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<tr>
<td>03 April 2020</td>
<td>Middle East and Adjoining Countries (MEAC) Strategy 2021-2025</td>
<td>ADOPTED</td>
<td>Drafting team volunteer(s): Satish Babu, Seun Ojedej, Raymond Selorm Mamattah (AFRALO), Dr. T. V. Gopal (APRALO)</td>
<td>13Y, 0N, 0A</td>
<td>16 April 2020</td>
<td>20 April 2020</td>
<td>Baher Esmat <a href="mailto:meac.swg@icann.org">meac.swg@icann.org</a></td>
<td>AL-RALO-ST-0420-01-01-EN</td>
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Ratified by AFRALO & APRALO Leadership Teams (12Y, 0N, 0A)

See BigPulse Poll result

Hide the information below, please click here >>
Brief Overview

**Purpose:** The purpose of this public comment window is to seek input from the ICANN community on the draft document for the Middle East and Adjoining Countries (MEAC) Regional Strategy for Fiscal Years 2021-2025.

**Current Status:** The draft strategy has been agreed upon by the Middle East and Adjoining Countries Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG), and is now open for public comment.

**Next Steps:**
- Comments submitted will be discussed and assessed amongst the MEAC-SWG.
- Relevant comments will be added when developing the final strategy document.
- Once the final strategy document is ready, the MEAC-SWG will develop the first year Action Plan that will run from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.

Section I: Description and Explanation

The MEAC Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG) was tasked to develop an engagement strategy for the region in line with ICANN’s global strategic plan for fiscal years 2021-2025.

This plan goes into effect by 1 July 2020 for the next five years.

In an effort to align ICANN’s latest global Strategic Plan for fiscal years FY2021-2025 with regional needs and demands, a group of community members came together under the support of the Global Stakeholder Engagement team for the Middle East (GSE Middle East) to develop a new engagement strategy for ICANN in the Middle East. This strategy will align with ICANN’s 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

The group identified four of the five strategic focus areas set forth in the ICANN Strategic Plan to be of relevance to the Middle East:

1. Security
2. ICANN’s Governance
3. Unique Identifier Systems
4. Geopolitics

Under each strategic focus area, the MEAC Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG) identified a set of goals that are of relevance to the Middle East and adjusted them to fit the needs and demands of the region. The MEAC-SWG then identified targeted outcomes and actions for each strategic focus area in order to guide the implementation phase.

In executing this regional strategy, a detailed Action Plan will be developed annually between 2021 and 2025. This Action Plan will further inform the action items listed in the strategy document, with the possibility of adding more if needed.

Section II: Background

- Middle East and Adjoining Countries (MEAC) Regional Strategy 2021-2025
- ICANN’s 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan
- MEAC Strategy Working Space

Section III: Relevant Resources

Previous Regional Strategies:

- 2013 – 2016 Middle East Strategy
- 2016 – 2020 MEAC Strategy

Section IV: Additional Information

Section V: Reports

**FINAL VERSION SUBMITTED (IF RATIFIED)**

The final version to be submitted, if the draft is ratified, will be placed here by upon completion of the vote.
FINAL DRAFT VERSION TO BE VOTED UPON BY THE ALAC

The final draft version to be voted upon by the ALAC will be placed here before the vote is to begin.

Please note the ratification vote for this statement was sent to the AFRALO and APRALO Leadership Teams. After the AFRALO-APRALO LT ratification, the ALAC will be able to endorse the statement.

DRAFT SUBMITTED FOR DISCUSSION

The first draft submitted will be placed here before the call for comments begins. The Draft should be preceded by the name of the person submitting the draft and the date/time. If, during the discussion, the draft is revised, the older version(s) should be left in place and the new version along with a header line identifying the drafter and date/time should be placed above the older version(s), separated by a Horizontal Rule (available + Insert More Content control).

02 April Draft -

Joint Statement by AFRALO and APRALO on MEAC Regional Strategy (FY21-25)
AFRALO and APRALO appreciate the opportunity to comment on the MEAC Regional Strategy Document developed by the MEAC Regional Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG), based on ICANN's Strategic Plan for 2021-25.

