

**Statement of the ICANN African Community on the Low African Participation in the Applications for New gTLD**

**Prague, Wednesday, 27 June 2012**

We, members of the African community attending the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting held on Wednesday, 27 June 2012 in Prague (Czech Republic), have regretfully noted the few participation of Africa in the first round of applications for the new gTLDs program.

This lack of interest is mainly due to a deficiency of outreach and communication activities in this region, to the almost nonexistence of the domain names industry and also to the very small number of ICANN Accredited Registrars in Africa.

With the delays experienced in Africa in Internet development, in the use of services and in African ccTLDs management, the digital divide will get bigger with such a weak involvement of the region in the new gTLD program.

Considering the efforts made by ICANN over the last few years in its international approach and its will to integrate developing countries in all its projects, including the support program for new gTLD applicants who need assistance;

Taking into account that the digital economy can be an important source of revenue for nations and can trigger a more rational management of public affairs;

We make the following statement:

**Towards CANN :**

- We express our deep concern about the lack of promotion of the new gTLD program in the regions of developing economies, particularly in Africa, which has led to the derisory number of application from Africa.
- We also believe that the insignificant number of applications for support under the “Applicant Support Program” for new gTLD applicants who need assistance is a direct consequence of the absence of a communication effort in areas where potential applicants for such support live, especially Africa.
- We suggest that ICANN considers the possibility of positive discrimination towards applications from developing countries, especially Africa, in any kind of prioritization.
- We hope that, for the next rounds, an information and awareness campaign on the whole gTLD program and the “Applicant Support Program” in particular is timely programmed and implemented in developing countries in general and specifically in Africa.
- We also propose that ICANN
  - ✓ Strengthens further its communication policy towards African countries by raising awareness and training on stakes and opportunities of Internet governance and particularly the attribution of New Domain Names,
  - ✓ Involves and empowers ICANN local stakeholders in the outreach and training activities;
  - ✓ Encourages and facilitates the accreditation of new African registrars, using exceptional measures if necessary, which could offer Africa the opportunity to be part of this continuous revolution of the Internet.

**We recommend to African Governments to:**

- Continue their Abuja commitment to promote domain names in Africa and particularly the “. Africa”;

- Create suitable conditions for the establishment of NIC (Network Information Center) to manage the country code Top Level Domains (ccTLD) for the benefit of economic and social development in general;
- Promote an enabling environment to the emergence of national domain name operators through the intensification of Internet access channels, the increase of "e-government" applications and the widespread use of the Internet.

**We invite the African Private Sector to:**

- Foster the establishment of regional LARGE GROUPS, viable and competitive at the international level; the digital economy remains a huge income source in Africa that requires big initial investments;
- Continuously seek for new technologies adapted to social habits and lifestyles of local people and provide innovative services;
- Be more active and visible on the world stage within the governance technical management organizations, as well as in the technologies and their usage thereof;
- Actively participate in the GNSO constituencies in order to stimulate the development of policies promoting the domain names industry in Africa.

**We encourage the African ICANN accredited Registrars to:**

- Undertake more communication and outreach initiatives about their activities;
- Establish an ICANN Accredited African Registrars organization in order to create the enabling conditions for a real development of their activities in Africa and speak with one voice at the GNSO.

**We call the African Civil Society to:**

- acquire the best practices in terms of knowledge documentation and presence on the Internet (use of gTLDs with creation of local content);
- increase the number of outreach and information activities at local level;
- Participate in the capacity building activities in terms of understanding of the Internet domain industry and its role in the development of the digital economy.
- Contribute to the development of the African TLDs and ensure that each African application for new gTLDs succeeds.

***Prague, June 2012***