Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We would like to have the Doudou N'Diaye Rose drumming band entertain you.

 [Applause]

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Chairman, ICANN board of directors, Dr. Steve Crocker.

[Applause]

DR. STEPHEN D. CROCKER: I want to be introduced by a set of drums every time.

[Laughter]

DR. STEPHEN D. CROCKER: This is great. Particularly just after lunch.

Welcome to Senegal and good afternoon, everyone. On behalf of the ICANN board, I want to welcome you to Dakar for ICANN's 42nd international public meeting.

In principle, this is our opening ceremony, but many of us have already been here for several days, so the meeting is well underway.

Of particular note, there was an African ministerial meeting last week that resulted in a very substantial communique that includes quite a few requests for us to work on. This represents strong engagement with the Internet as a whole and with ICANN in particular.

Another very important meeting here is the AFRALO meeting, which involved the cooperation of RALOs from other regions to support this very important gathering of Internet leaders from all over Africa.

I congratulate all of the participants and I salute the other regions for their spirit of cooperation. This is in the highest tradition.

I want to thank president of Senegal, his Excellency Maitre Abdoulaye Wade for taking time to welcome and speak to the ICANN community earlier today. Thank you also to all of the other members of the government and the Senegalese community who joined us as well.

There is no doubt that our work here is considered important and is being watched by people all over the world. And in this context, I want to talk to you about two traditions and then mention several of the key pieces of work.

43 years ago I was lucky enough to be at the first meeting of the future network users of the ARPANET, which was the seed for today's Internet.

We represented four sites, all in the western part of the United States. The meeting was called to initiate technical work to define the protocols for the new network, but the first decision we made was to visit each other's laboratories.

We understood the irony in that decision. In principle, the network was supposed to decrease the need for travel, yet we intuitively understood that face-to-face interaction and the need to learn about the working environment and the needs of the people we're working with was paramount.

And thus, we initiated a tradition that continues unbroken all these years and brings us here to Dakar to meet the people from Senegal and all over Africa, as well as our colleagues who regularly spend more time on airplanes than at home.

The other tradition we established right away was openness and inclusiveness. Our meetings were open to all interested parties, and our documents were available free of charge to anyone.

That tradition continues among all the organizations that have sprung up to accompany the growth and breadth of the Internet.

Meetings and documents for the Internet Engineering Task Force -- that's the IETF -- for the Internet Society, for the regional Internet registries, and of course for ICANN, are open to anyone, and thus, we

encourage the sharing of ideas, participation by new people, and the idea that the network would benefit all of the users.

Today, we emphasize these ideas under the rubric of the multistakeholder model. To me, that's a fancy way of saying: The process must be open and inviting and that all of the parties must have access to the decision processes.

ICANN's policy and decision-making are a product of this commitment. Complex, contentious issues are sorted out through robust debate, discussion, and finally consensus.

All of our supporting organizations and advisory committees are part of this process. Hundreds of volunteers -- perhaps even thousands -- work year-round developing policies and ensuring the safe and secure operation of the single, global, interoperable, one Internet.

ICANN is not only committed to the multistakeholder model way of doing business now, we've committed to making this model stronger and better.

We are implementing the recommendations of the accountability and transparency review team. We'll keep our commitments to continue scrutiny and improvement. It fits in with the other parts of our DNA that ICANN be of service and work in cooperation with the rest of the players in the Internet environment.

We are here to serve, not to control. Our value comes from the work that we do and whether we meet the needs of the community.

ICANN is only as strong and as robust as the people who commit their time and energy to the organization, the many volunteers in the supporting organizations and advisory committees, the staff, and our board.

Each individual cares, first and foremost, about helping others and the community, and in the wider Internet community we are but one small group among many.

All of us value the leadership, energy, and commitment of the organizations that existed before us and the new bodies that have sprung up.

