
BUENOS AIRES – AFRALO-AFRICANN Joint Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2013 – 14:00 to 15:30
ICANN – Buenos Aires, Argentina

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Hello everybody. Welcome to the AFRALO/AFRICANN joint meeting today in Buenos Aires. This has become really a tradition now with AFRALO, during the ICANN meetings, and today we'll be talking about the ICANN meeting strategy. We already circulated a draft statement. I was asked to speak in French. Should I do that? People are participating online? I'm going to speak in French. It's going to be in both languages.

Hello everybody. The subject today is the meeting strategy of ICANN. We have a lot of things to say about that. Tijani's going to address the subject later on, but I want to address some general comments and say that the statements that we're going to do here, from this meeting, are addressed to ICANN. Normally it's a statement and we're waiting for a reaction from ICANN. It's important everyone understands that it's very important for our next meetings for ICANN.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank all the people who have joined us here. We have Olivier Crépin-Leblond, we have a Council Board Member selected by At-Large, Sebastian Bachollet, and our Vice-Chair is also here from the Strategy Group for Africa, Pierre Dandjinou, and online we have Yaovi Atohoun, who is responsible for the African stakeholder engagement. We also have Bob online, who's responsible for stakeholder participation in East Africa.

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I wanted to thank them for their participation in this meeting. Now I'm going to give the floor to our Chair... I'm sorry, there's a change here in our Agenda, a question of order. We're going to allow Sebastian Bachollet to speak first, because he has some other business to do. Sebastian, you have the floor.

SEBASTIAN BACHOLLET:

Thank you very much. I apologize that I've come and then have to go. It's a Wednesday afternoon and it's a bad time. I have a Board meeting and we're preparing both meetings for Thursday afternoon. Why are there two meetings on Thursday afternoon? It's the annual meeting for the leaders. We're going to change leaders so we have a meeting with the Board with the leaders going out, and the new leaders coming in.

Bertrand de La Chapelle is leaving and [inaudible 00:21:36] is coming in, so we are discussing the organization of the work for next year. For me it's very important for me to be present at those meetings. Thank you for inviting me. I wanted to tell you about the importance of your work, because you're not the region that has the most registries and registrars, but you are the region that is going to be the region with more Internet users in the future.

You're the region with more mobile Internet users currently, so it's very amazing and we have to take care of those users. You're also the region that is first in a lot of things. You are a pioneer when AFRALO, for example, organized the first showcase to show all the At-Large structures. You were the first to give this example, and now everybody wants to have its own showcase.

You were the first to do that activity. You were the first also to work on the strategy for your region, and it was very good work. I thank you because it was work you do in a jointly way. You worked a lot and you are advancing, and you were an influence for the work of other people, for the work on the ICANN strategy. So that was also important.

I've been reading the document that you're going to discuss and draft, and I want to tell you that as Chair of the Working Group on the future of ICANN meetings, I think that first what the members of the group say is very important. In your region you have different representatives, but Tijani's here, and he's participating in an active way in all the meetings. He has a lot of ideas and he's helping the group progress.

I'm sure that we're going to work together and reach a good proposal, which will, I hope, be accepted by everybody. I've also seen that there is a key issue, and that's the participation; allowing everybody to participate. I think you can do that online but you also have to be able to travel. I think that's an issue that's very important, that we are all heard. We are going to take that issue in charge.

To conclude, I want to thank you for your work and participation, and for your efforts too, and for all of what you do for your community and for the global community of the Internet and ICANN too. I'm very happy to know that you're working with us. You know that you can count on my help if you need anything. Thank you very much.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you very much Sebastian. I know you're in a hurry but before you leave we wanted Aziz, through Pierre, to give you the scorecard that we

were asked to prepare during the last meeting, so that what we're waiting for can happen. Thank you very much.

SEBASTIAN BACHOLLET: Thank you very much. Good meeting, I'm sorry to leave.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Bye Sebastian. Olivier?

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you very much Fatimata. I'm going to speak in English, because for me it's easier when I have a week working in English. My ideas come easier in English, so please go to the English translation. Every time I see a vibrant African community coming together at every single meeting and discussing on a common issue, a topic. It really is, as Sebastian said earlier, the fact that this region is a precursor to whatever goes on at ICANN.

First, the topic-based issue. There is a lot of talk around ICANN at the moment, that there should be more topic-based discussions, not just discussions based on silos or on SOs, ACs, etc., but to try to get the community to talk together. AFRALO and AFRICANN... The AFRICANN initiative was one initiative that immediately understood this, way before everybody else.

With regards to the actual community coming together and working together on a single issue on a regional basis, that's again the precursor to this type of thing. I've seen in LACRALO and the LACNIC community that there's now some work that's started. In Europe there's also some

work that starts between all the different stakeholders, but it's not as regular as this meeting, which takes place at every single ICANN meeting.

I'm saying 'every single ICANN meeting' because of course some ICANN meetings are a lot harder to get to. I'm well aware of visa issues, which many in Africa have had to be able to reach Argentina; mostly logistics. It's not next-door, it's expensive. So it's really great to see so many of you around the table. I know that each one of you have earned your arrival here by going through a lot of work, a lot of procedures.

That really means to me that this is really, really important. The other thing is, of course, that now we have a new challenge that's come up since Fadi Chehadé has spoken about it over in Bali. There are a lot of new initiatives that are taking place, and Africa is going to be a real key component of the direction in which things will go. Why? Because Africa is a place where ICT for development is extremely important.

Permission list innovation is what has enabled the Internet to become what it is today. The fact that you didn't need permission from a government, from a regulatory authority, from some very specific direction, in order to be coming up with a new service or with proposing a service on the web, or starting an ISP and being able to work with the authorities to actually get Internet in a location, enhance communications, enhance the sharing of information...

