

Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting
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ICANN multi-stakeholder model (MSM) and the increase in national
legislation and regulations

For many years ICANN has been developing policies in relation to domain names and numbering resources to the benefit of the entire Internet community in a consensus based bottom-up form. Most recently, the ICANN community raised concerns about the effectiveness and efficacy of the model, leading ICANN to adopt a process to evolve the MSM. The issues identified and the work plan adopted to evolve the MSM model focused on challenges coming from within the ICANN community, and addressed how the ICANN community could improve its performance.

In this statement, the African community is attempting to address the challenges that face the consensus based bottom-up model from the outside world rather than from within. We try to highlight the challenges and possible approaches to effectively mitigate those challenges.

Among the trends that the African community sees as having a potential impact on ICANN's multistakeholder consensus based policy development are: increasing interests in the nationalization of the Internet, rising privacy concerns accompanied with national and regional data privacy laws, increasing concerns about the security of the Internet and big tech companies' upcoming policies. Most of these trends arise from the lack of knowledge of what the Internet is and how it works. Some of the trends also emanate from the fear of the unknown brought about by some of the products and services on the Internet value chain that have resulted in more open societies. We see these trends possibly resulting in the substitution of the bottom-up policy development process with dictated policies. ICANN processes ensure the voices of all stakeholders are heard, capturing perspectives from all supporting organizations and advisory committees. This stakeholder collaboration ensures governments and

businesses views are taken into consideration and guarantees that those views are well balanced against the public interest.

To that end ICANN will need to be agile and innovative, accommodating unavoidable changes while preserving the valuable MSM. As for At-Large, educating the community, raising their awareness and encouraging their participation ensure Internet end users have a stake in the game. Therefore, the AFRALO recommends the following:

- Increasing the efforts in building the capacity of the governments in Africa to understand how the Internet works and the importance of embracing the Internet's model of development.
- Creating a repository of the changes in regulations across various regions and their impact on the multistakeholder model policy development process.
- Supporting and fostering the communities in the preserving of best practices
- Raising awareness and creating an understanding of the multistakeholder policy development process and including success stories and examples that show how the MSM has worked well throughout the years.
- Support studies that aim to measure the impact of the new regulations on the DNS market.
- Foster the collaboration with global organizations like the ITU to emphasize on the importance of the multistakeholder model in coordinating the Internet Unique Identifiers.

- Encourage industry players to adopt and respect the development of the latest standards and recommended technologies.
- Support and encourage communities in their technological watch actions as well as in the evaluation of potential changes needed at the DNS level, changes in standards, etc.