AFRALO NEWSLETTER

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

Visit our Website

From the Chair's Desk

Seun Ojedeji, AFRALO Chair

Dear Colleagues,

I trust you are staying safe and maintaining all safety precautions during this period of pandemic. On behalf of the AFRALO Leadership (Myself, Aziz Hilali and Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong) I welcome you all to our first newsletter for the year 2021.

In the Q4 update I informed you that Mr Bram Fudzulani, our new Outreach and Engagement (O/E) Co-Chair is leading the implementation of our O/E plan. I am happy to inform you that within this quarter the AFRALO leadership launched a webinar series tagged "AFRALO Webinar series 2021". Due to the limitations in our face-to-face meetings imposed by the current health crisis, the series is to keep our community engaged, making this "online only" time more beneficial and productive for all.

AFRALO members, Tijani Ben Jemaa and Bram Fudzulani were appointed as the coordinators of the series and I would like to again thank them for serving in that role. The first of the webinar series was on the topic: "ICANN multi-stakeholder model & the increase in national legislations and regulations", with participation from members of our community. This webinar was also an initial step into drafting the next statement for the Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting. In order to ensure topics of interest to the region are covered within the webinar series, a survey was launched to get suggestions on topics from the community and a couple of topics will be identified.

The webinar series will alternate between topic-based and activity-based webinars both of which are geared towards improving capacity and participation of our members within ICANN.

AFRALO participated in various sessions during the ICANN70 Community Virtual Meeting, and as it is our custom, we also held our Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting where we finalized a statement around the topic titled "ICANN multi-stakeholder model (MSM) and the increase in national legislation and regulations". The session was on 25 March and featured various guest speakers to include board members led by board members from Africa, ICANN President and CEO, ALAC Chair and other experts in the field of multistakeholderism.

I look forward to continued participation of the community in the various activities and events that will be happening during the year.

I encourage us to continue to abide by the necessary preventive measures against COVID-19 and I am certain we shall come out of this even stronger as we look forward to counting our gains in this year 2021.

On behalf of the AFRALO Leadership, I wish the entire community an engaging virtual year ahead!

See **At-Large 2021 Priorities**

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About AFRALO

African Regional At-Large Organization: Engaging Africa for Development

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 defining public interest aspects of Internet governance with specific focus on the areas of **privacy, transparency, and accountability**
- Strengthen 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 **69 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**.

ICANN Update

ICANN held the ICANN70 Virtual Community Forum from 22-25 March. Stay tuned for the next AFRALO Newsletter for highlights.

ALAC Update

During the most recent ALAC monthly call on 23 February, Christina Rodriguez, Sr. Director, Language Services, and Sara Caplis, Manager, Meetings Technical Services from ICANN demonstrated and provided an overview of the Zoom Interpretation Features, a feature that was appreciated by most participants.

John Crain, Chief Security, Stability & Resiliency Office, ICANN was the Guest Speaker of the month and provided an overview of the Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) 2.0., the initiatives taken so far, the DAAR review process and also responded to questions from the audience.

In addition, updates were shared on the 2021 At-Large activities and initiative. Maureen provided information about the ICANN's FY23 Strategic Outlook Activities and how the At-Large Plus leadership would participate in an upcoming trends session; ALAC Liaison to GNSO Council Cheryl Langdon-Orr

updated on developments from the GNSO Council. An update was provided on the ALAC policy development activities. Additionally, ICANN Staff Gisella Gruber and Maureen provided an update on ICANN70 and At Large Plans and Lilian Ivete de Luque Bruges provided information on the Social Media plans for ICANN70. Stay tuned for the next AFRALO Newsletter for highlights from the ICANN70 Virtual Community Forum.

ALAC / At-Large Policy Comments & Advice

All of AFRALO and the At-Large Community are 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.

The At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) submitted (5) statements to ICANN Public Comment and other forums since the last AFRALO Newsletter:

- Second Security, Stability, and Resiliency (SSR2) Review Team Final Report
- IANA Naming Function Review: Recommendation for an IANA Naming Function Contract Amendment
- EU Directive on Security of Network and Information Systems (NIS 2 Directive)
- Operational Design Phase (ODP) Concept Paper
- Draft FY22-26 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY22 Operating Plan & Budget

The ALAC is currently developing responses to the following (2) ICANN Public Comment proceedings, and other cross community and/or external consultations:

Drafting ALAC Advice on EPDP Phase 2 Policy Recommendations for Board Consideration 30 March 2021 **CPWG**
Vote ALAC Advice to the ICANN Board on Subsequent ProceduresTBD **CPWG**

