**At-Large Advisory Committee Statement to the ICANN Board
on Prioritization of Internationalized Domain Names in the New Generic Top
Level Domain Program**

The At Large Advisory Committee (ALAC) notes with great concern that Internationalized Domain Name Top Level Domains (IDN TLDs) represent only 6% of the total applications for new generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs).

Given the importance of IDNs to Internet users, we call on the ICANN Board to:
- Prioritize and expedite the evaluation and processing of IDN gTLD applications in the new gTLD program.
- Ensure sufficient provision of resources for an effective global outreach and communication campaign for IDNs together with the Applicant Support program prior to subsequent new gTLD application rounds.
- Instruct the Variants Implementation Project (VIP) Team to prioritize work on IDN Variant issues relevant to the received IDN gTLD applications and to consider the applications on a case-by-case basis.

Our Rationale

One World, One Internet
- IDN prioritization is crucial for enhancing diversity and multilingualism on the Internet. The implementation of IDNs in a world that is rich in linguistic and cultural diversity makes the Internet more inclusive and representative of the world that we live in.
- Globalization is a key strategic priority for ICANN. IDN prioritization presents an opportunity for ICANN to enhance its engagement and outreach to more Internet users worldwide.
- In the midst of numerous propositions for greater national oversight of the Domain Name System (DNS), the prioritization of IDN gTLDs would be consistent with ICANN's commitment towards a unique authoritative root that would mitigate the threat of Internet "balkanization."

Global Public Interest
- The enlargement of the top-level namespace to accommodate different scripts and allow Internet users to access domain names in their own language expands consumer choice and competition and serves the global public interest.
- Communities who do not use the Latin script continue to be under-served by the DNS. These communities have a reasonable expectation of access and use to an equally useful DNS that other communities have enjoyed for decades. There is thus a legitimate basis for a proactive prioritization of IDN gTLDs.

Human Rights
- Individuals and consumers have the right to express themselves in the language of their choice. In prioritizing IDNs, ICANN is demonstrating that it recognizes the significance and importance that IDNs play in enhancing diversity, preserving language and democratizing access.
- The prioritization of IDNs is consistent with the following international commitments:

- The United Nations General Assembly [Resolution](#) (A/HRC/20/L.13) on the Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet - Adopted on 5 July 2012 by 73 countries including the United States of America.
- The 2005 World Summit on the Information Society Working Group on Internet Governance Recommendations, which touch on key public policy areas such as freedom of expression, consumer rights, multilingualism and intellectual property rights - Adopted by governments worldwide in December 2005.

Market Development
- The market for IDNs needs to be nurtured carefully for future growth.
- The small number of applications should not be interpreted as a lack of user demand for IDNs. Rather, it makes evident that market forces at the registry level alone are insufficient, and that the advancement of IDN gTLDs requires supportive policies from ICANN.
- The successful implementation of the initial set of IDN gTLDs will create visibility for IDNs and can be expected to stimulate further demand.
- To grow future demand, an effective global outreach and communication campaign on IDNs alongside the new gTLD Applicant Support program is crucial. The low budget allocation for the "Global Communication Campaign" compared to other essential components of the new gTLD program, such as the "Independent Objector," suggests that ICANN may have underfunded a crucial aspect of IDN gTLD promotion.

Meeting Demand: Addressing IDN Variant gTLDs
- Prioritization of work on IDN Variant issues relevant to the received IDN gTLD applications conveys the message that ICANN is serious about IDN gTLD implementation.
- It is appropriate for the IDN Variant gTLD applications to be considered on a case-by-case basis as a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to succeed given the complexity of IDN variant issues as indicated by RFC3743, which states that it is "impossible to create universally accepted definitions for which potential variants are the same and which are not the same" and that "it is even more difficult to define a technical algorithm to generate variants that are linguistically accurate."
- Given the evaluation milestones in place that are applicable to all new gTLD applications, the processing and evaluation of IDN gTLD applications (even on an expedited and prioritized basis) need not necessarily derail the Variants Implementation Project (VIP) Plan's timeline. Rather, it requires an alignment of priorities between the VIP Plan and the new gTLD program, which will help ensure that the resolution of IDN Variant gTLD issues meets IDN gTLD demand in a timely manner. The community at large remains hopeful that the implementation phase of the VIP work may be ready or be close to being ready by the time the delegation of IDN gTLDs with IDN Variants occurs.

The ALAC reaffirms our belief that IDNs are crucial for enhancing diversity and multilingualism on the Internet. We urge the Board to take action as per our recommendations towards making the Internet more representative of the world that we live in, thereby serving the global public interest and living the vision of One World, One Internet.

END