

# Minutes of Meeting

## MEAC-SWG ICANN60 Open Session – Thursday 2 November 2017

---

The MEAC-SWG had an open session at ICANN60 which took place in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 28 OCT – 2 NOV. The session itself took place on Thursday 2 November at 10.30 – 12.00 Abu Dhabi Standard Time.

The meeting attracted more than 50 physical attendees, as well as a handful of remote participants. The meeting had more than 25 members/observers of the MEAC-SWG.

The agenda for the meeting was as follows:

- **Welcome and Introductions** - Walid Alsaqaf, MEAC-SWG Chair
- **Update and Discussion of Ongoing Implementation** - Baher Esmat and Fahd Batayneh, GSE Middle East, ICANN
- **Thematic Topics**
  - o **Topic 1: Enhancing MEAC-SWG's Effectiveness and Impact** - Michael Oghia, Zakir Ben Rehman, and Chokri Ben Romdhane
  - o **Topic 2: Assessing and Strengthening the DNS Industry** - Hadia Elminiawi
  - o **Topic 3: Improving Regional Academic Engagement in ICANN** - Hadia ElMiniawi and Habib Yousef
  - o **Topic 4: Side Effects of Censoring Mobile Apps on the DNS Industry in the Region** - Mahdi Taghizadeh and Farzaneh Badii
- **Open Discussion** - All

### Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed those attending the session, and thanked the MEAC-SWG members/observers for organizing such a session at ICANN60. He went through the agenda.

### Update and Discussion of Ongoing Implementation

ICANN Staff shared a quick update on where things stand at in terms of implementation. An excel sheet showing an initial review of what was achieved since 1 July 2017 to-date was displayed.

A couple of capacity development programs were delivered, yet many else are still in the pipelines. DNSSEC and LEA Workshops are high on the list. The KSK Rollover is another hot topic being widely pushed within the region. The work of the Task Force on Arabic Script IDNs (TF-AIDN) is progressing with a new leadership. The DNS-EC have a strategic plan until 2019, and are executing it. A study on the Digital Landscape in the MENAT region has concluded, and has been shared with the community. We are still on course in our partnership with MENOG for their regional roadshows. We are working on engaging entrepreneurs in our work; whether the DNS business or being part of ICANN's PDP, and are seeking advice and assistance from the SWG members/observers. A media roundtable was held in Dubai 6 weeks before the kick start of ICANN60. We will work with regional ALSs on different activities during FY18, and will liaise closely with ICANN At-Large Staff. We will also intensify our remote engagement for countries that we are unable to travel physically to. The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the MEAC School on IG concluded

in Ankara. National IGFs and SIGs are on the rise, and ICANN will support with expertise as requested and when possible.

While much has been achieved in the first 3 months, more is yet to be done in the next 7 months.

## Thematic Topics

This session covered 4 main topics:

1. Enhancing MEAC-SWG's Effectiveness and Impact
2. Assessing and Strengthening the DNS Industry
3. Improving Regional Academic Engagement in ICANN
4. Side Effects of Censoring Mobile Apps on the DNS Industry in the Region

### Enhancing MEAC-SWG's Effectiveness and Impact

This part was covered by Zakir, Michael, and Chokri. They covered 3 topics as follows:

1. **External Collaboration** - Identifying and mapping stakeholders within the region and beyond so as to collaborate with them in a more focused way to help further enhance the SWG effectiveness and impact.
2. **Internal Collaboration** - Working within the SWG with the members to work on the 3 Focus Areas in a more focused way. It was discussed that new members of the SWG find it difficult to effectively participate and hence more frequent webinars/conference calls be arranged for new members so as to give them a quick backgrounder of the SWG. A sub group in this regard was also proposed details of which will be shared on the group for input from all.
3. **Sub Group Structure, Working Methods, and Other Details** - To help enhance the effectiveness and impact of the SWG, the idea of having more focused subgroup was discussed and the process of managing these possible subgroups based on the SWG charter's recent revision, the cycle of these subgroups functionality was discussed.

### Assessing and Strengthening the DNS Industry

This part was covered by Hadia El Miniawi; Director of the DNS-EC. In her talk, she spoke about how the domain name market is intertwined with the digital economy pointing out that the top three ccTLDs identified by Verisign's latest industry brief happen to have very strong digital economies. To this end, she started looking at the state of the digital economy in the region and the online presence of the SMEs. She then discussed the opportunities and challenges for the domain name industry, after which she presented the perspective of three ccTLDs from the region with regard to the opportunities and challenges that they specifically experience. Finally, she highlighted the main elements that governments, registries and registrars should deal with to strengthen the industry concluding that the way forward for the domain name market development requires collaboration between all stakeholders.

### Improving Regional Academic Engagement in ICANN

*Habib Youssef* spoke about ICANN's Academic Engagement Program with CCK; which, was initiated in July 2016. So far, four workshops have been organized at four different locations (see

<http://www.cck.rnu.tn/events/>), where 150+ attended each workshop. All events were broadcast via a livestreaming service on the CCK web portal.

As future actions, CCK shall seek to do the following:

- Continue with the organization of regular workshops at various university campuses in Tunisia. The next one shall take place at the University of Jendouba (North West of Tunisia) at the end of November 2017.
- Seek to Broadcast events via a collaboration platform for a wider accessibility, live interaction, and better engagement of the Tunisian academic community
- Make sure to perform an evaluation survey for each event
- Improve implication of ISOC/IGF-Tunisia, Telco operators and commercial ISPs as well as network equipment manufacturers
- Conduct parallel sessions to widen topics suitable for a wider students backgrounds
- Introduce students to the fellowship program of ICANN

And as part of the DNS-EC's academic engagement efforts, the DNS-EC Director Hadia El Miniawi spoke about how the DNS Entrepreneurship Center is approaching the academic sector for capacity building and raising awareness. She mentioned that the center is doing this through three main tracks, the first is through the Egyptian Universities Network (EUN), the second is through partnering with companies like IBM that have programs for developing the skills of the youth and the universities' students, and the third is through lists of interested students collected by the center. Looking forward, and in order to have a better presence and a bigger role in Africa and among the Arab countries the center is seeking partnerships with some academic organizations working on capacity building and skills development.

#### Side Effects of Censoring Mobile Apps on the DNS Industry in the Region

This session was covered by both Farzaneh and Mahdi.

Mahdi spoke about how some registrars are treating Iranian registrants differently, and in some cases are imposing higher fees on them. He then moved on to share how difficult it is to use Adobe Connect in Iran; a tool heavily used by ICANN for teleconference calls and remote sessions. He spoke about how Apple's recent removal of dozens of iOS applications originating from Iranian developers has effected the entrepreneurial landscape in Iran; mainly those who utilize mobile Apps to push their business. He finally spoke about how some hosting and SSL certificate providers are refusing to offer their services under .IR domain names even if the registrant is based outside of Iran.

Farzaneh spoke about financial transactions with ICANN and how it is very difficult for ordinary businesses in sanctioned countries, providing DNS training for sanctioned countries face restrictions due to sanctions, sometimes registrars impose arbitrary US sanctions on registrants when they do not even have to follow US sanctions, registrants in sanctioned countries face arbitrary cancellation of their domain names and might be forced to transfer and sometimes this leads to loss of their domain name.

#### **Open Discussions**

As the session was congested with topics, not much time was left for open discussions. Some questions were raised in the context of the implementing the strategy, and they were answered duly.