
ICANN76 | CF – Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – 13:15 to 14:30 CUN

YESIM SAGLAM:

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your full name. For example, a first name and last name or surname. You may be removed from the session if you do not sign in using your full name. With that, I will hand the floor over to Seun Ojedeji, AFRALO Chair, and Aziz Hilali, AFRALO Vice Chair. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Yesim. Hello. Hello, everybody and welcome to this is a meeting which brings together the Internet community of ICANN. For those who attend this meeting with us for the first time, it is a tradition established by AFRALO since 2010 at the meeting in Brussels. So we will start by giving the floor to our chair of AFRALO, Mr. Seun, who couldn't be with us because of the problem of visa. Seun, you have the floor.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

Hello, everyone. Thank you very much, Professor Aziz. Apologies for not being with you. Physically, I miss some of the faces I've been seeing. Joining remotely as well. As Professor Aziz has said, this is our 31st AFRALO-AfrICANN session. This has gone a long way on this tradition. This particular session has produced several statements of importance to the African region and of course, to ICANN. Alan Barrett, who is actually the board member from Africa. And of course, I've not seen Manal, but maybe the camera is not showing her yet, who is also from Africa. I also want to use this opportunity to say thanks to Göran Marby, the former CEO of ICANN, for his contribution to and of course to his support to this particular initiative. He always ensured to be part of this session.

And in the same vein, I'd like to congratulate Sally Costerton for the tough job which she has actually got in. And of course, I wish her all the best. Appreciation to our GSE team as well, led by Pierre. Without taking much

of our time further, this session is organized by AFRALO, but open to all members from the African region and beyond to participate in statement development. My colleague, Professor Aziz, would chair this session for the obvious reason of having to coordinate better locally. Thank you very much. And I will still stay online. Back to you, Professor Aziz.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Seun. We'll switch in French. So please take your headphones. Thank you very much for being here. As Sean said, the meeting, AFRALO-AfrICANN, tackles a topic that is selected based on a survey from the African community, and it pertains to ICANN policies that are important for the region. Today, we're going to discuss the best practices for DNS operations in Africa. This is a very important subject matter.

And based on the survey, it was in competition with another topic, which is the building of capacity, and especially for African leaders. At the end of this meeting, we are going to provide a declaration, a statement, pertaining to the best practices in Africa. And I would like to thank all the members of the community that spent several months on the preparation of this declaration. We are going to discuss this statement and approve it so that it can then be submitted to the ICANN board.

This declaration contains recommendations on the best practices of DNS in Africa. But before that, we are going to give the floor to our guests, and I thank them for accepting to contribute. And first of all, I would like to give the floor to Jonathan Zuck, chair of ALAC. The floor is yours.

JONATHAN ZUCK:

Thank you, Aziz. This is Jonathan Zuck, for those that are not in the room. And I am the newly elected chair of the At-Large Advisory Committee. And it's often easy to forget that the At-Large Advisory Committee is just 15 people, working to represent the interests of individual end users within ICANN policy development. And the truth is that's not enough. There's a lot of research that shows that the more diverse the inputs into a decision, into a position, the better that that position is.

And the more people that are involved in forming a consensus, the more likely that a particular position will succeed. And so it's the challenge of the At-Large community as a whole to participate as broadly as possible in these policy discussions, and to really understand regional perspectives, gender perspectives, age perspectives, and see the whole gamut of perspectives of people that use the Internet, because they use it differently, with different levels of expertise, with different priorities for activities.

And the more that we're able to determine the interests of different types of users, the more we're able to serve them by attempting to represent their interests. There's no member list for 5.6 billion people. Instead, it's just going to be reaching out as much as we can, whether it's through surveys or webinars or meetings, to get as broad a perspective as we can. So an event like this, I think, is incredibly critical to really get an understanding of an African perspective on an important issue like DNS operations. And so I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to be a part of these conversations. And I'm really glad that they're happening. So thanks a lot for the invitation, and I look forward to the discussion.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you, Zuck. Now, I would like to give the floor to our friend mentioned by Sean. And this is our friend Sally, who is Interim President and CEO, if you can.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Aziz, and thank you, everyone, for your generosity. I will speak in English. I don't need your headsets. You can if you like. Always good to be with you. This is a very important meeting in our ICANN meetings. We've been together many times before, and I'm very happy that we have our board colleagues with us here. We have our team here. My good friend, Mr. Dandjinou, who's a great caretaker of ICANN's work here in the region. And I wanted you to be aware, I know today you are addressing the best practices, the statement.

