Support for new gTLD applicants

Statement of the African ICANN community

The ICANN Board resolved at its Nairobi meeting (Resolution 20) that "*The Board requests stakeholders to work through their SOs and ACs, and form a Working Group to develop a sustainable approach to providing support to applicants requiring assistance in applying and operating new gTLDs .*"

The Members of the African Community, consisting of the AFRALO and the AfrICANN, attending the 38th ICANN meeting in Brussels, jointly discussed the possible support to be given to new gTLD applicants in Africa, who need assistance in applying for, and operating the gTLDs. As members of the community, we:

- Welcome the Board resolution 20 related to the support for Applicants requesting assistance in applying for and operating new gTLDs.

- Express our gratitude to the Board members for their consideration of the community concerns about the cost of applying for new gTLDs that might hinder applicants, especially those from developing countries.

- Strongly believe that entrepreneur applicants from African countries, where the market is not wide enough for a reasonable profit making industry, are eligible for support.

- Deem that Civil society, NGOs and non for profit organizations in Africa are the most in need of such support, because they have a deep impact in society since they work at the grass-root level.

- Believe that support is of utmost importance for geographic, cultural linguistic, and more generally community based applications..

- Urge that support to new gTLD applicants in Africa be prioritised since this support will be an incitement for new aspirants to come forward and apply for new gTLDs.

- Believe that the support to be provided to applicants of new gTLDs in Africa should include, but is not limited to the following:
  - Financial, by reducing the application and the on-going fees
  - Linguistic, by translating all the application documents, especially the Applicant Guidebook, in the six UN languages
  - Legal, by assisting the applicants in preparing their applications properly.
  - Technical, by
    - helping the applicants to define the infrastructure options,
    - addressing the issue of infrastructure problems in some African countries; such as IPV6, internet connectivity etc.

- Strongly support that cost reduction is the key element in fulfilling the goals of ICANN Board's Resolution 20 within the principles of the recovery of the application and on-going costs.

- Propose that the following be entertained to achieve cost reduction:
  - Waiving the cost of Program Development ($26k).
  - Waiving the Risk/Contingency cost ($60k).
  - Lowering the application cost ($100k)
  - Waiving the Registry fixed fees ($25k per calendar year), and charge the Registry-Level Transaction Fee only ($0.25 per domain name registration or renewal).

- Propose that the reduced cost be paid incrementally, which will give the African applicants more time to raise money, and investors will be more encouraged to fund an application that passes the initial evaluation.

- Believe that African communities apply for new gTLDs according to an appropriate business model taking into consideration the realities of the African region. ICANN's commitment towards supporting gTLD applicants in Africa will be a milestone to the development of the overall Internet community in Africa

- Since Africa is disadvantaged and lagging behind due to the digital divide, we strongly suggest that ICANN provides supplementary support and additional cost reduction for gTLDs applications from African countries.

Brussels, 22 June 2010