All of this has contributed to the Internet becoming what it is today in Africa. I was around in the early '90s tracking Internet connectivity around Africa. Of course, some countries started before others. Often it was individuals that started the first node in a country. No one knew

about it. They paid a service provider abroad, had a telephone link over to the outside world and email came in every now and then.

Then one day they managed to put a little bit more money together with colleagues within the community – and I insist on the word ‘community’ because we are a community here – and suddenly there was full Internet in the country and it just went from strength to strength. So the basis of continuing to work as a community, together on common goals, and working on this in order to provide further development for the Internet, in your part of the world and the rest of the world, is really important.

I think that the next year is going to be very, very interesting indeed, because we need to continue to nurture that network, which has enabled so many of you, and so many of us, to come up with new ideas with innovation, and bring more wealth to our regions and to our people. I’m not going to make a huge, long speech. I’ve probably spoken too much already, but I wanted to make sure that I spoke about this here, because it’s important.

We’re at the beginning of a long trip. I heard words saying it’s a marathon this morning. Knowing that it’s Ethiopia that has the marathon champions, you’re well placed in your region to win that marathon. We’ll be quite tired by then, but looking at it on a different scale it is a marathon. It’s going to be a long discussion and probably some collaboration in trying to find the right solution, to continue with an Internet that continues to grow.

That’s all the words for today. There’s one more thing. I’ve read the statement just now that’s under consideration. I think it’s really

important that you make that statement and that you make your voice heard. One cannot bypass a whole continent. You need to have, first of course, the balance around the world, but then it's also the very fact that you need to have your local communities being able to have a meeting like ICANN on their doorstep, and to not feel as though you're the ones who always have to go and get the visas to go to the other side of the planet.

Having tried to help a couple of people who were not able to come here, I know how long that first marathon is, ahead of the other marathon that we've got ahead of us. So I hope that you have a good meeting. I'll have to pop out for a few minutes. I'll try and see if I can cancel another meeting and then come back here afterwards. Thank you very much for letting me speak over the minutes I was allocated.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you very much Olivier. We'd love to have you during the discussions, even if it's for five minutes. Are you coming back? Thank you very much Olivier. The next person is Pierre.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you very much. I think it's quite interesting that we could meet and discuss some of the issues. Of course I know someone that really thinks that most of our meetings happen outside of Africa. It always seems to be that it's outside of Africa that we can meet and talk, especially when it comes to Internet issues, so it's good that we do have this tradition.

One thing I would like to share is that we need to do some homework in Africa. The analogy I'm always using is that if you consider those who keep on coming to ICANN, most of them are coming because of the business, because of the industry. It's not because of donor agencies. So what I want to say here is that where we shall find ways in which we can come to these meetings, because we understand that our business depends on them, because we think that the [inaudible 00:34:43] is important to our business, and then we can come here.

Also that we're in a position to have [inaudible 00:33:59] or who is taking the decision to understand this is key for the development in Africa, because the danger is that if you are coming to this meeting because of donor agencies, that's fine, but the point is that next time it may not be you.

I'm not seeing where we are building any capacity in the countries, because we keep on changing participants depending on who is paying for what. I believe that we need to do more than that. A few countries are doing this in Africa, I've seen them. I think Nigeria, for instance, are trying to really bring more and more people in, and they're paying on their own or at least know their industries there. I'd like us to put more and more emphasis on that one, please.

We are out... I shall talk about this Africa strategy. I've just talked about it and most of you were there. It's a momentum that we want to beat here. We want to use the resources we've been given by ICANN to see how we could start something in Africa and start the movement in Africa. We do recognize that there is potential there in Africa. How do

we work well with this potential? That's exactly what I'll be expecting from all of us here.

We've put out a few projects. First, we'll need people to do those things; new resource people as well. If it's possible, that's what I think I'd like us to be working together in; whoever can come forward and work with us. It's not about a strategy for Pierre or Yaovi or Bob or whoever is coming – it's for all of us to share it. It just depends on what role you want to play in this one.

The other issue I'd like to add – and this plays onto the declaration you want to work on here. I've been approached by many who've been going for this issue of no visa; not getting a visa and what you can do and what ICANN is doing to facilitate those things. My impression is that ICANN did whatever it could – letters and those things.

Maybe one [coincidence? 00:37:13] is that any hosting country should take the proper means, so that they can facilitate entry for people. That's all ICANN can do. Put this also as a requirement for any country that would like to be hosting; that they really assist. I can only remember one participant stuck in Paris who was Skyping me saying, "Pierre, do something, I'm in Paris, I need a visa. What can you do?"

I couldn't do anything, so it was such a pity. Or they were from Comoros Island to Paris and then you're stuck there. The first time he was [inaudible 00:37:56] who has to go back to Comoros, spending money and then not being able to come here. That was a pity. Anyway, I think we need to continue pushing on with some of those issues.

I do believe that what I'd like to be seeing is that we build this African business community, which I'm not seeing. I'm not talking about the business community with recommendations, or anything like that. I want a business community that's got things to do and issues to raise. We are working with registrars now to work around this insurance issue they're facing, because it's big money for them and no African bank wants to listen to them, so they have to send money to the US or to Europe.

Even in South Africa they're having an issue with sending this money out of the country. These are concrete issues that we need to face in Africa. We need to find ways in which the bank can understand this business and they're able to assist. These are concrete things that I'm now seeing in Africa, and I believe we also need to not only talk about that but also provide options for solutions for that.