In essence, we work for the regional Internet registries, we work for the IETF, we work for the registries and the registrars. We work cooperatively with everyone. With governments, with user groups, with service providers, and with those who participate in Internet governance.

We thrive on cooperation and we welcome the participation and the creation of additional groups.

And this week, our 42nd international public meeting is all about that participation. We are going to tackle together important issues that have an effect on what happens with the greatest shared resource of our time. We're going to talk about the critical transition to IPv6 and how public policy and private practices can speed that shift.

I was very pleased to hear that AfriNIC, the African regional registry, has allocated IPv6 addresses to approximately a quarter of its 900 members. That is an excellent start and I hope the numbers climb rapidly.

We will be talking about DNSSEC. We will be studying the WHOIS registrant identification and bringing law enforcement, security responders, and the private sector together to fight DNS-related abuses like phishing, malware, and crime ware.

We'll be talking about the continuing efforts to bring the characters of the languages of the world to DNS.

And there's even more to discuss when it comes to country codes.

The ccNSO, I'm told, has just welcomed its 120th member, dot ir from Iran.

We'll be hearing news from Senegal, Nigeria, Japan, and Denmark, and we mark the 25th anniversary -- or longer -- of 19 of the TLDs, including quite a few ccTLDs, and we have the very beginnings of the recognition

that I hope that we can bestow on these. The list of names are on the screen. We are arranging certificates of recognition and we'll try to establish a tradition over time.

And of course we have our internal organizational matters to deal with.

Our CEO, Rod Beckstrom, has announced a plan to step down next July, leaving us with an appropriate amount of time to find his successor.

We will have many contributions from the community, including a session this afternoon, on the -- on this process.

We are also examining our rules for conflicts of interest and ethics, always seeking to improve them and our practices that go along with those rules.

All that and more is the full ICANN agenda this week.

No matter what specific technical issue we come together to talk about this week, we are talking about one big thing: We're all focused on ensuring our single, global, interoperable Internet continues to connect everyone everywhere.

When we started, our world was but a few dozen universities in the United States. Today, our world is, literally, the world.

That's why it's such a great thrill for me and for ICANN to be here this week in Senegal.

The Internet now includes a couple of billion people, and we consider that to be no more than a good start.

So on behalf of the ICANN board of directors, I officially welcome you to Dakar and our 42nd international public meeting.

Thank you all for coming, and we'll now hear from our president and CEO, Rod Beckstrom. Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. ROD BECKSTROM: Bienvenue a la reunion de l'ICANN dans un Dakar ensoleille.

Welcome to ICANN 42 and to sunny Dakar. As you will have discovered, the Senegalese are known for their hospitality, a hospitality so warm that it rivals the sun that shines on the beaches and the city. There is a Wolof word for it, teranga.

We are deeply grateful to the Government of Senegal's Ministry of Communication and Telecommunications and ICT and to the Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications and Posts for their generosity and hospitality in hosting this meeting. They have shown us the true meaning of teranga.

We welcome our special guests who honor us with their presence today: His Excellency President Wade of Senegal and Minister Guirassy. We thank Madame Diop, Director of ICT at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies. We also thank the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and in particular Francopol and Frederick Gaudreau of the Surete du Quebec for organizing an outreach and awareness session for Senegalese law enforcement on dealing with cybercrime.

And I would like to recognize Africa's ICANN and Internet leaders, including Adiel Akplogan, CEO of AfriNIC, for joining us today.

I am glad to see so many of you here today, and equally glad that so many more are participating remotely.

There is another West African tradition for which Senegal is well known, and that is storytelling. Storytelling is done by griots, who have kept West African history alive for thousands of years through words and music. The griot profession is passed down generation to generation and requires years of training and apprenticeship in genealogy, history, and music.

Griots literally give voice to generations of West African society.

Having a voice and being heard is a fundamental human right. Griots are important members of West African society because they are living

history books. They hold the stories of a society in their hearts and minds. But each of us holds our own stories, opinions and ideas. And we share them. In discussions with each other, through articles and white papers, through lectures, music, art, videos, and through social networks and through meetings like this one here today.