And this is an important piece of work, and I really thank you for the amount of time that you've spent on this. I know that this is very -- it is very time consuming to use so much volunteer time to participate in this way. But I support you in this exercise. I think the clearer we can be at ICANN about what DNS abuse is, what it isn't, if you sort of, what it is, what is in our remit, what is not in our remit, and how do we tackle it, how do we move forward the discussion on solving it, on making the world safer on the Internet, the better. So I really appreciate the efforts here. As you will know, we are in the process of now managing and running the Coalition for Digital Africa, and one of the projects that we are engaging in is an in-depth study of the African domain name system landscape.

And this is overdue. We have not looked at this for, what, three or four years? Five years. The world is very different. The amount of Internet

users in Africa in the last five years has increased enormously. And we know, as I said in my opening speech this week at this meeting, it is going to grow extremely fast in the next 25 years. So now is the right time to start setting down the expectations that the world needs to see about how we manage that growth in Africa safely, so that we can confidently bring more people online. And that, of course, is the overarching goal of the Coalition itself. As you come out of issuing the statement to the Board, and you have, as you say, submitting recommendations, we are looking forward to working with you on how to implement those recommendations. And, of course, the At-Large structures and the individual members are an incredibly important part of how we do that on the ground.

I just came from a meeting with Tijani, who is -- I know he's normally here, isn't he? But he's in the NomCom, so he's not at this meeting. But we had a meeting discussing the African IGF, the forthcoming meeting he's having in Libya in a couple of months' time, and how do we use that platform and so many other platforms that you are, so many of you are involved in to keep raising the message about these critical topics. And we literally just came from that discussion, and he's asked me to speak at that event, and we were talking about how to do that. And I really welcome that partnership and the spirit of that partnership. As I said, Pierre's team, who are so involved in the coalition and involved in the broader work in our Africa engagement, which so many of you have built with us, is critical.

And I want to reaffirm that with this interim CEO role that I currently have, in addition to my engagement role, which I've always had and always worked on with you, this can only be a good opportunity for us to

be even more focused about how we work together as a staff and a volunteer group to help you to move this forward. And the final thing I would say, because I'm looking at Christian because he's in my eye line, it is not just us at ICAN. It's not just the namespace. In Africa, as in every other region in the world, we are closely integrated – not integrated is the wrong word, sorry, Christian. We are closely dependent on each other. The ecosystem literally, the Internet won't work functionally if the RIRs and ICAN don't work well together.

So there's a technical requirement for us to coordinate all the time through meetings, through events. We came for a meeting this morning with the ASO, which Christian was with us, and talking to the board. A very detailed discussion about outreach events on the ground in Africa. What are the right topics for ICANN people to be talking to your members in Africa? Africa members, for example. When are the times that we need to be helping each other to move our collective good, recognizing that that's going to change over time? So I want to thank you for that support, but I also want to reaffirm how critical it is moving forward. And now I think I should hand over. So I'm going to, I don't have to leave right now, but I will have to leave soon, and I want you to know that when I do, I'm going to see the newcomers, which is my final point for you.

So many of you in this region have been such hard workers for all the time I've been at ICAN. I mean, Aziz, you and Tijani were some of the first people I ever knew at ICANN. And that is so amazing, but you need help and you need new people and fresh blood to come in to ICANN to take on new roles and be at large. Jonathan and I have been discussing this as well this week, how can we support you around the world to support that process to be more successful. So that's why I'm going to see the

newcomers, and I shall take the AFRALO message to them on your behalf.
Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Aziz takes the floor. Thank you, Sally. Sally has a meeting, so therefore I would like to keep you for a few seconds. Are there a couple of questions on the floor for Sally before she leaves?

DAVE KISSOONDOYAL:

Thank you, Sally. This is Dave Kissoondoyal for the record. I think for the future meetings, for the AfrICANN meeting, if we can have, like, it is dedicated to all the participants of Africa. What I've heard that today at this time we are having a meeting for the newcomers, and the newcomers also have African participants. So in the future, if you can, please. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

So there is an opportunity for this to be discussed during the meeting planning phase. So forgive me, Jonathan, I'm not quite sure, I can't remember who from the At-Large is involved in our meeting planning team. We can take this offline. But I want to absolutely, Dave, it's critical that we have it.