Fatimata, I think I'm happy to contribute and share whatever ideas... If you want to move this Agenda, which is make Africa fully participant to ICANN. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you Pierre for this excellent statement. I think you mentioned something very important, and that was about doing our homework within Africa. That's something very important. Still, we are here within an ICANN meeting and we still have to make recommendations towards ICANN. We have to do our homework though. I fully agree with you. Now I would like to hear...

We'll have discussion after that, all right? We're going to listen to all the keynote speakers and then we'll discuss the issues. Yaovi, is he online?

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you. If you can hear me, that's fine. I would like to thank the AFRALO leaders for their good work you are doing. I'm sorry I'm not presently in the meeting with you but I'm very glad to be able to participate remotely. I'd also like to thank Olivier, the ALAC Chair, and Sebastian, and my colleagues on the African team. I haven't got much to say today. I just want to emphasize the fact that AFRALO and the At-Large community in general is doing a great job.

I would like to see this work continue. Me, now, as a member from Africa, I've continued to work close with AFRALO. Again, I want to also talk about some homework we need to do, like AFRICANN. I want to thank the people participating remotely. How can we value people participating remotely, if within our countries we cannot talk to the various stakeholders to talk about the broader issues that are very important?

This session you're having, we have a topic on ICANN meetings, but I think it's very important for all of us to talk to our various stakeholders and the local [inaudible 00:42:22] on broadband issues, because [inaudible 00:42:25] we find, it would be very difficult to bring everybody, physically, to the ICANN meetings. So it is very important now to talk about the quality of the Internet.

I think in many African countries today we have Internet access, but we need to have good access. How can people participate if we don't have

good access? So with regards to homework, this is what I want to talk about. We all need to be involved in this. This is what we can do. This is our contribution. We talk to our government, we talk to our Internet providers, we talk to our consumers [inaudible 00:43:03]. We need to do some work.

People need to have affordable bandwidth and they need to have good bandwidth. It is only when we are able to achieve this, and then we [read? 00:43:12] document, the statement, the contributions, the suggestion we're bring to ICANN, that we have everybody participating and that we have this multistakeholder model as a good model. This is what I want to say. I want to thank everybody again. I'm far from Buenos Aires but remotely I'm with you. Thank you very much for everything you're doing, the job you are doing.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you very much Yaovi. We miss you here. Thank you. I think I'll just finish this and then go on. Thank you. Next is Bob. Bob, are you online? Hello, Bob? Okay, maybe I'll take that comment. Julia? Go ahead.

JULIA CHARVOLEN:

We have a comment from [Seeyoon? 00:44:32] who says: "Relatively, Nigeria may be trying, I will say as the population of Nigeria is over 170 million, it's for instance you see 10 participants from Nigeria. Relative to its population I say that that's still extremely low. To add to that government and private organizations need to really understand the work of ICANN."

“They need to know where their domain names come from, and understand the fact that their contribution is very important for them; to keep getting those names delivered accordingly. If the non-techs, who normally control the funds don’t understand ICANN, then those who want to contribute but don’t have the means, won’t be able to.”

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you for your comment. As we don’t have Bob, I’m just going to move on and give the floor to Aziz. It’s already done, for the scorecard. I’m going to give the floor to Tijani to present the statement.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you Fatimata. I’m actually not going to introduce the statement now. Aziz is going to read it in a minute. I just wanted to present the subject and introduce it. First, why did we choose this subject? You should know that we’ve spent almost three months trying to find a topic to choose. We mentioned the matter first and then we awaited different proposals. In the end we proposed this topic. Why this topic?

Well, for one thing, in Canada many of our fellow Africans could not go because of this visa issue. The staff from ICANN, who were in charge of the meetings, had presented to us before a project to review the ICANN strategy for the meetings, which aimed in reducing the number of meetings we hold in Africa, because they couldn’t find suitable venues to hold ICANN meetings in Africa, allegedly, and on the other hand they proposed to hold meetings in hubs.

One of the hubs is the hardest region, so to speak, which has the hardest conditions for getting a visa. This subject interests Africa in a very

particular way because of those reasons. At the same time, the first draft from ICANN staff was not accepted by the community, because it went to the public comment period, and there were many negative comments made regarding it. Then the ICANN Board decided to create a Working Group, which was a cross-community working group.

This Group aimed at studying this matter and proposing a new strategy. I am a part of that Working Group. If we consider the issue from the beginning, there were actually some considerations from staff, who said that the number of participants at ICANN meetings keeps growing, and that we face an issue, which is finding suitable venues for ICANN meetings in some regions.

On the other hand, they also say that the number of sessions also increases a lot. So much so in fact that now we still have overlapping sessions. People cannot profit from such sessions. Those are the two main concerns of the staff. Facing that, what do we have? We have a community that doesn't want for ICANN meetings to be centered in one single region or in a few regions.

As Africans, they say they cannot find a suitable venue to hold our meetings, because there aren't many big halls. That's actually not entirely true, because actually it's true in Africa that not all countries have that infrastructure, but some countries do have it. Since they proposed hubs, I think we should propose an African hub so that when applicable, if we cannot find an African country to host the meeting then we'll go to that country.

In the case of Durban, actually, that's completely transparent. We also have other considerations, for instance the number of sessions. They

speak about the number of sessions increasing. That's entirely true, but it can be solved otherwise. If we dedicated a certain number of days at the meeting for the work of constituencies, on the different SOs and ACs, we should dedicate a number of days for ALAC to do its work, and a number of days for the ccNSO and more for the gNSO, and so on.

So a number of days would be dedicated also for inter-constituency work. That's going to determine the number of overlapping meetings, and they're going to decrease actually, because if we do ALAC work we're all going to be ALAC there, so there won't be any issues. The same goes for the rest. Now, for those sessions that are cross-constituency, which imply or involve all constituencies, we should have specific days for those. Thus we will have less overlapping sessions.