A few days ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Ile de Goree. It is a picturesque island but one with a tragic history as a slave trading station. Today, it is a museum and a UNESCO world heritage site, reminding us of those terrible events and the millions who crossed the threshold of the "door of no return" and who lost their freedom.

It struck me that the Internet represents exactly the opposite. It brings freedom and connection to everyone, from anyplace, anywhere, at any time. It allows us to connect to anyone, opening up new worlds and building a new stronger society and helping to unite our world.

The Internet is another door, and now that we have passed through it, the world will never be the same. Not for us, and not for governments.

Senegal, like most other nations, is experiencing the rapid growth of information and communication technologies. That growth brings the potential for innovation, increased productivity, education and greater competitiveness. It connects people in new and exciting ways. It brings more voices into the chorus. More voices that enrich our discussions and more voices that foster innovation.

The Internet advances economies through innovation. It provides a global launchpad for ideas that will generate tomorrow's great economic opportunities. It empowers creative thought and risk-taking. And never has the Internet had a more fertile ground to grow in.

Here in Africa, there has been tremendous progress towards greater connectivity. In 10 years, the number of Internet users has increased 25-fold. This is rapid growth, yet it still represents only 11.5% of all Africans.   The stage is set for greater growth, thanks to AfriNIC's distribution of IPv6 addresses, as Steve alluded too.

EN

According to AfriNIC, more than half the continent has received blocks of IPv6 addresses. Sonatel, Senegal's telecommunications provider, will speak about IPv6 at a roundtable session this Thursday, as they are one of the leaders in this area.

African ccTLDs, including Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda are adding security to the domain name system by working to deploy DNSSEC.

So many others who are taking advantage of the three-day DNS security training this week offered by the network startup resources center, NIC Senegal, and ICANN.

I also hope that many of you will participate in SSAC's meeting on DNSSEC this Wednesday.

Your voices are stronger than ever, and the Internet's potential for greater growth and influence makes ICANN's role even more relevant than ever.

Yesterday, I had the honor of addressing the opening session of a capacity-building workshop attended by representatives from nearly every African At-Large structure. AFRALO vice chair Tijani Ben Jemaa and chair Fatimata Seye Sylla have built a five-day training program to give African civil society the tools and the knowledge to participate effectively in the ICANN policy development process.

As we move steadily closer to truly connecting every person in the world, our collective economic future will depend on maintaining a stable domain name system. A stable and unified DNS provides the foundation for continued innovation. ICANN must ensure that this role is understood and advance our common goal of a secure, stable and unified global Internet. That is job number one for ICANN.

I mentioned a few moments ago that everyone has a voice and a right to be heard. At ICANN, those concepts are a part of our DNA. The Internet is a global resource that belongs to everyone. We believe that everyone with an interest in the Internet has an equal right to be heard in its governance.

ICANN is built on openness, inclusion, trust and collaboration. These very principles are woven into the multistakeholder processes demonstrated here this week.

The entire ecosystem collaborates: Internet Service Providers, domain name businesses, local Internet communities, governments, Internet standards bodies, regional Internet registries, individual Internet users, nonprofits, and businesses around the world.

Engagement with governments is also fundamental to ICANN's role and to the very future of the Internet. In representing governments at ICANN, the Governmental Advisory Committee, or GAC, makes its voice heard in all of our work. The GAC's significant role in ICANN, of course, complements many other groups.

This constructive international engagement, including the series of intensive Board/GAC consultations, was demonstrated throughout the development of the new gTLD program. It demonstrates once again that the multistakeholder model is alive and working.

Operating a new gTLD, as many of you know, is a complex undertaking, and applicants from developing countries may need technical or financial information or assistance to facilitate the establishment of a new registry.

