digital eye strain symptoms, while a recent African study by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) under its National Center for Biotechnology Information at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) based in US, showed a prevalence of Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) in Nigeria with reported CVS at 65% and 51.5% in Ghana.

Also, part of the study conducted in Egypt showed that 92% of eye tiredness was reported among computer operators. In Ethiopia, the prevalence of CVS ranges from 68.8% 24 to 81.3% 25 among different population groups as of July 2022.

Symptoms:

Further, Cleveland Clinic outlined some symptoms of eye strain that could affect your eyes to include "Watery eyes, dry eyes, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, burning eyes, itching eyes and even at times, difficulty keeping your eyes open.

Experts went on to say that above symptoms of eye strain that affect other parts of the body are not limited to headache, neck pain, shoulder pain, back pain and difficulty in concentrating.

Don't forget to start with an eye examination, however, consider **the following tips to reduce or prevent eye strain.**

- Adjust the lighting. When watching television, it may be easier on your eyes if you keep the room softly lit. ...
- Take breaks. ...
- Limit screen time. ...
- Use artificial tears. ...
- Improve the air quality of your space. ...
- Choose the right eyewear or glasses for you.

Experts maintained that most of these symptoms are short-term and they often lessen or go away when you stop using your computer or device. But symptoms may continue for a longer time.

ALAC Meeting Updates

MONTHLY MEETINGS: ALAC held monthly meetings as may be directed by the leadership.

The agenda and call details are available at: https://community.icann.org/x/V4IvEQ

AFRALO ICANN 80 Planning Committee
https://community.icann.org/display/AFRALO/AFRALO+ICANN+80+Planning+Committee

ICANN80 Planning Committee
https://community.icann.org/display/atlarge/ICANN80+Planning+Committee

At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG)
At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) Call https://community.icann.org/x/CoASEg   - Zoom Link: https://icann.zoom.us/j/765717566?pwd=UTJCdWRSZVdJNEhOYW02OVBqQVQ1Zz09

AFRALO monthly call:

The last **AFRALO Monthly Call was** on Wednesday, 8 May 2024 at 18:30 UTC**.**

The agenda and call details are available at : https://community.icann.org/x/bIZXDg
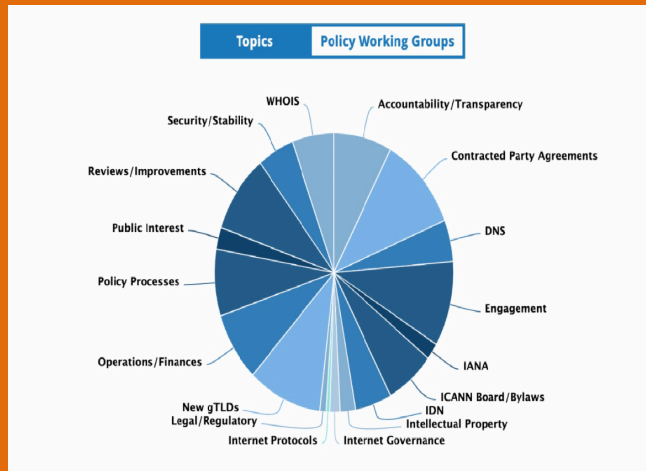
Do well to join monthly calls!

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

Yes! Kigali is ready for ICANN80
By Remmy Nweke

All is set for the ICANN80 Policy Forum, slated to be held between Monday, 10 and Thursday, 13, June 2024 at the Kigali Convention Centre.

Recall that towards the third quarter of 2023, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) pronounced Kigali, capital of Rwanda, as the location for the ICANN80 Policy Forum.

Noteworthy is that the last ICANN Public Meeting held in the Africa continent was in June 2019.

ICANN, annually holds three Public Meetings at various regions across the world to avail stakeholders from around the globe to participate in-person or online.

AFRALO with some 74 ALSes expected to actively participate at this meeting while registration is free.

ICANN Public Meetings are a central part of ICANN's multistakeholder model, and provide a venue for progressing policy work, conducting outreach, exchanging best practices, negotiating business deals, and interacting with members of the ICANN community, Board, and organization.

While Prep Week, which is strictly online, has been slated between 28 and 30 May 2024.

The Kigali Convention Centre (KCC) venue for ICANN80 is located 5 km from the bustling city centre and the Kigali International Airport (KGL).

From all indications, Kigali, capital of Rwanda, is ready to host the ICANN world on African soil.

2024 Ghana UA Day: EGIGFA partners GDNR, AAU, others

Carine L. Malor

After successfully organising the maiden edition of the Ghana UA Day celebration last year with an awareness creation seminar, the E-Governance and Internet Governance Foundation for Africa (EGIGFA) hosted a technical training to mark the 2024 UA Day in Ghana.

This year, EGIGFA organised the event in partnership with Ghana Domain Name Registry (GDNR) and association of African Universities (AAU) among others. The technical training was organised this year based on feedback from previous participants.

This year's event, which took place in Accra on 15th May 2024, gave the technical community in Ghana, the opportunity to be equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills needed for a UA technical skills development.

The event had a session where representatives from the Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) presented solidarity messages and another session where Dr AbdulKarim delivered the technical training to participants.

In all, 60 individuals participated physically while 55 participated virtually. Participants were drawn from various institutions with key mentions as the Ministry of Communications, Ghana Linus Users, Ghana ISP Association, Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana, Internet Society Ghana Chapter, various Universities across the country and some private individuals.

Hurray! Nigeria DigitalSENSE @15, reveals date for 2024 forum

By Nkem Nweke

The date for the 2024 Nigeria DigitalSENSE Forum on Internet Governance for Development (IG4D) has been unwrapped for Thursday, June 27, by organisers, ITREALMS Media group.

Disclosing this, the Lead Consulting Strategist, DigitalSENSE Africa and Group Executive Editor, ITREALMS Media, Mr. Remmy Nweke, said that this year's edition marks the 15th edition of Nigeria DigitalSENSE Forum on IG4D series and comes with the theme "IG4D: Innovative Digital Economy & Safer Civic Space in Nigeria" at the prestigious Welcome Center Hotels, International Airport Road, Lagos.

Nweke recalled that in 2009, the Nigeria DigitalSENSE Forum (NDSF) series on Internet Governance for Development made a debut and ever since has been steadfast in rallying stakeholders to take discourse on Internet access, openness,

affordability, connectivity and ICT infrastructure among others.

This year, he also said, as NDSF marks 15th years of impacting various Nigeria's economic sectors with yet another series on the theme: IG4D: Innovative Digital Economy and Safer Civic Space in Nigeria.

"It will also be a time for recognition of corporates and individuals for their contributions in deepening Internet penetration, improving access and affordability as well as technological adaptation that begets digital sense in our society," Nweke said.

NDSF series on IG4D, powered by ITREALMS Media group is hosted by DigitalSENSE Africa, an At-Large Structure (ALS) certified by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including Internet Society (ISOC), Nigeria chapter, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria (IXPN) among others.

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