Aziz is now going to read the statement. I think that will be easier and more straightforward. I'd like to say that this subject is particularly important to our region. I know it's important for all regions, but for us it's particularly so, because we're the region with the most issues to do with visas in ICANN. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you very much Tijani for the wonderful introduction. We are fortunate to have Bob online, so we're going to listen to him for a minute. Bob? Hello, Bob, you have the floor.

BOB OCHIENG:

Thank you. I hope everyone can hear me. Sorry for any sound challenges. I'm glad to join you from Nairobi. I'm very glad to be part of the team that is working to try different African participation in the

Internet ecosystem, and ICANN particularly. I just wanted to touch very briefly on the African strategy, and specifically on one project that we are driving in this financial year, and which I believe is going to be of great impact in the way, as Africans, we interact with the ICANN ecosystem.

This is the digital entrepreneurship for this, but Pierre mentioned this earlier. Now, how are we going to participate fully in the Internet ecosystem? One of the things we are to focus on is ensuring that we are building African content. We can only build African content if, as the youth drive from our universities, we as a team are aligned to the entrepreneurship culture.

This is why ICANN is pretty much [inaudible 00:54:27], to come in and support some of the entrepreneurship in [inaudible 00:54:37] Africa's regions. Currently we are conducting a survey, and we'll be doing that [inaudible 00:54:45] very soon, just to [inaudible] embrace this entrepreneurship culture. The other item I want to touch on, that Yaovi has spoken about, is on participation in the Internet fora.

I think that not all of us must attend the meetings in person, but we need to make it possible for remote participants and make them aware – especially for universities, because this is where the largest pool of potential players are coming in. Very few of them are really online, or are even aware about the impact of the Internet, how the Internet is managed and how the Internet works.

So this is a lot of work that needs to be done, and I really think that this is the right organization to help enhance this understanding in our

universities. I thank you very much. I'm sorry for any sound challenges.
Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much Bob. That was short and very well understood. Thank you for your contribution. I think I'm now going to give the floor to Aziz. Aziz is the incoming Chair of AFRALO, and Aziz is going to present the statement, but before that he'd like to read the scorecard. I don't know, so I'll give you the floor.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you Fatimata. That's right. I asked Fatimata to mention the scorecard first because the scorecard sums up all the statements we've made since the beginning of this tradition, which is the AFRALO/AFRICANN meeting. I just counted it. This Argentine meeting is our 10th statement in fact. Just to remind you, you've been handed out a chart. In this chart we prepared materials after the joint AFRALO/AFRICANN meeting we had in Durban, and after our meeting with ICANN's CEO, Fadi Chehadé.

Actually, we just got a message here, because we sent, via Sebastian, this chart to Fadi, and he just thanked us for it. He's also promised that he'll do his best to discuss this with us, all the statements that have been written. This was after a request from the African meeting, so that we could make a summary of all the statements that we wrote. If I may remind you of all the subjects we dealt with in our statements?

We started in 2010 in Brussels where we spoke of the Resolution #20, work formulas to support candidates who needed the support in their

application for new gTLDs. Then in Cartagena we dealt with a number of effective participants in the African community, within African activities. Then we had a San Francisco statement on March 16th 2011, which dealt with the group's work on the review of geographical sessions, which is the same as we have today.

But it was different, because at that time there was a Working Group that was considering the possibility of splitting North Africa from the rest of Africa. They were trying to change the regions, and actually we discussed that and we were heard. In Singapore we made a statement... It was right before our Dakar meeting. In Dakar we foresaw the possibility of organizing an ICANN assembly on developing countries, so we centered our discussion on that Summit.

Then we had San José in Costa Rica, where the subject was the option of the final JAS Working Group Report, concerning gTLDs that are CCT. Actually, there was a discussion on that and that had an impact, because the JAS Group that was formed after that took into account all of the statements of the African community and the AFRALO/AFRICANN community.

In Prague last year, just after the announcement of the results of the first round of applications for new gTLDs, our stocktaking was actually quite low at the level of African applications. There were only 17 applications from Africa, and so once again we tried to explain in our statement what the reasons were for that low level of African participation. So we also drafted a statement. You have there on the chart everything we mentioned in the statement.

In Beijing in 2013, the beginning of this year, we dealt with studying the possibility of implementing a development fund to help those countries that are developing countries, and to promote the domain name industry in African countries. That brings us up to this date. If you have questions on the chart of course we can discuss them afterwards, but I'm not going to go straight to... Fatimata thinks to rewrite today's statement.

I'm going to read today's statement and then we'll have questions, if you have any. This is the statement that we wish to convey today, after this meeting: "We, the members of the African community attending the AFRALO/AFRICANN Joint Meeting in Buenos Aires, held on Wednesday November 20 2013, in the framework of the 48th ICANN International Public Meeting, extensively debated the issue of ICANN meeting strategy.

"We understand full well the challenges that the ICANN staff charged with meetings had faced, due to the increasingly huge number of participants that makes the availability of adequate venues in some regions more difficult, and also the growing number of sessions resulting in several overlapping meetings or sessions.

"We notice, with satisfaction, the efforts of the staff to find solutions to the issues that arose during the last meetings, and to propose a new meeting strategy. We encourage ICANN to continue their efforts in the framework on the Meeting Strategy Working Group, so that they can find an alternative meeting strategy that allows to overcome the challenges faced, and that takes into consideration the community's concerns, such as:

“Keeping the rotation between the five ICANN regions, to maintain the inclusive and international character of ICANN. (2). Adopting the principle hub per region to serve as an alternative solution, in case another venue couldn’t be found within the same region. (3). Making sure that especially hubs and also all other venues, among others, should be chosen [interalias? 01:03:32] according to the will of governments and to make the adequate arrangements for visa delivery and granting to all ICANN community members.

