

Declaration from ICANN's African Community regarding the low participation rate of African participation in the new gTLD requests.

Prague, Wednesday 27 June 2012

We, members of the African community, taking part in the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting held on Wednesday 27th June 2012 in Prague (Czech Republic) have noted, with regret, the low participation rate of Africa in the new gTLD requests. This lack of interest is mainly due to the lack of understanding and the almost nonexistence of the domain name industry and the very low number of accredited Registrars in this region.

Africa has already suffered delays in internet development, in consumer services and in African ccTLD management, the digital gap now runs the risk of further deepening faced with such a weak regional participation in the new gTLD programme

Taking into account the efforts made by ICANN over the last few years in its international approach and its will to integrate developing countries in all its projects, and more specifically, its support programme for New gTLD requests.

Taking into account that digital economy can be an important source of revenue for nations and can trigger a more rational management of public affairs;

We recommend:

That ICANN:

- ▶ Further reinforces its communication policy to African countries thanks to outreach and training actions covering the stakes and the opportunities of internet governance, especially concerning the attribution of New Domain Names.
- ▶ Involves local parties and gives them a sense of responsibility with outreach and training actions.
- ▶ To lead a reflection considering the possibility of «positive discrimination » in favour of countries of the region and to offer them the opportunity of being part of the ongoing internet revolution ;
- ▶ To assist with African ccTLD delegation and re-delegation and to thus contribute to diminish the digital gap, which has once again been made visible with the multiple new gTLD requests that have placed developing countries in last position.

That the African private sector:

- ▶ Encourages the constitution of regional BIG GROUPS which would be viable and competitive on an international level, due to the fact that digital economy is still a considerable source of revenue in Africa which requires important starter investments;
- ▶ Continues to research technologies and innovative services adapted to the social habits and lifestyles of the local population,
- ▶ To increase activity and visibility on the international scene within organisations of technical management and governance as well as within technologies and the usage thereof ;

- ▶ To actively take part in GNSO groups in order to encourage policies aiming towards the development of domain names in Africa;

That the ICANN African Accredited Registrars:

- ▶ Provide more communication and outreach about their activities;
- ▶ Create an organization of ICANN African accredited Registrars in order to build ideal conditions to further develop their activities in Africa and to have a unique stance within the GNSO.

That the African civil society:

- ▶ Gains correct practices regarding the documentation of knowledge but also a bigger presence on the Internet (use of gTLD with creation of local content)
- ▶ Increases outreach and information actions at a local level
- ▶ To take part in the reinforcement of capacity activities regarding the understanding of the domain name industry and their role in the development of digital economy.
- ▶ To contribute to the development of African ccTLDs and gTLDs and to ensure that they are managed in the best interest of the local internet community.