JONATHAN ZUCK:

I appreciate you putting me on the spot, because I think it was me that was involved in that planning process.

SALLY COSTERTON: We'll be starting again straight after this meeting, and we'll be planning for the Washington meeting, and that's a very tactical discussion about exactly that. How do we plan the time? It's always extremely challenging, which Jonathan knows because he's been part of this, because we have very little time on the agenda that is non-conflicted. But we'll take that back, and we'll do our very best. I can't promise, but we will do our very best. Thank you.

DAVE KISSOONDOYAL: Thank you very much.

AZIZ HILALI: Aziz take the floor. Is there a second question? If not, I will ask. When will be the next ICANN meeting in Africa?

SALLY COSTERTON: This is a good question. The answer is that we are looking at Africa very actively at the moment in terms of our future meetings. It's a very live discussion at the moment in terms of selection of meeting venues, very high on our priorities. As you know some of know we have very specific requirements to go into particular parts of the world, and we particularly technical requirements and the kind of convention centers we can use and how many different parallel rooms, all sorts of technical things. We have struggled historically to find, as you know we have a great venue in Morocco, as you know because we've been there twice and we've had fabulous meetings. We have a venue in Joburg. We've done Durban in my time at ICANN. But it's important that we, and ideally, we'll find some

new venues in Africa to do more of those meetings. But it's high on our list of priorities.

AZIZ HILALI: Yes, I know. It's not easy. Thank you, Sally. The next speaker is our member of ICANN board. Is there another question? Yes, Bram, please.

BRAM FUDZULANI: No, thank you. Bram has a question. I just wanted to also, I think, while we're discussing about the Washington meeting, the visa situation in Africa, especially for the US, I think in most countries is very, very difficult now. I just wanted to understand whether ICANN has put in place some measures to make sure that Africans do participate in the Washington meeting. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: I do apologize. I got the second half, but not the first half. Would you mind saying it again? I'm so sorry.

BRAM FUDZULANI: No, no problem. I was asking in reference to the upcoming meeting in Washington. The visa situation in Africa, especially the US embassies in Africa, I think for you to get a slot, it's almost impossible just to book the visa appointment. I was wondering whether there are deliberate measures that have been put in place through ICANN with the US embassies across Africa.

SALLY COSTERTON:

This is such a difficult one. Yes, I'm very familiar with this issue. Here's what we can do and here's what we can't do. We can't make the US embassies go faster. I wish we could. But what we can do, and we've done it in several ICANN meetings, and I will take it back as an action. Gisella, could you make sure we do this to the meetings team, just to make sure I don't forget. We can put additional support. We have a particular partner that we've used at different meetings.

We did this in Hyderabad, for example, where we had some similar kinds of issues before the pandemic. Making sure that we have bolstered, we've increased the amount of staff support that we can provide to travelers who want to come to our meeting. So I just don't, I want to manage expectations. We can't this, we can't make the visas come faster per se. But what we can do is apply more resource to the individual travelers to try to help them, because you probably know everyone's different.

When you apply for a visa, it's an individually led issue. So we have to tackle, we have to provide more staff support to help you to do that. And so I will take that away from this meeting. I think we probably are going to do that, but I want to double check. So I don't want to promise, but I take it back as an action. I know it's going to be challenging. I understand that point. Thank you.

EPHRAIM KENYANITO:

Hi, my name is Ephraim Percy Kenyanito from Kenya. So maybe just building onto that about the visa situation, maybe an action item that can help is just going forward to ensure that the letters for invitation come right now as soon as possible. Because there's a backlog in terms of post-

pandemic for those who are renewing their visas for the US. There's this backlog. It might take up to three months to get an appointment. So if they, for example, apply next week, they might get an appointment around the end of May or first week of June for the meeting to happen at the end of June.

So if the letters of invitation could come right after this meeting and not towards the end, because that will help. Because there's lots of backlogs with various embassies. And that might explain also the reason why there's fewer Africans in this meeting, because of the backlogs. Getting appointments, even for the Mexican embassy, took forever to get the visa appointments. Because they kept saying, we've been processing backlogs from the pandemic time.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Incredibly good suggestion. Very practical. I hope that we're already doing that. But Pierre and Gisella, if we can make sure we go back to the team to make sure that we can do this as quickly as possible after this meeting. I don't think there's any downside in us trying to be as fast as possible. So thank you for that. Thank you for the suggestion. It's very practical. This will help with the issue you raised.