“This could avoid the repeated experience of some of the African community members missing meetings in spite of their important roles. (4). Reorganizing the meetings in such a way as to separate the cross-constituency work from the intra-constituency work, and assigning separate days for each so as to avoid conflicting sessions and the overlapping of them.

“We believe that with due consideration of those issues, ICANN will find a good and sustainable meeting strategy that will be equitable and will accommodate the community’s needs and aspirations worldwide, and overcome the challenges faced by the staff.” Now, I would like to thank all of the members of our Committee who drafted this statement.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you very much Aziz. Thank you for introducing the scorecard and reading the draft statement. Without further ado, I’ll give you the floor. If you want to make any comment or if you have any amendments you’d like to suggest, or if you have questions to ask as well. You have the floor. Who would like to take the floor? Sophia? Mary? Right. [Third one, Barrack. First, Sophia.

SOPHIA BEKELE:

It's nice to see everyone here, far away from Africa. I want to thank the organizers, the AFRALO Group, for your continuous commitment to giving us all a voice, making an open meeting and letting us bring the issues that we want to the forefront. I really want to applaud you. It's a continuous and consistent commitment that I've seen, and I'm very happy that we could step in and hear what Africa is doing through your work.

Now, DotConnectAfrica, the company that I represent, has been involved with ICANN since 2005. We were an applicant for .africa, and we still are. We have been involved in Internet governance issues. For those of you who don't know, we're very committed to developing the African Internet infrastructure. We've been participating very actively, I'm always at the meetings, and some of my people are here.

Going back to the participation issue that you mentioned, and Pierre also mentioned, on the donor funded participants, versus those participants like us, who actually pay our way and come and participate in ICANN meetings. As Pierre noted, the continuity of people when they are funded by donors to come to these meetings, the intelligence here does not get carried away from meeting to another.

When the funding stops, it goes away. I'm talking about organizations like us who've been continually attending ICANN meetings. Where is the integration strategy for us? How are we looked at by AFRALO, ICANN, and so forth? Why aren't we integrated as part of a resource, as part of building the ICANN infrastructure? We know the ICANN policies well.

There has to be a concerted effort, Pierre, that you need to work with us, organizations with us, so that we don't feel like we're isolated and just coming to ICANN meetings, and just be [picturous 01:08:10] and go back home. We want to contribute to the work of Africa. We want to be on any of the panels that you're formulating, and we have knowledge. We have a database. We are working on the ground in Africa. We're part of the business community in Africa.

So if you're talking about forming a business and coming up with business solutions, Pierre, please include us. This is what I want to say. There could be others like us, but it has to be a concerted effort by ICANN and by ICANN staff to work with us and call for us. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you Sophia. The floor is to Mary, so we'll hear everybody and then we'll provide answers.

MARY UDUMA:

Thank you Fatimata. I want also to lend my voice in saying congratulations to the organizers. I want to comment on the fact that what Aziz read to us, that we're documenting all the communication that we've issued in all ICANN meetings. I think that the Board will have to work on that.

Coming back to the statement we're trying to push out, I like the topic we're looking at, because some of our registrars that we encourage to come to ICANN – business people that were ready to pay their money to come here – were denied visas. A gNSO Council Member was denied a visa. A Board Member of NIRA, who we've provided for to pay for to

come here was denied a visa. So it's really a challenge for us and there were no reasons given to us for that.

Look at those who've been promoting ICANN within the business community saying, "Look, you have a business in ICANN? You can make business." One of the people that was to come here is the person who's applied to become an ICANN registrar. We're looking for ICANN registrars in our region, and this person, an ICANN registrar applicant went to a level that he was to be cleared, and then he was denied a visa. He couldn't come.

So there is a strong consent for us that we want to comment on this. There is a part I find difficult to comprehend very well. You can explain it better; the fourth bullet point, making special hubs. Okay? I don't know how that will go down, because I think that as a country that volunteers to host, would the whole country be available at all times to be able to accommodate ICANN? to be able to host ICANN, if we make a hub in a region? That's where I need to understand better.

Maybe... I don't know how you're going to take that into consideration. Good. I agree with every other thing, but I think with that aspect... What Pierre has said as well about what we come here to do. Those of us from Nigeria come to make sure that we understand how the policies that shape our industry are developed. We want to contribute as well. Giving us an opportunity to make our voices heard is very, very good for us.

So I met one of the meeting organizers in ICANN. I said, "Look, this is a big problem for us in Africa, especially in my country Nigeria. I couldn't attend Toronto because of visa issues. I couldn't attend Beijing because

of visa issues. Even though I was given a visa, in protest I refused to come because my people who applied for visas were denied visas.”

Those are things that we need to bring to the forefront, and I want to say that we are not coming to ICANN because of donor agencies. Some of us are spending our money to come here. Throughout my period in GAC I refused to take any of the Fellowships in GAC, because I made sure that I told my government, “You must fund me to come.”

When they don’t fund me I use my money to come, because I know this is the way the world is going, and we are coming for business here. Thank you. Before I end, I don’t know whether I’ll be given another opportunity to speak. What I want to say is that we, in Nigeria, want to host ICANN, and we want to see the visa issues sorted out and ICANN Members able to come and go without problems. Thank you. [applause]

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much Mary. I will give the floor to Barrack.