ICANN's global community is already taking steps to help needy applicants for new gTLDs. A joint working group has spent many, many hours working on a proposal that the board will consider this week on how best to provide that support.

Details may still need to be ironed out before the application window opens in January, but the voice of the global community is clear on this issue. Support for needy applicants will help ensure that we receive a diversity of new gTLD applications and that these are not just domains for big organizations and the developed world.

ICANN's global community is rich with talented and experienced people who may be interested in helping as well. Part of the support available includes an online gathering space to facilitate cooperation among

those interested in establishing a public interest gTLD registry and entities willing and able to provide pro bono assistance. This part of the micro-site is now up at ICANN.org.

I encourage each of you to think about how you can help. Could you offer pro bono services, in-kind support, or grants? Assist with application writing? Technical requirements? Registry back-end services? Or DNSSEC consulting?

Whatever means you choose, you will be able to help bring more voices and more people to the Internet.

New gTLDs are an important initiative and communicating about the program has kept me and many other ICANN staff members very busy. In early September, several of us hit the road and scattered around the globe to spread the word.

When the board approved the new gTLD program in Singapore in June, it charged us with informing and educating the world about new gTLDs.

That plan includes an ambitious series of organized visits and events in many countries. This is the first key deliverable of the new gTLD program. It represents Phase 1 of operations.

In recent weeks, ICANN representatives have explained, discussed and debated the new gTLD program in Ankara, Beirut, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Dehli, Doha, Dubai, Helsinki, Istanbul, London, Munich, Nairobi, Oslo, Paris, São Paulo and Warsaw. And we are planning to take part in events in Beijing, Jakarta, Moscow, Sofia, Tokyo, and beyond.

In every case we have met members of this community, government officials, business leaders, academics and students, the media, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

We're not done yet but I wanted to take this opportunity to provide an update on our progress and to acknowledge some of those involved.

First, let me thank the many staff, board, community members who have spoken and taken part at events in numerous countries as a part of these outreach efforts.

There are far too many of you to mention here by name, but please know that your contributions to this awareness-raising effort are both noted and appreciated.

The message we've been delivering is that the new gTLD program offers unique opportunities, but that applying for and running a registry isn't for everyone.

Anyone who might be interested needs to do their own homework, develop a solid understanding of the program, and then determine if a new gTLD is right for them. The clock is ticking.

Judging from the media coverage we've generated, the roadshow has been a success. We've been interviewed numerous times on television, radio, online, and in newspapers, allowing our message to spread far beyond the auditoriums and conference halls across six continents to reach potential applicants.

International news outlets such as Al-Jazeera, BBC, CNN, have carried stories, as have major newspapers in every country we have visited. In India alone, no fewer than 15 English language newspapers and many more in other languages carried stories on new gTLDs based on our visit.

The people we've met and talked with have many questions, and they've come away with a better understanding of what new gTLDs are all about.

And more importantly, they will have a better understanding of what ICANN is all about and a deeper appreciation for all the work that we collectively do. Representatives of more than 100 countries are here in Dakar today. I ask each of you to help us carry this message to your communities, whether that means distributing materials, organizing events, sending a Web link or sending an e-mail to your networks and your associations. Whatever steps you take, please do so soon.

The new gTLD application window opens in 79 days. That's just a little over two months away, and it's before we'll meet again the next time at our ICANN meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica.

We can bring more voices and more people to the Internet through internationalized domain names. IDNs make it possible to access the Internet in scripts other than Latin-based characters, and their adoption has been one of the community's great collaborative efforts.

Maybe you only speak Arabic or Chinese or Hindi. IDNs will make it easier to join the conversation and to tell your story.

I've spent much of this speech on the value of hearing from the widest possible range of voices on Internet governance, and that is true no matter what your view. In a multistakeholder model, it's important that everyone be heard.

Since we met in Singapore, ICANN has opened more than 20 public comment periods on topics such as expired domain names and how to expand participation from developing countries in the new gTLD program.

