ICANN Africa Strategy Working Group (ASWG)
Assessment of ASWG questionnaires
05 September 2012

From 10 July to 20[h] August the Africa Strategy working Group, which was set up by ICANN at its 44th meeting in Prague, administered a set of two questionnaires on the AfrICANN list . The pursued objective was to engage with the community on the one hand, and collect community opinions and recommendations as to the Icann Africa strategy on the other hand.

The questionnaires had to components, each of them with subsequent sub questions : the first component sought to assess the relevance of ICANN to Africa, and also the benefits ICANN could derive from further involvement in Africa. The second component puts to test the suggestion that an ICANN's physical presence in Africa should improve the Organisation's image and activities in Africa.

A total of 18 respondents filled out the questionnaires and were from the following constituencies and countries :

At large/Civil society/registrants : 6
Registry/registrars : 3
Governments : 3
Academia : 2
ND (non defined) : 4

Respondents' countries included : Burkina Faso; Kenya; Nigeria; Cameroon; DRC; Tunisia; Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania , Niger, Congo and Mali.

Questionnaire No1: It has been argued that ICANN can be more relevant to Africa and ICANN can benefit from increased involvement with Africa. To assist explore these please respond to the questions below

To the question 'What has ICANN done right in the eyes of the African community?' , most respondents cited the holding of ICANN's meetings every two years on the continent , on a rotational basis and the establishment of the fellowship programme which has enabled participation of more Africans to ICANN's meetings globally.

Also, a few of respondents believe that some of the basic principles that ICANN promotes so that Africa develops and maintains its Internet resources through for example maintaining geographic names and strings reserved for the right owner is the right thing that ICANN does. The effort made in translation, namely into the french language is also perceived as a good point.

'What has ICANN not done well in Africa in the eyes of the African community within ICANN?,

- Lack of or none communication of ICANN process to Africa.
- Inclusion of Geographic names in the new gTLD programme;
- Approving of sensitive strings against all protests from African ICANN.
- There is lack of ICANN's presence in Africa,
- Poor communication and outreach on the new gTLD programme in Africa
- Failure in working with African cctlds

- There is lack of understanding of the Continent's economic and developmental environment by ICANN Board and staff.
- The implication of high level government members in Icann activities;
- The development of African ccTLD's and their support;
- The cooperation with African regional organizations

What do you wish the most for ICANN to do in interest of Africa?

- Inclusion of Africa in the activities of ICANN.
- Increase the participation of Africans in ICANN constituencies, meetings by stepping up outreach programs in the Continent thereby creating the much needed awareness among the technical and business people in Africa.
- Appointment of a VP for Africa.
- Support, train, communicate ICANN to the African Governments and create linkages with Academia.
- Build capacity for African cctlds
- develop a closer link with the AF*
- ICANN should listen more Africans' needs
- Conduct special research on the understanding of internet and ICT business in the Continent, especially the new gTLD.
- Create focus group on Africa.
- Set up an Africa bureau for ICANN
- Develop special waivers to facilitate accreditation of more registrars in Africa;
- Reorient the JAS programme so that it could benefit African registrars and help build a local domain name industry
- Promote and support sensitization campaigns, communication and training activities as related to ICANN and its programmes, using media and targeting local languages

How can the African community in ICANN best help ICANN?
- African Community in ICANN should present ICANN to African Governments and Businesses. Participate effectively in all ICANN constituencies, Working Groups and contribute to the work of ICANN.
- Create opportunities for partnership with ICANN in Africa.
- By suggesting home grown solutions to African reality and issues, as they may rise within ICANN's processes
- develop a permanent communication plateforme on Icann policies within Africaines
- Educate African decision makers on ICANN's activities;
- Focus on ensuring that African stakeholders particularly governments have the right capacity in terms of the basic understanding of ICANN's role and functions and how it fits within the Internet governance area more broadly so that Africa properly develops and manages its Internet resources.
- Support the expansion and growth of African ccTLDs through incentives and capacity building activities including ensuring that Africa's and its communities' specific needs are met.
- The introduction of the DotAfrica which is being supported by the African Union Commission and ECA is expected to create an attractive regional home for the Pan-African Internet

community, as the first sponsored registry to be operating from Africa and serving the specific needs of its communities.
- Icann to better use Africa's on going national and regional fora on Internet governance to ensure its presence and contributions.
- By accessing to leadership positions in Icann;
- Improving organization participation in meetings (online meetings on topics of Icann, geographic organization and country)

What are barriers to ICANN in Africa?

- Lack of knowledge of the work of ICANN by the Business Sector in Africa.
- Under developed ICT infrastructure; poor connectivity
- Lack of Professionals and Private Sector interest.
- Non-participation of Private Sector and Government which still are very much the driver of economic activities in Africa.
- Lack of specific programmes for building capacities on ICANN policies and procedures
- Linguistic barrier as most documents are in English

How best to improve African participation in ICANN?

- Main streaming of internet and domain name business in all sectors of African economy.
- Proper and effective communications to the Governments of Africa.
- Organize sensitization and training for the African communities
- Pursue translation of working documents
- Propose digests for working documents
- Africans to organise strategic working groups to prepare and master issues pertaining to ICANN

Questionnaire No2- It has been suggested that a physical presence of ICANN in Africa is important to improve ICANN presence. To contribute in shaping how this is implemented please answer the following questions

What are the a) strengths b) weaknesses c) opportunities and d) weaknesses of ICANN in Africa?

