
ICANN77 | PF – Joint Session: AFRALO-AfrICANN
Wednesday, June 14 2023 – 13:45 to 15:00 DCA

YESIM SAGLAM:

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With that, I will hand the floor over to Seun Ojedeji, AFRALO Chair.
Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

Thank you very much, Yesim. Hello everyone and sad I couldn't be with you physically but good to see the faces and of course thanks to the internet for the opportunity to be with you remotely. It's welcome to our AFRALO-AfrICANN session again. This is what we do at ICANN public meeting and I'm happy to welcome us to this particular one. It's been a while we started this and this is going to be the 32nd of this series which has been a kind of tradition for us and we as AFRALO are very happy and proud to have been the community hosting this session.

As usual, we have the agenda in front of us and we have quite a number of guest speakers and of course members of the community who are going to be speaking to us on various items on the agenda. I'd like to thank all our guest speakers for making it a date to actually attend this session of ours and considering that I'm virtual I would be handing over to my colleague, Abdeldjalil, who is going to [inaudible] through this session. But I'm going to still remain online and of course will follow the session. Without much ado and considering our time, I'd like to just say thank you for coming to this session and I look forward to fruitful discussions with us and everybody on this call. I'll hand it back to Abdeldjalil who will chair this session. Over to you Abdeldjalil. Thank you.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much Seun. Thank you Mr. President. As you know we are going to start on the agenda. We have the ALAC chair Mr. Jonathan Zuck who will be here with us and is going to share some opening remarks. Thank you.

JONATHAN ZUCK: Thank you very much. My name is Jonathan Zuck and I'm the current chair of the ALAC and I'm very excited to be here. My position in this schedule is no reflection of my importance, just the complexity of scheduling so many meetings here at ICANN. I asked for an opportunity to speak to this group because I really want to express my appreciation for the way that the region stepped up for the Universal Acceptance Day. We made it a decision pretty late in the process to make a push through the At-Large community to participate in this day and as a result we delivered nearly half of the total number of workshops that were presented and none of that would have been possible without the incredible participation by the African region. So I really wanted to come and say thank you for that and so yeah maybe it's worth it.

And related to that, our efforts over the next few years to participate in this coming round, the At-Large community have some very important goals with respect to bringing some people into the application process that typically haven't been a part of it, reaching out to communities more to get a different types of application pool than we had in 2012. And I think this is going to be another area in which the African region is going to play an absolutely crucial role.

So as we have these conversations about applicant support, as we have these conversations about auctions later this afternoon, as we have

these conversations about IDNs and universal acceptance that are going to be ongoing, this region is going to play an absolutely critical role in the At-Large strategy with respect to the next round of new gTLDs. So those are really the remarks I wanted to make because I really wanted to express our appreciation for the way you mobilized so quickly. There's more to come and I'm very excited to be working with all of you in the coming months and coming years leading up to the next round. So I read your statement. It looks excellent. Thank you so much for all that you do. And unfortunately I need to run out of the room, but I really appreciate all that you've done. Thank you.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you, Jonathan, and you've always been a supporter of AFRALO. He has another meeting, another obligation, therefore we will go to the next speaker, Sally Costerton, the interim president of ICANN. Sally, would you take the floor, please? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Hello everyone. I'm very happy to be here this afternoon. So this is I think the first time—maybe it's not the first time I've been with you as the interim president and CEO, but it feels—this is a critical session in the ICANN meeting, and I want to thank you for—I actually want to echo also what Jonathan said on two points he made. One is congratulations on your statement. I think it's very thoughtful. It contains a lot, well all I think, of the key points. It's very well thought through in terms of the way in which Africans can participate in ICANN in the future. And I'm going to go through one or two of them in my talking points, which will

cover some of the key issues and projects that we're dealing with, which I hope will be helpful.