But I had to smile when I saw the title of a public comment period that opened at the end of August. The announcement said that we were seeking public comment on our public comment process.

If that doesn't sum up ICANN, I don't know what does. We have to be one of the most open governance structures in the world. When your organization is built on a foundation of accountability and transparency, as ours is, you wind up seeking public input on how you seek public input. And that, I think, is a good thing.

How we receive public comments matters because it's a bedrock concept in a bottom-up model like ours.

Ongoing community review cycles are built into ICANN's foundation through the Affirmation of Commitments. As we implement the ATRT recommendations, the WHOIS and security, stability and resiliency

review teams are developing additional recommendations to improve ICANN.

Right now, there are multiple organizational reviews underway simultaneously. Roughly nine in total. Having trouble keeping up with them? So am I. So we built a Web site that includes a simple visual graphic depicting the status of each review, with links for more information to help all of us follow those important initiatives.

I also want to give you an update on where we are with the IANA functions contract. Those who have followed its evolution will recall that back in the late 1990s the U.S. Government laid out a vision for ICANN's rapid transition to a fully independent international organization. This was clearly stated in the white paper approved by the U.S. Government as official Department of Commerce policy.

We're not there yet. Instead we've seen a series of short-term contracts overseen by the U.S. Government. In response to Commerce's requests for comment on the IANA functions contract, many have argued that this structure is no longer appropriate for the organization responsible for a key function of the global Internet.

Nor has that process achieved the level of transparency that we feel the global community has a right to expect. We are pleased that the department shares our concern as evidenced by their commitment to include greater transparency requirements in the next contract.

We hope that the department will permit us to publish data related to root zone change requests so that every major step in the process will be open to public examination. The spirit of the ATRT and the Affirmation of Commitments demands no less.

We also hope that Commerce will support publication of the detailed user documentation that ICANN has developed over the past two years, which will increase the confidence of other nations and stakeholders that the process of root updates is fair and predictable.

Many submissions to Commerce specifically requested that ICANN's structure be more international. The feedback from many community

participants globally was that the current unilateral structure of the IANA functions contract should evolve to meet the needs of the global community. We hope that progress toward the vision articulated by the U.S. Government's white paper will be made in the next agreement, and we hope and we expect to see a roadmap for the realization of this vision in the future.

As I work through the remaining year of my term, we have many challenges and opportunities ahead of us. We need to negotiate a successful evolution of the IANA functions contract that expires at the end of March. We need to successfully launch the new gTLD program, the largest and most complex program in ICANN's history. We need to continue to implement the ATRT recommendations and support its community reviews.

We are a complex organization and our complexity increases with every new review, working group, or policy initiative that adds more requirements and processes to what we already do.

Pressures on ICANN are growing. Political, ethical, financial, geopolitical, and operational. The complexity of the geopolitical landscape, the risks and unpredictability of the new gTLD program, the mounting concerns over cybersecurity, the need to coordinate so many diverse institutional and organizational tasks, present an enormous challenge to an organization of just under 150 staff members covering activities across six continents.

Given the increased respect and stature for ICANN around the world, and as witnessed this morning, we are in an excellent position to recruit a highly talented individual for the CEO position. A skilled manager, respected by the world, and able to lead a complex international organization in transition. We are currently operating with an annual budget of $85 million and with the new gTLD program, this could perhaps double.

ICANN's next CEO may be from any country in the world, working in any organization, but must have the courage to manage and, in some cases,

stand up to the many pressures and special interests the CEO is subjected to every day.

The person who succeeds me should be a person of integrity, experience, talent, skill, intellect, and leadership qualities, someone with a strong international background and the judgment to make tough choices under enormous pressure.

The board recently adopted a resolution about the CEO search. It states that no current or incoming member of the board or liaisons may be considered as a candidate for the role of CEO. It was intended to assure the community that the search process would be fair and impartial and avoid the appearance of a clear conflict of interest.