AZIZ HILALI:

Aziz takes the floor. Thank you all. This issue keeps on coming back. It happens during each meeting. It is a big problem. The gentleman mentioned three months. In Nigeria, it takes up to a year. So it depends on the country. And it's a very complicated issue. It's a problem for ICANN. ICANN cannot intervene with the embassy. ICANN is not a governmental organization. If we were at IUT or government ITT, it will

work because it would go through the country itself and the government itself. But the host country could facilitate the visa. This is what we did, for example, in Raba and in other meetings of the ICANN organization. Thank you, Sally. Thank you very much. The next speaker will be my friend, Alan Barrett, who is from South Africa and a member of the board. You have three minutes.

ALAN BARRETT:

Good afternoon, everybody. This is Alan Barrett. It's a pleasure to be here again. I do enjoy these AFRALO-AfrICANN meetings. I think it's great that every time this community produces a statement. And the topic this time about DNS best practice is very timely. I think the next round of gTLDs is going to be kicked off sometime soon. The board has been working very hard on that for a while now. And the community produced their recommendations after quite a long policy development process. And internationalized domain names, IDNs, are going to be very important there. And I am pleased to see that this is addressed in the draft statement. So thanks, everyone. I won't keep you longer. I think we've got a lot to get through.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Alan. The next speaker is my friend Maarten who is the member of the ICANN board. You have the floor.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Thank you, Aziz. Thank you, all. Pleasure indeed to be here. The ALAC is able to organize in several areas specific events where we focus on the specific issues of that area. And Aziz has been a longstanding champion

in Africa for this. The AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting is one I have not been able to attend last time. But I'm very happy I'm here now. The focus on best practices of DNS operations in Africa, I think is excellent. I did happen to be at the IGF in Ethiopia. And that was good to have that IGF together. And it was relatively focused on Africa because of its location. And what became very clear is that also the Coalition for Digital Africa Initiative that Pierre no doubt will talk more about is very much at place.

It brings parties together to help to make things happen. And that's what it's about. I fully understand that the first priority in Africa is to get online. Because not everybody is online. It's less than in Europe or other parts. But as soon as you get online, you run into a world that is very sophisticated, both with opportunities and threats. And that is why, in particular, best practice for DNS operations and other ways of making sure that you do it in a safe way is essential. So really looking forward to the discussion about the topic. I applaud the choice for the statement this time. And I think also Pierre will be very well able to provide some background that probably links into the statement. I look forward to see that grow further over the years to come. Thank you, Aziz.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Maarten. As he takes the floor, Maarten, after what you said, Maarten, this theme, the subject we will tackle today is very important to the strategy in Africa, and it is led by Pierre Dandajinou, our friend. I know he will speak about it. We're going to talk about the DNSSAC. We're going to talk about everything that has to do with DNS in general. Pierre Dandajinou, for those who don't know him, he's the vice president for the engagement, for the stakeholder engagement, vice president of ICANN. He's in charge of the stakeholders for Africa. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Pierre Dandajinou takes the floor. I do not have to introduce myself. We're going to save some time. So again, it's very nice to be among you. It is my house. I'm home at AFRALO. So thank you for inviting me. Sally said everything when it comes to the contribution of ICANN, when it comes to support. Just a few words. So as GSE Africa, within our program, I'm going to speak to what we can contribute. First of all, I would like to thank you for the choice. We knew the best practices for the ccTLD management. We know very well the questions linked to the ccTLD, but we want to talk about the best practices for DNS operation in Africa, and that is a very important subject.

As far as we're concerned so far GSE Africa, most of the things we've been doing actually turn around developing capacity around DNS. And then it's about DNS management, it's about security of the DNS. And if you go back to this Africa strategy that you actually helped produce, and that was what I might call our agreement with Africa to deliver on this strategy, you will see that DNS holds a very important place in that strategy. And that strategy for 2021 to 2025, and we'll be providing you a briefing on that one when we reach to the Washington meeting.

Now if quickly you already heard about it, the coalition also is coming to actually amplify what we've been doing, I would say. For the CIS project we already have under that coalition, and some of them are already being deployed, you will see that most of them is about, of course, ICANN's remit, and is about the DNS actually, or the service. You heard about the MRS cluster, I'm not going to go into details on that, but you could see the kind of impact that we are already seeing since we placed this in Eastern Africa, in Nairobi. We do have a project around these ISPs, with

ISOC. Definitely building capacity, developing capacity of ccTLDs is key here, and I would actually think that your recommendation would be quite useful also for kind of beefing up this project, it's quite important.

