

Assessment of the Transition of the Technical Coordination and Management of the Internet's Domain Name and Addressing System

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce, Notice of Inquiry. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) was formed in 1998 and I had the privilege of serving as the Chairman of the General Assembly (GA) of the Domain Name Supporting Organization (DNSO) during the formative years when there were few participants from the developing world and even fewer from Africa

In spite of the limited resources at the time ICANN embraced diversity and included geographic and linguistic diversity as a strength in its workings

The series of Memorandum of Understandings with the United States of America Department of Commerce benefitted ICANN and enabled ICANN to develop enhanced means of fulfilling its principal objective of technical coordination of the global Internet while being accountable to a community.

There is no doubt that ICANN has been successful in its core function of coordinating a stable and fast growing Internet. The series of MOU/JPA have shown over the years that ICANN meets key milestones in the privatization of the Internet DNS. The principles of stability, competition, private, bottom-up coordination and representation have been well integrated into ICANNs processes and structures. The technical coordination and management of the Internet DNS has been done in a manner that ensured the continued stability and security of the Internet DNS evidenced by the growth and resilience of the Internet in the past decade

While the JPA and the past relationships documented through MoUs with the US Department of Commerce have provided an important guidance for ICANN's development, the JPA has been successful and should be terminated allowing the industry led bottom-up technical policy development process to function independently

However, ICANN's success may have posed challenges to itself since outreach to new communities increased interest in ICANN and made it easy for wishes to be made about ICANN and the resources it coordinates. Throughout ICANNs development there has also been suggestions among stakeholders about one or another constituency not having adequate influence and that continues today. However ICANN's multi-stakeholder driven bottom-up policy processes made it possible for participation globally accepting several backgrounds and interests. In particular, Africans benefitted immensely from this inclusive approach to policy. The world has benefited from it considering the resounding adoption of multi-stakeholder approach generally and the ICANN bottom-up approach to technical policy might become practiced in other areas beyond the narrow critical technical function of ICANN

ICANN has continuously developed a variety of means for being transparent and accountable to its large active and diverse community throughout the years. ICANN is much larger, more international, more capable and institutionally more responsible. With the numerous transparency and accountability instruments developed over the years ICANN's accountability may be superior to similar organizations and it will continue to progress in that area

Today ICANN can boast of significant and meaningful African participation throughout the organization and with far fewer barriers. I had commented at IGF Rio that while Africa was deploying its new networks and developing its technical policy processes it was not a good time for drastic change in the administration of the Internet. The termination of the JPA does not change the administration of the Internet which has been largely industry led with bottom-up policy processes and does not affect the institution building activities going on in Africa.

In fact the termination of the JPA would confirm the approaches in practice in the region and provide a more stable global environment for development

Respectfully,

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June 4, 2009