I feel very strongly that the board members interested in the position -- whether they have applied in the past, would like to apply now, have expressed an interest, or may apply in the future -- should state their interest publicly.

In addition, the Board Governance Committee identified three of its members to review and guide staff efforts to revise the conflicts of interest policy and the ethics program.

My decision to leave does not mean that I'm going to take my foot off the gas pedal. I don't know how to. I plan on driving us to accomplish two years of work in the next eight months. I am more focused than ever on the execution of top priorities.

I will also do my best to assure an efficient and effective handover at the end of my term, and I hope that the person who replaces me will be of the highest integrity and has no recent or current commercial or career interests in the domain industry, because ICANN's fairness, objectivity and independence are of paramount importance to the future of the Internet. We are not here in the domain name business. We are here to serve the global public interest.

If we can continue to manage the challenges I've talked about, ICANN is poised for future success. To lay the groundwork, this fiscal year we've put into place a new financial management system. This should give the

board, the community, management, and staff greater insight into budget management and it will also further enhance our commitment to accountability and transparency.

We have also just received our 12th consecutive clean audit. We have a 100% track record in this respect. Our financial house remains in order. We will continue to exercise the budgetary discipline needed to keep costs low and be good stewards of ICANN's resources.

Working with VeriSign and NTIA, we have completed a multiyear automation project that streamlines the management of the root zone, and this year we will transfer all of our Marina del Rey staff to a new facility to enhance the productivity and to better accommodate the technological needs of the organization.

And we'll also continue to bring new voices into the ICANN multistakeholder process at every level.

Thank you to those of you here who are new to the ICANN family and attending one of our meetings for the first time. We are glad that you are here. We welcome you.

This fiscal year was the first in which full remote participation was used at all three international public meetings. With stakeholders in every country in the world, ICANN strives for world-class remote participation services that enable Internet users and their voices to the discussion from wherever they may be. Remote participation supports ICANN's commitment to maintain and improve robust mechanisms for public input and transparency. This is what bottom-up, consensus-driven policymaking looks like.

Those remote connections are enabling people in Beijing, Johannesburg, and Montevideo to participate in this week's meetings here in Dakar without having to be physically. Technology connects all of us in new and complex ways, breaking down geographical boundaries and creating a virtual gathering place for the world to share ideas and tell their stories.

In my recent travels, I have seen people accessing the Internet in the tearooms of Dehli and in the sheesha bars of Doha. I've heard of Internet buses crossing Africa in Benin and Rwanda that are bringing computers and connectivity to children in villages, allowing them to use the Internet for the first time in their lives.

Technology is woven into the everyday lives of people around the world and the world is a better place for it.

There is a wonderful African proverb that I will leave you with this afternoon. "I am because we are; and we are because I am."

This beautifully expresses our new life and our new world of connectedness.

Each of us exists in community with others. Like the West African Griots who trace their lineage of their people and who keep their ancestors alive through storytelling and pass these stories on from generation to generation, we are the keepers of something just as important. Together we maintain a global community built around the operation of the Internet's domain name system. Each of us is a part of that whole. The Internet is the doorway to the future, and now that we've gone through it, there's no going back.

I want to extend thanks to the ICANN staff whose diligence has built a foundation for our good work here in Dakar this week. A special thank you to the meetings staff for seeing to every technical and logistical detail. And thank you to the global community, those of you here and those participating remotely, and to all those who leverage this technology for the betterment of people everywhere.

Together we are ICANN. We accomplish so much together. We bring new voices to the discussion. We maintain a stable Internet. We are poised to launch the new gTLD program successfully. What happens next is up to each of us and all of us.

Thank you.

[Applause]

MR. ROD BECKSTROM: And this concludes this session. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next session in this room will be the CEO succession process, and that meeting will begin at 1530. Thank you.

[End of audio]