We find the document to be largely consistent with the aspirations of the end-users of the MEAC region. We have the following comments to make the document better-adapted to the evolving Internet Governance ecosystem. These are classified under the four subheadings used in the original document:

A. Security

1. DNS Abuse is one of the biggest threats for end-users. The MEAC Strategy needs to emphasize measures against DNS Abuse, as DNS consistent with the measures that the ICANN community has since recommended on aspects such as reporting, abuse thresholds, and tools for contract compliance.
2. The last DNS study conducted in the region appears to be in 2015. We recommend that this be updated in order to better understand the state of the market, including security.
3. The technologies of the future need a framework for Security which includes assuring quality of the mnemonic names in the region, different physical locations of the root name servers for the region, ascertaining the preparedness for DNSSEC at all levels in the region, performance monitoring and timely checking of the traffic flows.

B. ICANN's Governance

1. We recommend that the strategy considers adopting some of the proposals recommended from the recent community work on Next Steps to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, for better effectiveness and higher throughput, reducing volunteer burn-out, and better use of resources.
2. Scoping of the Computer Supported Collaborative Work tools in terms of a judicious mix of online and face-to-face meeting is necessary based on the region. Measures must be taken to include all stakeholders in the region, especially those that are remote and inaccessible, or bandwidth- or linguistically challenged, to articulate their opinions in the policy processes and discussions.
3. Universal open standards with the applications offered on the edge devices need to be advocated.

C. Unique Identifier Systems

1. We recommend more focus on academia and industry for the promotion of IDNs and UA in the Region, jointly with the UASG. Working with Academia is essential for producing technical solutions, including open source solutions, to UA problems, whereas industry's support is required to implement solutions from existing vendors.
2. Inclusion of the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, ICANN is strongly suggested for arriving at a purposeful process for regulating the addition of the gTLDs.

D. Geopolitics

1. In addition to the elements already proposed, we also recommend that ICANN carries out better advocacy with nationals Governments in the region so as to ensure that ICANN's strategy gets adopted. The advocacy needs to include the due appraisals on goal of universal accessibility through one internet with global navigation aids, services and appropriate use of technology.
2. Continuing and increased attention to internationalized [I18N] domain names [IDNs] is necessary.

30 March Draft -

Joint Statement by AFRALO and APRALO on MEAC Regional Strategy (FY21-25)

AFRALO and APRALO appreciate the opportunity to comment on the MEAC Regional Strategy Document developed by the MEAC Regional Strategy Working Group (MEAC-SWG), based on ICANN's Strategic Plan for 2021-25.

We find the document to be largely consistent with the aspirations of the end-users of the MEAC region. We have the following comments to make the document better-adapted to the evolving Internet Governance ecosystem. These are classified under the four subheadings used in the original document:

1. Security
   a. DNS Abuse is one of the biggest threats for end-users. The MEAC Strategy needs to emphasize measures against DNS Abuse, as DNS consistent with the measures that the ICANN community has since recommended on aspects such as reporting, abuse thresholds, and tools for contract compliance.
   b. The last DNS study conducted in the region appears to be in 2015. We recommend that this be updated in order to better understand the state of the market, including security.
   c. Emerging Technologies such as DoH/DoT may be considered amongst measures to enhance the security of the domain name system in the region.

2. ICANN's Governance
   a. We recommend that the strategy considers adopting some of the proposals recommended from the recent community work on Next Steps to Improve the Effectiveness of ICANN's Multistakeholder Model, for better effectiveness and higher throughput, reducing volunteer burn-out, and better use of resources.
   b. Given that face-to-face meetings are likely to be reduced in the near future due to the ongoing pandemic, measures must be taken to ensure communities in the region, especially those that are remote and inaccessible, or bandwidth- or linguistically challenged, are able to articulate their opinions in the policy processes and discussions.

3. Unique Identifier Systems
   a. We recommend more focus on academia and industry for the promotion of IDNs and UA in the Region, jointly with the UASG. Working with Academia is essential for producing technical solutions, including open source solutions, to UA problems, whereas industry's support is required to implement solutions from existing vendors.

4. Geopolitics
   a. In addition to the elements already proposed, we also recommend that ICANN carries out better advocacy with nationals Governments in the region so as to ensure that ICANN's strategy gets adopted.