BARRACK OTIENO: Thank you Chair and colleagues. I think the point made by Pierre really got me thinking. I asked myself, “Why does ICANN exist?” because probably we need to go back to the drawing board and understand why ICANN exists. When I was thinking of this, I have in mind that we have AFRINIC in Africa, we have AFTLD.

We have quite a number of regional organizations handling different aspects of the Internet. I think it’s important, going forward as AFRALO,

to build strong bridges across all these organizations. What's coming to my mind clearly is that if there's value people will come. My colleagues have said why they come to these meetings, why they pay their way for these meetings.

If there is value people will come. Well, the other question is, are our people – because AFRALO basically represents the users – seeing the value of the Internet, and to what extent? These are the issues that we need to be able to address going forward. A lot of the challenges we're facing will not be challenges anymore. Of course on the issue of visas, I know it's a challenge. Visas are sovereignty issues.

Sometimes countries, for whatever reasons, may decide, "This is how we're doing business." But I think if the value proposition is there then we'll be able to contribute or participate at whatever cost, even if we are... Sometimes you're just humiliated. A country refuses to give you a visa for their own reasons that they may not want to divulge.

Let's not focus on that. Let's really focus on the key issues that will see more people participate in this fora, more people pay their way to participate in this fora, more people get online remotely. I think the other litmus test is to be able to see how many remote participants are participating in these meetings, to know if people are really keen to participate.

But the bottom line is that I'd like to encourage closer collaboration among the [AFSTA? 01:16:50] organizations and AFRALO, so that we are able to address some of the challenges we're facing jointly. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much Barrack. Please say your name?

EDWIN OPARE: Hello, my name is Edwin Opore from Ghana. I am an ICANN Fellow. This is my second ICANN meeting. The first one was in Durban, courtesy of Pierre's help. I'm very thankful to Pierre for my first experience. We've said a lot about the visa issues in Africa, which are really true. I had to go to Nigeria for my visa and there were a lot of ordeals. I almost did not make it to the meeting, but I'm here.

I think instead of talking more about the challenges, we should look at solutions that can be put on board to ensure that it's resolved. I am thinking it would be good if ICANN staff can engage the GAC Members of the hosting nation directly, and then be able to provide the list of the people who are applying or are registering to attend a conference.

If the GAC Members are able to provide this list to the embassies in their countries, I think that would be one way to ensure that these visa refusals are reduced. We might want to look at that angle. The other thing I want to talk about is, going through the meetings and sessions yesterday, there was a lot of talk about the name collision issues, as far as the new gTLDs are concerned.

There is an excellent African strategy out there, but I'm not sure how far the ISPs in Africa are engaged, for them to understand some of the issues that are related to the name collision and all of that. So if that's an area not captured in the African strategy, then it's really important that we need to have a way of engaging ISPs, for them to know what the

real issues are and then how they can mitigate the name collision on their networks. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you Edwin. Chris?

[CHRIS]: Hi everyone. I just want to propose that the point for the visa, if we can just get that line out of the statement? As Barrack and my colleague here indicated, it's basically a sovereignty issue. The embassy can or cannot give you a visa based on some of the criteria that they're looking at. We cannot force or request ICANN to intervene on that, because there are quite a lot of factors that they're looking at, and they might come back to us based on those points and say, "Look, there is this online participation."

So to put it out of that document, for me I think we shouldn't. We should just take it out. Someone who's living on another continent would say... If that person has never traveled and it's their first time, "Oh, maybe they'll look at his bank account and those types of things." There are quite a lot of issues, so we are making an effort to make sure that some of the points that are quite important are in there are there.

But this should not pull on the important statements that are in the document. It will make the whole of the proposal that we are trying to make becoming a bit quicker. That's my purpose.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Excuse me for just a bit of clarity, Chris, what are you suggesting to take out of the statement? The visa issue?

CHRIS: The visa should not be there, because it depends on each individual. If you look at, for instance, understanding...

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Okay, I get the explanation. Thank you Chris. Tijani? I think I'll just go... I will follow the chronology. I'll give the floor to Pierre to give a quick reply to Sophia.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Sophia, you are right. We need to find a way in which to further integrate especially those like yourself who are actually striving too. But now the point here is that we need to think on how exactly we do that. We do have a Fellowship Program now on the ground for everyone who is interested. Now, how we work concretely with the African business sector is something which...

I tried something and I was looking for a kind of African ICT business course, whatever, allowance that should exist. I have to say that so far I'm still wondering with whom we are working. I know there is Victor from [Jimsum? 01:22:24], yourself, you do have your own. I would like to see a situation where we sit together and see exactly how we do this. There are other groups in Africa and we do have African business, even African [angels? 01:22:45], whatever. Those guys are...

There is potential out there. Maybe we need to see that and see how to engage with those different people. But of course I do recognize that people like yourself have been really spending to come here, because you know what you get from it. That's exactly what I'm saying. If you come here, you should know what you are getting from this. It's not just about us coming and then buying [fun stuff? 01:23:14] or whatever.

We want to go back home – no. I think it's about knowing what one gets from this and what one can contribute. So your point is taken. As far as the African strategy is concerned, yes, we will have to find ways in which we could invite people like yourself and the rest and see how we can sit down and solve the issue. That's all I can say. I don't have a say in the declaration there, because there are issues that are valid.

I think ICANN staff is not... ICANN will just receive it, then it's vetted and then the staff will work on it. That's all, so I don't need to add anything at this point in time. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you Pierre. Mary, your point was about the hubs. I will let Aziz give you a reply. Aziz?