- Strength is its population, willingness to develop and catch with the rest of the world, Government support when properly informed.
- Weakness is lack of knowledge by Governments, poverty, weak ICT infrastructure and communication gaps/linkages in the different sectors of the economy and ICT ecosystem.
- The opportunities are the untapped market, young populations and upcoming entrepreneurs, conversion of African economic mangers to embrace ICT and e-businesses.
- The threats are unstable political economy, opposition of Governments to the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance. High government control of internet and ICT businesses resulting in double taxation, harsh operating environment, etc.

Which countries in Africa would you recommend to be headquarters of ICANN and why?

Opinions are diverse :

It should be located in Nigeria, says one respondent. The fastest growing e-business economy in Africa. Most populous nation of Africa, willingness of the Government of Nigeria to provide financial support and the necessary facilities for the operation of ICANN office, cheap labor and wireless environment including communication satellite launch (NigcomSat). There is a strong presence of Multi-national businesses and Global Institutions in Nigeria. Her neighbors are all French speaking, currently headquartering the ECOWAS and playing the big brother role in Africa. Four undersea marine cable landing, over 100million mobile users with 3g/mobile broadband capabilities and services.

Another suggestion is Ghana, which, as per the respondent, has all it takes to host ICANN office for Africa. Ease of operation, political stability, prosperity and conducive atmosphere.Ghana could be potentially appropriate location due to its pioneering role on the development of the Internet on the continent, its infrastructure, its open policy and favourable ICT environment, its good governance, etc. Accra could also be seen as a bridge between francophone and Anglophone countries due to its proximity to both groups.

Ethiopia could be potentially appropriate location due to the presence of the ECA and the AUC, which has attracted all UN institutions and a big number of other international organizations. This could facilitate face to face interactions with these organizations. Also Ethiopia benefits from a large network of international airlines.

.Nairobi , Kenya because of ease of access from West , North Southern Africa and Europe

Cameroun because of cultural diversity and political stability; openness to sea; good connectivity; existence of three submarine cables; political willingness to move the ICT sector; geographical situation. A policy on cybersecurity and criminality, a regular participant to ICANN's meetings.

South Africa for its good infrastructure, strong support to ICT, and proven leadership in the industry

Senegal for its good infrastructure, a proactive support of ICT, and a democratic country. Other cited countries are Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritius.

Other comments :
   ICANN already committed to an office in Kenya. I guess this question becomes irrelevant, unless of course my understanding that ICANN already chose Kenya is wrong.

Of the eighteen respondents, one in particular is not convinced of having to open a physical office in one country. Rather, he thinks needs to employ a diverse team from Africa that meets all the number 7 criteria: regions, language, culture. As he puts it :'I really don't think the need for a physical office is justified. Rather, ICANN should have a team located in different countries in Africa or that is able to effectively relate to Africa's major cultures, languages & regions.'

A good number of respondents insisted on a set of criteria to be developed prior to selection of a host country; these are :
   • An IT infrastructure well developed and allowing fast and secure connectivity
   • A democratic governance which does not favour red taping
   • A simple and free entry Visa facility;

- Secure and pleasant social life
- A fluid air trafic conditions

Other important elements to consider should be the presence and proximity of UN Agencies such as UNECA and AUC, and AfriNIC

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Overall Comments

While majority of respondents suggest a physical bureau should be established in Africa (with potential hosting countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa, Senegal and Mauritius), a small number insist that strict criteria should be developed in order to select such a host country. One respondent does not see any reason for a bureau in Africa, but instead, suggest there be closer links with Af* on the one hand, and that there be established points of contacts in the regions.

CONCLUSION

Although the number of received questionnaires are far from meeting expectations, they certainly provide an insight on the community's perception of icann's role in Africa. Indeed, all respondents agree that Africa should deserve a special treatment and that ICANN is in a position to contribute to the development of an indigenous industry on Internet and most specifically, the domain name services. The working group will obviously have to engage more with the community, through fine tuning parts of the questionnaires and sample interviewing of specific constituencies. A few strategic objectives should be retained from further outreach and with the corresponding strategic projects, the group should be in a position to elaborate on its recommendations.

Annex 1

A SWOT Analysis of ICANN perception from Africa derived from the questionnaires

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Icann's meetings in Africa every two years and its rotational basis The fellowship programme which ensures African participation to Icann's meetings Bottom up approach in policy development Multistakeholders mechanisms for engaging with the community	Lack of communications/ Poor perception of Icann's activities Poor outreach to African governments Lack of a physical presence in Africa Partial linguistic coverage of the continent No impact on growth of the domain name industry Poor relashionships with African ccTLDs No clear link with the AF* Poor representation of Africans on the Board	Current outstanding growth of the mobile telephony implies majority of next Internet users will be from Africa; thus, a need for specific projects for Africa Africa as one of highest GDPs Icann's image and perception to be increased through contribution to the growth of a continental Internet economy Icann's legitimacy to grow with more participation from African communities, namely at GAC level Develop IDN to boost content in Africa	Poor reach out to African communities Lack or Poor financial commitment to an Africa Internet Agenda Poor or inadequate representation of ICANN in Africa