I also wanted to thank you, as Jonathan has done, for the enormous amount of energy and responsiveness that you showed for Universal Acceptance Day. We astounded ourselves. I don't think any of us thought it could be that big, those many countries. We had over 50 events all over the world. We reached tens of thousands of people. It captured also, I think for the first time, I felt the sort of heart as well as the mind, the idea that this is about changing people's lives. It's about humanity. It's not just about changing the coding in the back office of an email address, although it is about that, and we're doing a lot of work now inside the organization to build a significant project for next year's Universal Acceptance Day, and we'll share those with you, and I know that you'll want to be involved.

I wanted to update you on a couple of other issues. We are very committed to what you said in your statement, to the rotational model for ICANN meetings among the five regions, which I've been involved with for all of the 10 years I've been at ICANN, and we're, as a board and an organization, we're very committed to upholding that policy that the community made all those years ago, and with that in mind, we are hoping to be back in Africa soon, hopefully next year. I'm not yet in a position to confirm exactly what will happen. I hope to be in a position quite soon. We're feeling hopeful that we can be in Africa, and I wanted you to know that that is our current priority, and that is what we're working towards. So I will give you information on that as soon as I have it, but I know you will understand that these issues are subject to commercial negotiations, and we're just a little tiny bit too early to

share that with you, but we will as soon as we can, and we know that needs to be quite soon.

I just wanted to say one thing about visas. I know this is a very relevant issue, particularly for you and for your colleagues, and not just in Africa, but particularly we have a lot of issues and challenges with visas, and we will do everything we can inside the ICANN organization with our traveler support function to give you any support we can with visas. But I do need to remind you that we can't control the pace, the speed at which embassies issue visas, or indeed whether they issue them at all. Embassy has its own process, and they, as you know, this is part of an intergovernmental process, and we do not have the power to dictate how quickly or slowly these processes occur.

So I would remind you that it is important for you when you're travelling to ICANN meetings and for working groups to understand the embassy's decision-making process is independent, but that we will do everything we can to support you, and I know, I hope that you do know that, but sometimes the key thing that you want is the thing we can't support you with, but we want to partner with you as much as we possibly can. But frankly, my strong advice, and I know you all know this, is plan well ahead, because actually in the post-Covid world, visas are challenging for many more people around the world, and embassies are taking longer, and so it's not just like it was before Covid, and we now have a lot of process steps to get through which are delaying things.

I want to make sure that you know, and again, Jonathan has been a very good partner on this, as have you, that we engage with Africa and our

African stakeholders in the ICANN through many programs. We have an increasingly active partnership with the RAILO structures. I see Sebastien sitting here, with the EURALO, Jonathan has been very, Seun has been very active, all our RAILOs have been very active, working in partnership with our GSE leads, so we see you have Pierre Dandjinou here, and Seun are very connected, and I can see Naela over there, she's very connected with the NARALO group, the North America group, and these are very detailed hands-on engagement activities done in partnership with you, to make sure that we're maximizing the resources that ICANN has at its disposal, we don't leave anything unturned, we don't let ourselves get siloed, and we miss things. So we prioritize your goals, which in many cases, and I know it's true of the At-Large generally, one of the things you've asked us to help you to look at is waking up kind of ALSs that exist but maybe aren't very active. And interestingly, I think Universal Acceptance Day was a good example of a way to do that, and I think maybe that was one of the reasons why we thought that At-Large is a very natural partner for that program, as we move forward next year.

I wanted to talk about the regional plan, we've talked about this in these meetings many times before, and the priority here is of course to increase African internet users' involvement and participation in our model. It's never been more important than it is now. The world's eyes are increasingly on us, on the way that we operate around the world, on the efficacy, the delivery, the deliverables, if you like, that come from our multi-stakeholder dialogue. This is going to be very high profile at this meeting, I think in terms of to what extent can we work as a

community to progress key decisions that the internet infrastructure needs.