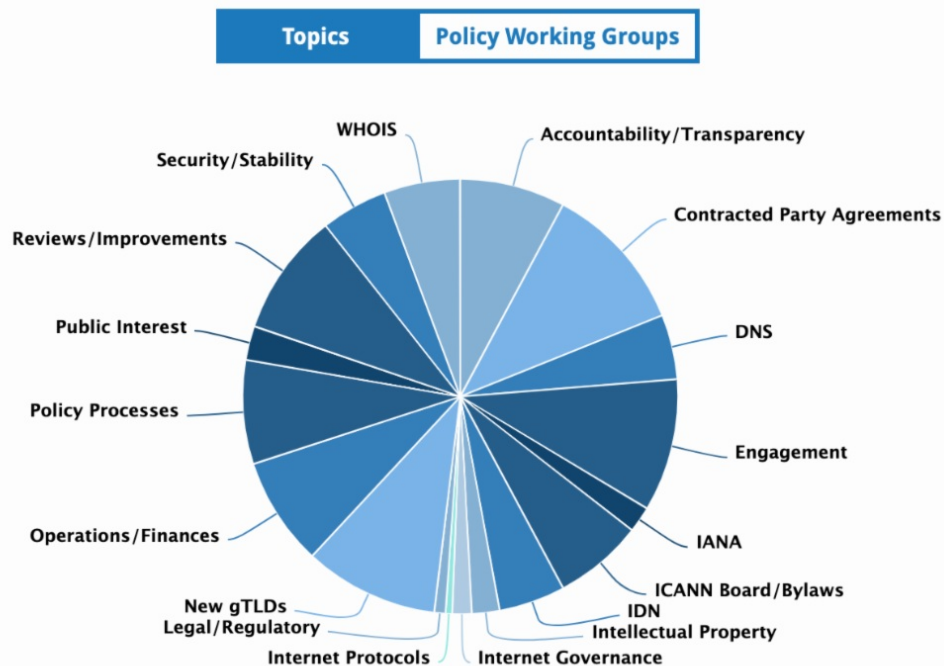**See: At-Large Website on Public Comments and Policy Advice**
See: Executive Summaries: ALAC Public Comments and Advice
See: Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG)
See: At-Large Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group (OFB-WG)

ALAC/At-Large Policy Issues

Note from GSE Africa

Pierre Dandjinou, Regional Vice President, Global Stakeholder Engagement Africa

This being the first edition of your now regular newsletter for this year 2021, may I take this opportunity on behalf of my team to send you seasons greeting from ICANN org. In the same vein, I also congratulate the AFRALO leadership, the newsletter editorial board for their tireless efforts that have ensured the newsletter becomes regular and mainstream to ensure that the various important community work is highlighted for the benefit of the membership and all stakeholders.

Webinar Series:

While 2021 looks promising, you will agree with me that the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to weigh down on the overall engagement landscape and feasibility of return to normal physical engagement modes. This is why the Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) Africa team have opted to further explore other options to deepen our ongoing engagement efforts as the prevailing conditions persist. This means that our efforts would continue to be limited to what we can do and achieve online. In this regard therefore, our capacity building as well as informational focused webinars continue to be prioritized.

For example, in January this year, the GSE Africa team hosted a webinar with the Association of African Universities - AAU. The main objective of this webinar was to introduce the membership of the AAU to two thematic programs at ICANN org, the Identifier Technologies Health Indicators (ITHI) and the Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) projects. The intention was to demonstrate to the Universities, especially their ICT technical staff why and how they can participate in both projects. The recordings of this webinar have now been made available here for your ease of reference and follow-up. This was followed by a second webinar organized jointly with our Africa based Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) Technical Engagement team targeting African ccTLD operators to sensitize, build awareness and seek their participation on the ICANN DAAR program. The webinar hosted on Feb 4th, 2021 was the first in a series of planned thematic Informational and Capacity building webinars that would be targeted at the African ccTLD operators this 2021. In case you missed the webinar, please access the recordings here.

Introducing the Africa Engagement Forum (AEF) – May 2021:

Having reviewed as a team our overall engagement agenda over the last eight years, especially looking at our banquet of events, both capacity building initiatives and engagement missions, it occurs to us that we still have an opportunity to further streamline, refine and prioritize some of the activities we have been involved in till now for a better impact. A platform to further collate, update, follow-up and synchronize the work done by our community from Africa as well as get direct updates and feedback from ICANN org staff. We therefore propose to pilot a regional event convened under the title " Africa Engagement Forum" slated for May 2021. Details on the agenda and dates will be shared on a later date.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the AFRALO for initiating the Capacity Building Webinar series that have so far tackled very interesting topics touching on both ICANN and Internet governance ecosystem.

