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Office of the Ombudsman

Remarks at Cairo Public Forum

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Mr. Chairman, Peter Dengate - Thrush, President Paul Twomey, members of the Board of Directors and Liaisons, esteemed members of the ICANN community, ICANN staff, ladies, and gentlemen, thank you for your warm welcome here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have a number of items that I would like to share with you today. First, I can report that to November 3, 2008, my Office has received 95 complaints and contacts from 23 countries. Of these, 22 complaints were in my jurisdiction. This number of jurisdictional complaints is on pace with previous years.

Second, in accordance with the Bylaws, I have released a report concerning the repayment of

expenses, and I made several recommendations to the Board of Directors. I look forward to receiving a response in due course.

Since we last met in Lisbon in March, I have attended the United States Ombudsman Association Annual Conference at Lexington, Kentucky. The Ombudsman for the Province of Alberta and I presented a day long training session on strategic and evaluation planning and this was very well received by the USOA members.

I believe that the continued involvement of the ICANN Ombudsman with the peer Ombudsman and Online Dispute Resolution communities is important.

Through these associations my Office stays abreast

of the best practices in the field of dispute resolution, and by participating in the various fora, increases the reputational value of both the Ombudsman and ICANN as a world leader in online Ombudsmanship.

Last month I had the pleasure of acting as a faculty member for the International Ombudsman Association training course, Ombudsman 101, which was held at Vancouver. Other ombudsman faculty members came from such institutions as Harvard Medical School, Coca Cola Enterprises, the International Monetary Fund, and the Universities of Hawaii and California. I am pleased that the reputation of the ICANN Office of the Ombudsman allows it to participate with colleagues of such renowned and global institutions.

Mr. Chairman, I also have the pleasure of tabling the Fourth Annual Report for my Office with the Corporate Secretary, as required by the bylaws. This report has been translated into five languages, and is available on the Ombudsman webpage. While not essentially an evaluation document, the annual report provides information to the Ombudsman and the agency it serves about complaint volume, types of issues considered by the Ombudsman, and resolutions. This information provides information to both of these parties, and the community, and enables further conversations about staffing levels, budgets, jurisdiction, “mission creep”¹ and effectiveness.

¹ Wikipedia defines Mission creep as the expansion of a project or mission beyond its original goals, often after initial successes. The term often implies a certain disapproval of newly adopted goals by the user of the term. Mission creep is usually considered undesirable due to the dangerous path of each success breeding more ambitious attempts, only stopping when a final, often catastrophic, failure occurs. The term

I would like to thank our Publications Manager, Tanzanica King, for once again having designed and desktop published a very professional and attractive report.

Mr. Chairman, as is tradition I would like to make a few comments Ombudsman associations as part of a continuing opportunity to use the Public Forum to inform the Board, the staff and the community about the role and function of the Ombudsman. There are several classes of Ombudsman. Classical – which are appointed by state governments; organizational – which deal with in house matters in corporations, academic institutions, or health care settings; and executive Ombudsman – which like my office, receive

was originally applied exclusively to military operations, but has recently been applied to many different fields, mainly the growth of bureaucracies.

complaints from a defined community about the conduct or operations of governmental agencies, commercial entities, or other service providers.

Ombudsman associations represent practitioners based on two lines: geography (United States Ombudsman Association – Forum of Canadian Ombudsman) or by field of practice (International Ombudsman Association – organizational; International Ombudsman Institute – classical). There is no specific association for executive Ombudsman. The ICANN Office of the Ombudsman maintains membership in the four noted associations, and is a frequent presenter of leading edge research on demonstrating value, and Ombudsman evaluations.

That concludes my report. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Public Forum today.