And then I would like to finish by actually calling to your attention that you couldn't have selected a more, I would say, important topic, especially for Africa. For those who have been reading the literature, reports these days are actually showing that there are issues when it comes to DNS abuse, for instance. We do have close to four African countries today that are actually, at least the domain names are where most of these things, DNS attacks, is generating from. It's quite important. So that means that we need to do something. And that subject of yours actually was already one of the subjects we want to tackle during our Africa Engagement Forum, scheduled for July, and also for the Africa DNS Forum. So just to say that, that was a good choice, and I will be looking forward to your recommendation after this. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Pierre. And now we are going to give the floor to Leon. I would like to thank him for being with us. And we are giving you the floor.

LEON SANCHEZ:

Thank you very much, Aziz and thank you everyone, for having me. I won't take much of your time. I know that you have still a lot of food on your plate to discuss here, and very little time to do so. I just want to commend you, as usual, for building such a solid statement on DNS best practices. I think that you continue to lead the end users in Africa, and continue to be a good example of how ALSs, as the foundation of the At-

Large community, and the RALO, as the representation of the continent, in this case Africa, is the place to work for the good of the end users, and to enshrine the bottom-up, multi-stakeholder process with which we work within ICANN. So with no further ado, Aziz, I turn it back to you, and happy to remain here for the rest of the session and contribute to any discussions that you may have. Thank you very much. And of course, welcome to Mexico.

AZIZ HILALI:

Aziz has the floor. Thank you very much. This is a beautiful country, and we are happy to be here. And now we are going to move to the next phase. We were going to discuss the statement, and we are going to give the floor to the pens. So it's going to be Samwel, or who would like to take the floor? Please raise your hand in Zoom. Sean, if no one would like to take the floor, would you like to say a few words?

ANNETT BONUKE:

Good afternoon, hope you can hear me.

AZIZ HILALI:

Yes, go ahead.

ANNETT BONUKE:

Good afternoon. My name is Annett Bonuke from Kenya, and I am relatively a newcomer to the ICANN community. My first interaction with ICANN was during ICANN75, where I was a first-time fellow. And so today, on behalf of my fellow penholders, that is Yao Amevi Amessinou Sossou, and Samwel Kariuki, I would like to introduce the topic, forming

the AFRALO-AfrICANN ICANN76 statement. So the topic is best practices for DNS operations in Africa. And it's all about how can ICANN, in collaboration with stakeholders, like the AFRALO community, set up systems to govern and strengthen the DNS operations in Africa, so as to ensure that the internet is stable, resilient, and secure in the region.

And as has been alluded to previous speakers, that ICANN's work globally and in Africa focuses on strengthening the DNS. And it has been said, but I would also like to emphasize that in Africa, ICANN launched the first managed root server cluster last year in Nairobi, Kenya, which currently processes about 40% of all DNS root queries. And also, one of the three major areas of focus for the Coalition for Digital Africa is ensuring a robust DNS infrastructure in Africa.

And so our recommendation on this topic will center around how to enhance DNS service stability in Africa, to ICANN providing incentive, financial, and technical support to DNSSEC operators to capacity building initiative, to collaboration with local stakeholders and internet service providers in the region, to building technical capacity of ccTLDs, to developing and promoting policies that build trust and encourage DNS innovation, to advocating for more registries and registrars in the region, and more generic top level domains in African languages. And so the takeaway of the topic, is that operationalizing and implementing best practices for DNS operation in Africa require the collaboration and cooperation between AFRALO and ICANN. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Annette. And as an alumni of ICANN, you give a good example. Thank you for the work that you have conducted. Thank

you to your team, because many of you contributed to the declaration. Now I'm going to give the floor to Abdeldjalil, who is the Secretary of AFRALO, Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong, and he's going to read the declaration in French or in English. I don't know if he's going to read it in French or in English. Abdeldjalil Bachar Bong has the floor. I can see you. I can't hear you. Abdeldjalil your audio is really bad. So stop the video and maybe that will work better. If not, someone else will read it. It's still not good, Abdeldjalil. The audio is not good, Abdeldjalil. All right, go ahead, Abdeldjalil.