Another milestone, thank you and keep it up!

AFRALO Interviews

We bring you an interview between the Editorial Team and Mohamed El-Bashir, Universal Acceptance Manager, ICANN.

Africa is the next frontier for Internet growth, says Mohamed El-Bashir.

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

Thank you, my name is Mohamed Elbashir, I joined ICANN 9 months ago as a Universal Acceptance (UA) program manager. I have been an active participant in the ICANN community for many years, including serving in different ICANN constituencies. I was a ccNSO council member representing Africa as the ccTLD manager of .SD, At-Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) member besides being one of the founders and a former Chair of AFRALO.

2. What does your job entail?

In my role, I support the Universal Acceptance (UA) activities undertaken by the community and ICANN Org. Advance and promote the UA of domain names and email addresses through research, multi-stakeholder engagements, and through establishing national and regional UA initiatives.

3. As far as AfrICANN is concerned, how does this position you as one of the ambassadors in the

ICANN ecosystem?

The African Community within ICANN or AfrICANN is unique, in every ICANN meeting or event the AfrICANN members meet to network, coordinate, and discuss a topic of interest for the African Internet Community within ICANN. AfrICANN is a big group of friends and colleagues working together for one goal which is to develop the Internet in Africa. Africa is one of the Universal Acceptance focus regions and I am working with different multi-stakeholders from the region to establish a Pan-African Universal Acceptance initiative that will work to promote UA readiness in the continent.

4. What does the future hold for Africa's Internet Development?
Africa is the next frontier for Internet growth, COVID19 and the pandemic lockdowns have proven that Internet access is not luxury but a basic fundamental right. There is a strong Pan-African movement of tech entrepreneurship; and a new merging and thriving startup ecosystem.

We should be encouraging the Internet communities across Africa to support and empower young developers to create innovative products and companies.

ALS Activities

COVID-19: ISOC Mali offers distance learning for secondary schools
ISOC-Mali

As part of the implementation of its new program called "Education Support Program" (PAE), the Malian chapter of the Internet society has initiated with the support of the Information Technologies Agency and of Communication (AGETIC) a distance learning course for secondary schools.

This program was born following the successes achieved with the project "debaters" that the chapter carried out twice for the benefit of the world of education (secondary schools and universities) thanks to the support of the ISOC foundation.

The PAE is a program that aims to support schools and universities through different types of competition activities and capacity building of teachers and students and pupils.

The first activity of the said program was held from January 22 to 23, 2021 at the location of teachers from 6 secondary schools (Lycées) with some of the students who took part in the last debating competition.

With a total of 32 participants, the aim was to teach secondary school teachers and supervisory staff new techniques for distance learning and teaching in this period of pandemic to enable them to ensure pedagogical continuity with open source tools.

As a module, the participants were treated to the fundamentals of LMS (Learning Management system) with a focus on Moodle.

The courses were given on the https://learn.isoc.ml/ platform of ISOC MALI set up for this purpose. An implementation of video-conferencing tools like JitsiMeet, GoogleMeet and Zoom were used to complete this first approach.

After this training ISOC MALI is committed to supporting institutions that wish to implement a distance education initiative in a professional manner.

This training helped demystify distance education at the high school level, which has been greatly affected by the COVID19 pandemic. This was very well appreciated by school promoters, teachers etc.

This activity was carried out on own funds with logistical support from AGETIC.

Zimbabwe DNS Forum 2021 gets April date
Isaac Maposa

The Internet Society Zimbabwe Chapter in partnership with the Ministry of ICT Postal & Courier Services, POTRAZ, ICANN and ZISPA is set to hold a DNS forum on the 15th and 16th of April 2021.

The theme of the forum is "Towards the implementation of a multi-stakeholder sustainable structure for DNS in Zimbabwe". The DNS forum will address key issues including DNS Governance and Policy in Zimbabwe integrating a DNS Technical BootCamp which is being facilitated by ICANN and the .co.zw registry (ZISPA).

Webinars have been held and continued to run build-up to the DNS forum.

One of the rich features of this DNS Forum is the report on contracted public consultations by the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe on the Draft of .zw DNS Policy Framework.

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