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AT-LARGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AFRALO-APRALO Statement on Middle East and Adjoining Countries (MEAC) Strategy 2021-2025

Introduction

On 18 February 2020, Public Comment opened for [Middle East and Adjoining Countries \(MEAC\) Strategy 2021-2025](#). On the same day, an At-Large [workspace](#) was created for the statement. The At-Large Consolidated Policy Working Group (CPWG) decided it would be in the interest of end users to develop an ALAC statement on the Public Comment, from the Regional At-Large Organization (RALO) perspective.

ICANN policy staff in support of the At-Large community sent a request for comment to Seun Ojedeji, African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO) Chair and Satish Babu, Asian, Australasian and Pacific Islands Regional At-Large Organization (APRALO) Chair. The AFRALO and APRALO Chairs agreed it would be relevant to their RALOs to issue a joint statement on the Public Comment, affecting certain countries in their regions.

ICANN policy staff in support of the At-Large community sent a request for volunteers to form a drafting team to the AFRALO and APRALO regional mailing lists. Raymond Mamattah, Individual Member of AFRALO, and Dr. T.V. Gopal, Individual Member of APRALO, volunteered to form the drafting team of the AFRALO-APRALO statement. The AFRALO and APRALO Chairs joined the drafting team.

On 25 March 2020, staff created a Google Doc for drafting purposes.

On [25 March 2020](#) and [01 April 2020](#), the drafting team presented to the CPWG the discussions and draft of the first joint RALO statement within At-Large. Staff shared the draft with ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement (GSE) team members responsible for the regions in the MEAC Strategy, who provided their feedback and support for the statement.

On 02 April 2020, the drafting team finalized the AFRALO-APRALO statement with feedback from the CPWG and GSE.

On 03 April 2020, the ALAC Chair, Maureen Hilyard, requested that the statement be transmitted to the ICANN Public Comment process, copying the ICANN staff member responsible for this topic, with a note that the AFRALO-APRALO statement is pending formal ratification and endorsement by the ALAC.

AFRALO-APRALO Statement on Middle East and Adjoining Countries (MEAC) Strategy 2021-2025

AFRALO and APRALO appreciate the opportunity to comment on the MEAC Regional Strategy Document developed by the MEAC Regional Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG), based on ICANN's Strategic Plan for 2021-25.

We find the document to be largely consistent with the aspirations of the end-users of the MEAC region. We have the following comments to make the document better-adapted to the evolving Internet Governance ecosystem. These are classified under the four subheadings used in the original document:

A. Security

1. DNS Abuse is one of the biggest threats for end-users. The MEAC Strategy needs to emphasize measures against DNS Abuse, as DNS consistent with the measures that the ICANN community has since recommended on aspects such as reporting, abuse thresholds, and tools for contract compliance.
2. The last DNS study conducted in the region appears to be in 2015. We recommend that this be updated in order to better understand the state of the market, including security.
3. The technologies of the future need a framework for Security which includes assuring quality of the mnemonic names in the region, different physical locations of the root name servers for the region, ascertaining the preparedness for DNSSEC at all levels in the region, performance monitoring and timely checking of the traffic flows.

B. ICANN's Governance

1. We recommend that the strategy considers adopting some of the proposals recommended from the recent community work on Next Steps to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, for better effectiveness and higher throughput, reducing volunteer burn-out, and better use of resources.
2. Scoping of the Computer Supported Collaborative Work tools in terms of a judicious mix of online and face-to-face meeting is necessary based on the region. Measures must be taken to include all stakeholders in the region, especially those that are remote and inaccessible, or bandwidth- or linguistically challenged, to articulate their opinions in the policy processes and discussions.
3. *Universal open standards with the applications offered on the edge devices need to be advocated.*

C. Unique Identifier Systems

1. We recommend more focus on academia and industry for the promotion of IDNs and UA in the Region, jointly with the UASG. Working with Academia is essential for producing technical solutions, including open source solutions, to UA problems, whereas industry's support is required to implement solutions from existing vendors.
2. Inclusion of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, ICANN is strongly suggested for arriving at a purposeful process for regulating the addition of the gTLDs.

D. Geopolitics

1. In addition to the elements already proposed, we also recommend that ICANN carries out better advocacy with national Governments in the region so as to ensure that ICANN's strategy gets adopted. The advocacy needs to include the due appraisals on goal of universal accessibility through one internet with global navigation aids, services and appropriate use of technology.
2. Continuing and increased attention to internationalized [IDNs] domain names is necessary.