

25 October 2024

RE: AFRALO-AFRICANN ICANN77 Statement - Improvement of African Participation in ICANN

Hadia Elminiawi
Chair, African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO)

Dear Ms. Hadia Elminiawi,

Thank you for the AFRALO-AFRICANN [letter](#) regarding the improvement of African participation in ICANN. We appreciate the recommendations set out in the letter.

The ICANN Board acknowledges the thoughtful input from the AFRALO-AFRICANN community and recognizes that more work needs to be done to enhance the participation of the African community in ICANN. In response to your letter, we would like to share some highlights of recent ICANN organization-related activities which are in support of your recommendations.

In 2012, ICANN launched the first ICANN strategy for Africa to support a stronger presence for in Africa, increase African participation in ICANN, as well as promote the multistakeholder model at the government, civil society, and private sector levels.

In 2016, ICANN opened its first African regional engagement office in Nairobi, Kenya, to deepen its engagement with African governments and the private sector levels.

The Africa attendance to ICANN meetings has drastically increased, due to the establishment of the fellowship and NextGen programs. As a result, more Africans are now contributing to working groups and occupying leadership position in ICANN's Supporting Organizations and Advisory Committees.

Furthermore, the Coalition for Digital Africa, an ICANN initiative which was established in 2022, has demonstrated its ability to enhance meaningful connectivity, capacity development and inclusivity in Africa. The successful implementation of the Coalition initiatives is a result of close cross-functional collaboration within ICANN, and among the Coalition partners. It is also important to note that the Coalition's initiatives are well aligned with the [ICANN Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#), facilitating a more unified and effective approach to achieving digital inclusion in Africa.

The benefits of the Coalition extend beyond the African community. While the primary focus is on fostering development and innovation within Africa, the ripple effects are global. Enhanced digital infrastructure and a more inclusive Internet governance contribute to a more robust and resilient global Internet. Indeed, the Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) projects, jointly implemented by ICANN and the Association of Africa universities (AAU), have already started to make an impact, with more than three hundred universities and research centers embarking on correcting their

information systems and email addresses to make them compatible with UA. Furthermore, work has begun to include UA and IDN in university curricula under the Coalition.

As to your recommendation on Africa having a dedicated seat on the Board, you will note that Article 7.2 (c) of ICANN's Bylaws already requires that there be, at all times, at least one director from each geographic region. Your recommendation of having special visa assistance for Africans to attend ICANN meetings is a topic of ongoing work and focus. ICANN always works to streamline and improve the visa processes for all of our meeting attendees, and this will continue to be an area of focus.

I assure you that we will continually explore and evaluate avenues in the future to actively engage with the African community to achieve our goal of thriving African participation in ICANN. Thank you again for your thoughtful letter on this important topic and we look forward to ongoing collaboration.

Sincerely,



Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Cc : Sally Costerton, Interim President & CEO, ICANN