ICANN: a diverse world, a diverse Internet

Diversity starts now

1.   Why is diversity important?

When ICANN was incorporated in 1998, 75% of Internet users lived in developed countries, mostly in North America. 18 years later, more than 66% of Internet users live in developing countries.[1] In 2030, an overwhelming majority of users will access the Internet from Asia, Africa and Latin America, most of them being non-native English speakers. Being tasked to accomplish its mission "for the benefit of the Internet community as a whole",[2] ICANN must acknowledge this evolution.

Today, however, **ICANN's leadership**[3] **does not reflect the diversity of Internet users** and suffers from several imbalances:[4]

- 40% of ICANN community leaders come from North America and more than 63% are native English speakers.[5]
- Women represent only 26% of ICANN community leaders.
- 80% of ICANN community leaders come from the technical community and the private sector, while civil society and government representatives each account for only 10%.

ICANN is tasked with ensuring the stable and secure operation of a global resource, and should therefore embrace and reflect the diversity of Internet users across the world. Failing to do so will no doubt jeopardize ICANN's legitimacy as a steward of the global public interest.

The transition process that started two years ago is a unique opportunity for our community to design and implement mechanisms to enhance effective diversity within ICANN.

2.   What is diversity?

To enhance diversity within ICANN, the first step is to agree on a common definition. We propose a multidimensional approach that takes into account the following set of criteria:

1) **Geographical origin**. While already applied to the selection of ICANN board members, this criterion should be extended to all leadership positions in ICANN and based on both a regional analysis and country-by-country analysis.[6]

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[1] ICT facts and figures, *International Telecommunications Union*, 2015.

[2] New Bylaws as adopted by the board in May 2016.

[3] The 190 "ICANN community leaders" identified by AFNIC have one of the following roles within ICANN: Board Director; member of the Council of a Supporting Organization or an Advisory Committee; member of a gNSO Constituency Executive Committee; member of the NomCom; member of CCWG-Accountability.

[4] ICANN diversity data, AFNIC, 2016.

[5] While native English speakers account for only about 6% of the world population).

2) **Main language**. All languages should be represented in ICANN leadership, and a better balance between the seven official languages at ICANN – English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Russian – should be sought for leadership positions (currently, almost 2/3 of ICANN community leaders are native English speakers).

3) **Gender**. Gender equality should be sought for ICANN leadership positions. Currently, women represent only 26% of ICANN community leaders.

4) **Stakeholders**. A better balance between stakeholders' groups should be sought in ICANN leadership positions. Currently, the technical community and the private sector represent 80% of ICANN community leaders, while civil society and government representatives only account for 10% each.

5) **Openness.** A better balance between "insiders" and "outsiders" should be sought in ICANN leadership positions, in order to favor newcomers, youth and community representatives who are not necessarily familiar with ICANN.

3. Creating an Office for diversity and inclusion within ICANN

In order to move forward, we propose to create, within ICANN, an office for diversity and inclusion (or "observatoire de la diversité") in charge of 1) gathering and analyzing data regarding diversity within ICANN and 2) making concrete proposals to enhance effective diversity within ICANN.

This Office would be tasked with the following missions:

➢ Establishing a diversity audit;

➢ Defining diversity criteria;

➢ Collecting the data for each criterion for all leadership positions in ICANN;

➢ Drafting a long-term diversity strategy;

➢ Publishing an annual report on diversity within ICANN;

➢ Making concrete proposals to improve diversity within ICANN, to be shared with the community.

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[6] The distribution of ICANN regions is uneven: some regions represent a small number of countries (e.g. 8 for North America) while others represent a large number of countries (e.g. 75 for Europe). Some countries are therefore over-represented compared to others, even though regional balance is achieved.