AZIZ HILALI:

Yes. Thank you Fatimata. With regards to the visa problems, I don't know if you were here in yesterday's meeting between ALAC and the ICANN Board. Tijani spoke about that and Fadi made a promise that a group is going to think about that problem. I want to point something else out. I've been speaking with the Argentinian Ambassador in

Morocco and I've been speaking with him about colleagues from Gambia.

He showed me several visa requests coming from people from Morocco, from Africa, living in Morocco. I explained to him the fact that the ICANN Meeting is a public meeting can come, ask for an invitation letter and make a request for a visa. So when we're going to ask for a visa, this visa request is coming from someone who is really invited by ICANN – really a member of the ICANN community.

These requests are mixed up with other visa requests, which are not coming from people who are from the ICANN community. So we have to solve this visa problem. We have to know how the embassies, when there is an ICANN Meeting somewhere, have to receive the list of the people who are going to participate in the ICANN Meeting and who need the visas. That's what I wanted to say.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Mary was talking about the hubs and the venues, right?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Two points: first, the hubs. The proposal made by staff in their last proposal was to adopt two hubs and to hold ICANN meeting in those hubs regularly. That means that we organize two meetings per year, in fixed points, and the three others will be rotating in the other regions. This idea of hubs is not bad in itself, because it will permit the staff of ICANN to make contacts with the hotels long-term, so they will save money.

It's also good because they can choose the best venues to use in the future, etc. But they have other inconveniences, and the most important one is that ICANN will not have this character of international and inclusive. When they raised this concern and said, sometimes... They told be explicitly: "Sometimes in Africa we cannot find a venue."

The answer to this argument is very easy. As you choose perhaps another continent, you can choose a hub in Africa that you will use only if you don't find a good venue. In this case, Africa will have the same number of meetings as the other continents. So I'm not against the idea of hubs, but only as a redundant choice. In my point of view we have to continue to rotate among the five continents. Do you want me to continue?

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

I just want to say something and then I'll let you continue. Julia also wants to... There's someone online? Okay. Now, back to Barrack. I think I'm going to put together Barrack's intervention and Chris's, because they're both saying that we should not focus on visas, right? That's your point. That's a sovereignty issue, so ICANN cannot focus on that and that will really lower the strength of our statement.

We think in order to hold an ICANN meeting, you have to bid. We think that when you bid at least you should say how you can facilitate visas. That's why we think this should be in the statement. That's exactly what Mary was saying, "Come to Nigeria, we'll facilitate the visas to come in!" If it's too complicated it's surely a sovereignty issue, I completely agree with you.

But when you bid to host the meeting and then you make it difficult for anybody to attend it's a problem. At least loosen a little bit, to allow people to be able to come and participate in the meeting. That's my point. Tijani, I'll give you the floor. One more thing I'd like to add is about remote participation. You're all pushing for remote participation, and you know what's happening in our continent with this bandwidth problem.

It's a problem, so what should we do? Should we wait to solve that issue before we participate? Is that what you're suggesting? I just have this question for you. Should we wait until we have the appropriate infrastructure so that we can participate online and not attend the face-to-face meetings? That's one point. The other question I would put in front of you is, if remote participation was enough, why would ICANN organize face-to-face meetings? I'll leave it there.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you Fatimata. Coming back to this question of visas and sovereignty, nobody said that... Do you prefer French? No? Okay. Nobody said that we need visas for everyone. That's not possible. We didn't ask to give visas to the ICANN community without going through the normal procedure. We didn't say that, but we said that if a country cannot make special arrangements...

What I mean by 'special arrangements' is if a country doesn't have an embassy in certain countries, people from this country can get their visa on arrival. For example, this is one of the solutions. Also, for example for this case, the case of Argentina, there are people from Africa, from Gambia, that have to go to Banjul to get their visa, and they have to pay

their way. They have to stay three days there to get their visa, and it costs more than \$1,000. They don't have money to do so, and ICANN don't cover this cost.

There was a possibility, because they're going to come here through Casa Blanca, and there is an embassy in Morocco, but since it's not the region of those people, this embassy cannot give the visa to them because they're not from the region. They're in charge. A special arrangement could be that you can get the visa from any embassy, according to your possibilities. These are the kinds of facilities we're asking for. We're not asking to remove all the procedures, all the... No. For sure, if I'm a terrorist they will not give me the visa. That's normal. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA:

Thank you Tijani. Now Edmon. Edmon is suggesting that ICANN work with GAC to facilitate the issuance of visas. I will not say anything about this. Maybe I'll let someone else say something about this, but I know that some governments will do something, but I don't know whether GAC is really concerned about this. GAC Members are with us, I don't know, so that's a suggestion I guess. I'll leave it as it is, unless you have something else to say among the people here?

The other suggestion is for Pierre. He's asking how the engagement of the ISPs is in the African strategy.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Well, like I said, we understand that we need to work with those ISPs and whoever is already doing business there, because we need to firm

up whatever this is before we even think of expanding it. Apart from the ccTLDs that we're trying to systematize in the work for a TLD, I have to say that we have not really started any concrete work with the ISPs. We have to, but we are seeing a lot of this through the business component.

But it's in the plan that we are to do that. We haven't started yet, because we also understand that most of them are now also getting under the umbrella of these new Telco operators, which is also a big issue that we need to tackle in Africa.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you Pierre. Julia?

JULIA CHARVOLEN: Thank you. We have a comment from [Soon? 01:36:35], a question. He says, "Can we hear testimonies of the reasons why people were denied visas? What's the comparison between those who are granted visas in other countries compared to Africa? Is there a difference? If Africans are denied visas on the basis of travel experience, then how do we participate in ICANN as an African?"

"So yes, visas for an African, in my honest opinion, who goes beyond the data provided, I think denying African visas is kind of traditional compared to other documents. So perhaps visas could be removed, but it should be clear to ICANN that African participants are getting denied visas for certain reasons, which should be listed."