ABDELDJALIL BONG:

We again, the African ICANN community members participating in the ICANN76 community forum in Cancun, Mexico, and attending the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting on Wednesday, 15th of March, 2023, discussed best practices for DNS operation in Africa, such as an important topic for AFRALO. We recognize ICANN's role in strengthening the DNS infrastructure in Africa. In order to ensure the region's internet is secure, stable, and resilient, we thank ICANN for launching the first ICANN managed root system server, the cluster for Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, and this was done last year, which currently processes 40% of all IMRS DNS root queries on the continent.

Furthermore, ensuring a robust domain name system infrastructure in Africa is one of the three major areas of focus for the Coalition for Digital Africa, which ICANN launched during the Internet Governance Forum in 2020-22 in Addis Ababa. In this statement, we present our recommendation on the best approaches to ensuring a DNS infrastructure and ecosystem that works for Africa. The best practices for DNS operation in Africa could include the following. Reinforcing the use

of Anycast instead of relying on a single server, Anycast routes traffic to the nearest server. This can help enhance DNS service stability in Africa, where the internet infrastructure is frequently less developed than any other part of the world. Incentives to accelerate the implementation of DNSSEC, DNSSEC enhances the DNS security by digitally signing DNS records.

This aids in the prevention of the man-in-the-middle attacks and other forms of DNS spoofing. We urge ICANN to provide the necessary incentives to DNS operators to implement DNSSEC throughout the whole of Africa. Partnering with local stakeholders, this can help guarantee that DNS services are adapted to the region's specific needs. The collaboration with local internet service providers can guarantee that DNS services are well connected to the local internet infrastructure. Implementing country code top-level domain development in Africa, which are called ccTLD. This will build technical capacity in DNS operations in order to provide technical assistance and support as and when required.

Enhance the local cooperation with CERTS for better handling of DNS-related incidents in Africa. The activities to support these best practices could include, one, workshop and training sessions to educate local organizations and individuals on the benefits of Anycast, DNSSEC and other DNS best practices. The creating of alliances with local ISPs and relevant stakeholders to improve the region's DNS service dependability and security. Collaboration with local stakeholders to create and implement strategies for improving DNS services in Africa.

AZIZ HILALI: Aziz takes the floor. Abdeldjalil, your connection is really bad. I am going to stop you right there. We can now hear you, Abdeldjalil, a little. Maybe I could carry on.

ABDELDJALIL BONG: Abdeldjalil takes the floor. Creating alliances with local ISPs and relevant stakeholders to improve the region's DNS service dependability and security. Collaboration with local stakeholders to create and implement strategies for improving DNS services in Africa, such as increasing the number of DNS servers in the region and strengthening current server connectivity. Providing technical assistance and financial support to local stakeholders in implementing and maintaining best practices for DNS operation in Africa.

AZIZ HILALI: Aziz takes the floor. Abdeldjalil, we cannot hear you. There are only a couple of sentences, I will carry on if you let me. Thank...

ABDELDJALIL BONG: Abdeldjalil, it was at this sentence starting by providing technical assistance and financial support to local stakeholders in implementing and maintaining best practices for DNS operations in Africa. Looking for more generic top-level domains in African language and internationalized domain name, IDNs, and new gTLD registries and registrars in the region. Developing and promoting policies that build trust to support DNS innovation, competitiveness, and growth in Africa. Encouraging information and communication technology experts and decision makers

to emphasize digital security risk management for economic and social activities.

We finally recognize that the best practices for DNS operations in Africa require multi-stakeholder collaboration and cooperation. As a key stakeholder, AFRALO will be advocating for and working closely with ICANN and other key stakeholders to ensure the implementation of best practices for DNS operation in the region.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you so much. This is the end of the declaration. Thank you, Abdeldjalil. I know that once again, this is to show you that the connectivity in Africa is not of good quality. We always have issues during the meeting. When we have our monthly meeting in Africa, we always have this connection problem. A lot of people cannot express themselves in great conditions. Once again, I will give the floor to people to participate in this room as to see if they have comments or add-ons to the declaration. Thank you. Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you so much. This is Hadia for the record. So I congratulate you on this statement. My question is in relation to partnering with local stakeholders and creating alliances with local ISPs and relevant stakeholders. Who do you mean, who needs to partner with the stakeholders? Who needs to create alliances? Are we talking here about ICANN? And how will this happen? How will you create alliances with local ISPs and relevant stakeholders?

