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Office of the Ombudsman

Remarks at Los Angeles Public Forum

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Mr. Chairman, Vint Cerf, 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 this afternoon. First, I can report that to October 22, 2007, my Office has received 207 complaints and contacts from 33 countries. This is above the pace from the previous years.

Second, in accordance with the Bylaws, I have released a report concerning needed process improvements in a supporting organization. I believe

that the matter was discussed at the Special Meeting of the Board on June 18, and I look forward to receiving the Board's correspondence on this issue.

Since we last met in Lisbon in March, I have attended the United States Ombudsman Association Annual Conference at Anchorage, Alaska. I presented a paper on Analytic Tools for Ombudsman operations, and this was very well received.

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.

My Office has published a booklet entitled "A Practitioner's Guide to Evaluating Ombudsman Offices. This paper has also submitted International Ombudsman Institute, and this will be published in the organization's 2008 Ombudsman Yearbook.

Mr. Chairman, this essentially concludes the formative, or mid-term evaluation process. I can report to you that the Office has been well formulated, and is discharging its duties in an efficient and more than satisfactory manner. We continue with an ongoing client satisfaction survey; however, as the formative evaluation is complete, the next evaluation

activities will take place in FY 09-10, with the final, or summative evaluation.

Mr. Chairman, I also have the pleasure of tabling the Third 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 public, and enables further conversations about staffing levels, budgets,

jurisdiction, “mission creep”¹ and effectiveness.

Generally, these annual reports do not demonstrate effectiveness with respect to either evaluation criteria, or in analyzing performance in comparison to what are said to be the “pillars” of Ombudsman practice: confidentiality, impartiality, and neutrality.

There is an important role for annual reports in the relationship between action research and change.

Annual Reports reflect constructive storytelling about Ombudsman operations; and Druckman believes that stories are “accessible, fluid, vivid and powerful forms

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

of expression that can; they can, however, also be divisive by emphasizing us and them distinctions.”²

In the coming months I will be attending the Sixth International Forum on Online Dispute Resolution at Hong Kong University. I will also have the opportunity to give a lecture at the University’s Law School, thanks to an invitation from our colleague, Hong Xue, a former member of the At Large Advisory Committee who is a professor at the University.

Mr. Chairman, as this will be the last opportunity I have to speak with you in your role as Chairman, my I wish you well, and thank you for the support you have given to my Office.

² Druckman, Daniel, 2005, **Doing Research, Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis**, Sage Publications p317

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