We also have a comment from Yaovi to Fatimata: “Remote participation is participation, not a replacement of a face-to-face meeting.” Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much. I think you have something to say, but time is ticking and I think we need to agree on this statement. May I suggest that Mary and Chris... Where is Chris? He’s stepped out. Barrack? This is to rewrite the third bullet. I think that’s the issue, right? We agree on everything except this one, so if you can suggest something...

Tijani, we have to agree on something else; at least rewrite it so that we agree on this statement, not just AFRALO. That’s what I’m suggesting right now. Do you want to say something? Very quickly. You have one minute please.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you. Just to tell you that I had a meeting with Susanna, the new COO of ICANN, and she committed to treating this question of visas, and she really understands the issue very well. Also, as Aziz said, the Board plus the CEO, committed to treating the question of visas, and they said it is a shame that we have this situation.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much Tijani. Regarding [Sean’s] point, he wants to know why we’re getting visas denied. Is it just for Africans or for any other people? Who can answer that question? We know about Africans but we don’t know about any others. Is it a general thing?

PIERRE DANDJINOU: I have an example of someone who is from Mexico who could not go to Canada – he couldn't get his visa for the ICANN meeting in Canada, and he was a regional manager at that time. He couldn't get a visa to get into Canada. That's an example.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you Pierre. Michel?

MICHEL TCHONNANG: Thank you Mrs. Chair. With regards to the visa issue, before I give my opinion I wanted to answer the question you made before, asking if the GAC was able to help us to facilitate the obtaining of visas. My participation in the GAC helped me understand something that we need to know, and that is not really easy to understand – the organization of the ICANN meeting doesn't depend on the government.

Sometimes there are difficulties between the government and the structure of ICANN, and it's not easy to facilitate the negotiations of the visa. I remember, as you... I think you had to mention this strategy that was created during our last discussion in the SMC – we needed to present a key element; that any country that wants to host an ICANN meeting needs to facilitate the obtaining of visas for any participant.

I've been asking for a visa for two or three meetings and the invitation letter of ICANN wasn't taken into account. I don't know why but it's a problem. It's a difficulty. You ask for the letter. Now it's becoming a

problem, so we have to take care of that. Maybe we also need to work with the agencies that can help ICANN and see what's happening.

Maybe we can ask the people who go to the ITU meeting and have this problem too. With ICANN help it works or it doesn't work, but sometimes you're asking for the visa and have the invitation letter, but okay, you need hosting country help. That's the most important help. This is explaining the difficulties we had. I wanted to speak about the ITU. In all the embassies we see the letters that ITU send.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Barrack, you have the floor.

BARRACK OTIENO: Thank you very much. On the issue of the visa, not to pour water on it, but I'd like to give an experience where for a meeting in Canada, I got intervention from Canada, from the GAC representative, but the ambassador or the person responsible at the embassy, still decided otherwise. The embassies have a level of autonomy, within which they can make decisions regarding visas. I was only saying that this is a very complicated area that we may not be... If we try to focus on it it may not be easy.

For ITU it's easy because of government-to-government relationships. We don't want a situation where it will again be impossible to hold ICANN meetings in our countries, because possible hosts are not able to meet certain requirements that the government needs to put in place, knowing the relationships that governments and private sectors have in

some of our countries. So as African countries, again, we might be the people who are going to suffer if we are not careful with this decision.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Okay, thank you Barrack. I get you. I hear your message. I agree, but I don't think this should prevent us from trying.

PHILLIP JOHNSON: I think the statement is well in place. This statement will create a kind of awareness on what the African group has concerning the visa issue. Once you give such a statement then the other constituencies, for example GAC, will be very concerned. It pressures, next time, other governments, other countries that will be hosting ICANN.

Another statement I took from one of the remote participants was, he talks about the need for remote participation – not so much to create more participants, particularly from our academic or other institutions. I recommend that AFRALO encourage its allies [in Iran? 01:45:39]. Whenever ICANN organizes where it's being hosted, they should encourage the academic institutions to have it somewhere where they can participate remotely, so that we can have more remote participants outside.

Remote participation does not stop face-to-face meetings. They're very important; they bring networking besides just listening and discussions. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Thank you very much Phillip. I think I'll take the last one and we're going to close this meeting, because we're really beyond time. Yes, Yaovi?

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you very much. I'll be brief. I think what it was before [inaudible 01:46:25] ICANN staff, I think the issue of visas is very clear. I'm talking as a participant from Africa. I think people [inaudible 01:46:36] rework this visa issue, but it's very important to leave it. Just an example. I'm going to finish. By cooperation... Can you hear me?

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: We're not getting your point. We're not understanding.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: My conclusion: leave it. [inaudible 01:47:00] statement. Thank you.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA: Okay, thank you. That we heard. Okay, ladies and gentlemen, I think we did a good job. We will have a statement ready. I'm sure Mary's already working on it. I'd like to thank you all for your participation, and I'd also like to announce to you that this is the last time I will be chairing this meeting as an AFRALO Chair. [applause] Aziz is the incoming Chair.

Mohamed is no longer in the room. He was here. Mohamed is the Vice-Chair. He's not around. Phillip is the AFRALO Secretary. Thank you very much to all of you. Hadja is not in the AFRALO leadership. Hadja is an ALAC, incoming ALAC. Thank you very much to all of you. Thank you to staff. Thank you to the interpreters. Thank you very much.

Thank you to the staff. Thank you to you guys. Thank you very much. You did a great job. Thank you Olivier. Thank you Bob, if you're still here. Bye-bye to everybody. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]