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Hadia. Aziz has the floor. Who would like to answer regarding stakeholders? Sean, would you like to answer regarding stakeholders? That it's ICANN, ISOC. ISOC deploys a lot of efforts in particular for DNSSEC. I know they came to my country. They did many things regarding DNS security. I wish Pierre stayed with us. I know that in Africa, the ICANN strategy includes a chapter for improving DNS operations. There are many issues regarding practices pertaining to DNS security. So we are calling upon local authorities, local experts, but we get help from ICANN, from ISOC. This is what I know. If any colleague would like to add anything, they're welcome. FTLD helps us, I forgot to mention that next Tuesday in Morocco, we will have a day on Universal Acceptance, and Hadia is part of it.

And we are going to have a Universal Acceptance Day, and we will have a chapter, a portion of it on DNS security, and different ALSs are also part of this event. I don't know if I answered your question. I don't know if anybody would like to add anything, if you have any experiences in Africa. Ali.

ALI HADJI:

Thank you very much. Ali has the floor. Thank you very much, Aziz. As Aziz said, I am a member of FTLD, but I speak in my own name, not in the name of the AfTLD. I was fortunate to lead the structure. The AfTLD has organized and continues to organize sessions on building capacity for ccTLD operations. This program enabled us to train people to handle daily issues for ccTLDs. And in this program, we considered that we now need to move forward and tackle marketing issues in order to ensure proper communication beyond the technical aspects. But I would like to add that in many ccTLDs, we are lacking a strong commitment. We need

to work together. So I have my ccNSO hat as a member of the ccNSO Council.

As an African, we would like to share operations with various ccTLDs everywhere, not only in Africa. We observed that there is a lack of activity in this work group. We created a work group on DNS abuse so that we can share experiences and help each other and create mechanisms, especially in the context of TLD operations. We created references with tools, control tools. As Africans, however, we do not show a strong commitment to resolve issues pertaining to DNS. The partnership should be done around a strong commitment by stakeholders.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Ali. Aziz has the floor. Are there any other speakers? Maarten.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Maarten Botterman, ICANN board. Just speaking from my experience and having read the document, I really applaud the document because what it expresses is that you look to the specific issues that you think are important in your region to attack. And different stakeholders have different roles in that, and you recognize that as well. Yes, there's tons of global resources, and I think you rightly expressed that leads local matching of people who do something with those resources, who do something with what ICANN has to offer, who do something with what other organizations have to offer.

If anything, I'd like you to consider whether the focus should be tightly on DNS, or if you're doing DNS anyway, also look at the numbering and at

email and things like that, where you say it's all important, it's all one package that relates. And you may find that both your global resources as your local partners are interested in both as well. So just a suggestion from my side. And I'm -- this is what it's about, and I'm very happy to see that ICANN-ALAC is facilitating this kind of interaction.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you very much, Maarten. Yes.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, this is Hadia for the record, I just want to acknowledge all the effort that actually is done by Africa TLD and other entities like ICANN and others. And also the workshop that's going to be conducted in Morocco next week is in close collaboration with Africa TLD, and we thank you for that.

AZIZ HILALI: And also with ICANN, we will also have another speaker. We have a specialist of the ISOC group who will then lead this workshop. Thank you, Hadia. If you can just take the floor for our statement. And it's the best practice in DNS operations in Africa. We just speak about our day in Morocco. You will intervene in this meeting. So you can speak.

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you. Thank you, Aziz. This is Baher Esmat for the record. As I've been following the discussion about the statement, and I acknowledge all the efforts that have been put in the statement and also in the work that is taking place in Africa on the ground. You heard both Sally and Pierre

... speak about the coalition of Digital Africa. We have a number of projects underway that some of them have already been underway in terms of implementations. Others will be implemented over the next few months, and most of these projects do support the further advancement of the DNS infrastructure across Africa.

This of course, besides the numerous capacity building activities that have been taking place not only by ICANN, but ICANN in collaboration with other parties, AfTLD, Internet Society, ccTLD managers, and others. And of course, as Aziz mentioned, we will be taking part in the upcoming UA Day event in Morocco. And I know that the African GSE team is also taking part in other similar UA Day activities across Africa. So thank you, Aziz, for the opportunity.

AZIZ HILALI:

Shukran, Baher. Aziz takes the floor. Did we have to speak about the General Assembly that will take place for AFRALO that will take place in July next. Next July from the 22nd and 24th of July in Ghana, in Accra. We're going to take a few minutes to speak about this. Seun, can you talk to us about the General Assembly for AFRALO again that will take place in July this year? While we wait for Sean to take the floor, we will give the floor to someone who raised her hand. We have Olivier Kouami from Senegal. Take the floor, please. Your microphone is off.

OLIVIER KOUAMI:

Olivier takes the floor. Can you hear me? Good evening, good morning. Hello to everyone. Hello from Senegal. My name is Olivier Kouami. I am Senegalese. Well, I live in Senegal right now. I made a few comments when it comes to the statement. The acronyms which are not all

explained in the statement, that is important for Iranian meetings such as this one because we have newcomers, so it would be good to always explain these acronyms so it will be easier to understand. And of course, we have the statement written so it's easier to understand as well. I remember during ICANN75, I already asked this question. Just wanted to know when the clusters would be set, which countries there would be new clusters, and I was told that discussions were going on with certain countries. Do we know yet what is going on for the continent, for the African continent as to know where these clusters will be set?

AZIZ HILALI:

Aziz takes the floor. Goran is no longer president. Sally is now, Sally Costerson is now the interim president. So we did ask her where the next meeting in Africa will take place, where it will take place, and you will find what she answered on the transcription. Now, I'm giving the floor to Sean so he can talk about the General Assembly. Seun, if you're here, you can take the floor.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

All right. Thank you very much, Aziz. Hello, everyone. Again, this is Seun for the record. So the General Assembly for AFRALO is finally going to happen this year. For some of you, you may be aware that it's been a while since we were able to hold the General Assembly. The last one was in South Africa, and we are happy that even though a formal ICANN meeting has not held in the region for a while, the GSE team for Africa are holding an event in Africa, in Ghana to be specific, which is called the Africa Engagement Forum. And the GSE team has been able to discuss with them and we're able to accommodate for the General Assembly. So

the General Assembly will hold between 24th to 25th, while the Africa Engagement Forum will start on the 25th.

So it's going to give an opportunity for our members to not just do the GA, but they will also participate in some parts, a significant part of the Africa Engagement Forum. So I like to use this opportunity to welcome everyone here, even if you are not an AFRALO member, to General Assembly and of course to our AFRALO members, ALSs, you've been sent a survey, a link to your primary contacts, who should actually indicate their availability and answer some of the questions that have been indicated in the survey. We hope that the General Assembly would bring forth a more rekindled AFRALO towards achieving its objectives within ICANN, and more importantly, we have set up a General Assembly committee, which we refer to as the General Assembly Organizing Committee.

This committee was selected to help in the overall planning of the event, working with the Atlas staff, the GSE team, and the other applicable ICANN staff within ICANN. So we hope that the event itself, its planning, and the other activities that we're going to be doing prior to the General Assembly, we hope our members will participate. We also welcome members of ICANN community from the region and beyond to also participate in our General Assembly. So I look forward to that. I think it's going to happen right after, sometime after the next ICANN meeting at ICANN77. So we'll still have some time to talk about the GA at the next ICANN meeting. So for myself, on behalf of my colleagues, I welcome you to the General Assembly. Thank you, Aziz. Back to you.

AZIZ HILALI: Aziz takes the floor. Thank you, Seun. This could be the closing words for this session. aside of the little comment made by Olivier, I will consider that this statement is adopted for this meeting. I would like to thank the staff, Silvia, Gisella, Yesim, and Heidi for all the efforts they have brought forth. I want to thank the interpreters. I know it's not always easy, it's French, English, Arabic. Thank you for your support. And we'll see you next time. Seun.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Sorry Professor Aziz. Just a minute, Professor Aziz. Before we round up. Seun again. I'd like to just note something that is unique in this particular statement drafting. You would notice that the pen holders, all the pen holders have new names, relatively. You would notice that some of them are fellows. So we kind of, we're happy to see our fellows or newcomers or new members sticking out their head and trying to contribute in their own way to the ICANN processes. And I think it's a good thing that we need to encourage them more. And I congratulate all the pen holders and all the contributors to this particular statement. Congratulations to us. AFRALO and congratulations to you as well.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you very much. Aziz takes the floor, you're absolutely right, Seun. Thank you. Thank you for this meeting. Thank you all. Thank you, the interpreters and the staff.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]