And I wanted to particularly touch on the Coalition for Digital Africa, which you are all very familiar with, and many of you are very active participants. This coalition is now about, I think Pierre is saying it's about 18 months old, about a year and a half since we launched it, and it is achieving real momentum. These things take a little time to shape and to form, but it is ICANN, the organization ICANN, using our, I'm going to say our convening power to bring organizations together who have a common interest. And in this case the coalition is about increasing internet participation amongst Africans, so it's a big public interest goal, so you know we are a public interest corporation, we operate in the public interest, and this is very closely linked to that, and there are a range, I would encourage you if you haven't had a chance, go and have a look at the website, update yourself on the projects, they are very extensive, and we've just launched a very high, I'm very proud of it, a big partnership with the AAU, the African Universities Group, which means that we are now, and I feel very, I have George Sadowsky sitting next to me, who some of many of you will know George, who is an expert on these topics, and many people, and we now have far more students, particularly computer science students, law students, learning about universal acceptance, why it's important, what we need to do to deliver a truly multilingual Internet. So this takes us way outside our sort of domain name world, and much further out into the wider community. And I'm very happy to see in your statement the focus on UA ambassadors, so I wanted to draw those strands together.

Finally, and I won't dwell on it particularly now, but I wanted to just let you know, because I think we should we are very conscious that this has been a difficult period for AFRINIC, that we are with you, we are very closely involved and partnering to work, to understand how we can be helpful, and I just wanted to make that point, because I think, I know that this is a very important issue, not just for Africa, but for the internet as a whole. Many people are asking me in my role as interim CEO, what are we doing, how can we help, they're worried, and they want to be supportive. So I do want you to know that a lot of people are coming through me, the office of the CEO, to express support, and genuine concern and care that we get a good outcome. I thought this was a good opportunity to reflect that and share that with you while we're all together. Thank you very much.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much, Sally, for these comments. We're very happy to see that ICANN is very important and prominent in Africa. Thank you. And we know that you have another meeting, so you're authorized to leave. Thank you very much. Leon Sanchez now will take the floor. He's a great friend of Africa, and he'll have a short presentation for us. He represents the users on the board, so he's a great fighter, advocate of Africa. He's always present with us. So you have the floor, Leon Sanchez.

LEON SANCHEZ: Hi, thank you very much. Thank you very much for having me here. It's always a pleasure, truly, to be here with you, and I always say that this is one of my favorites, if not my favorite session within every ICANN meeting. I never fail to come to this session. And as always, I won't

repeat what Sally said. You have, of course, full support from ICANN org, from the board, from those board members who are always close to you. And I would like to just make a comment on the statement that you always submit, very productive and useful statements to the board.

And I would like to comment on point number one about Africa, to have a dedicated seat on the ICANN board. I wholeheartedly agree that every region needs to be represented and needs to be well represented. Today, if we read our bylaws in Article 7.5, you will see it refers to international representation. So, I am not going to read the full article, of course, but the intent of that article is to have diversity provisions to ensure that at all times, each geographic region shall have at least one director. And at all times, no geographic region shall have more than five directors on the board, not including the president and CEO, of course.

It says that as used in these bylaws, and I'm quoting, each of the following is considered to be a geographic region. Europe, Asia, Australia, Pacific, Latin America, Caribbean Islands, Africa, and North America. It also says the specific countries included in each geographic region shall be determined by the board and this Section 7.5 shall be reviewed by the board from time to time. And in any event, at least once every three years to determine whether any changes are appropriate, taking into account the evolution of the internet.

So, here is where your point number one comes into play, right? Today, our bylaws state that no geographic region should have less than one representative at all times. And well, there you have your dedicated seat on the board already, right? But why not make it two, right? So, of

course, this is something that is not encoded into our bylaws, but that doesn't mean that we can't review it. Actually, we are mandated to review it every three years at least. So, this is a discussion that I promised to take to my board colleagues. And of course, I cannot promise any outcome, but what I can promise is that I will bring it upon the board to discuss and to fulfill our mandate of reviewing this Section 7.5 of our bylaws and see how that turns out. So, without further ado, Abdeldjalil, I wish you a very productive meeting. I will remain here for another 15 minutes, if you allow me, then I will have to leave you. But it's always good to be here. Thank you very much.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much, Leon, for your words, for your support. You're always supporting AFRALO. Thank you very much. Alan Barrett will be speaking now. He's a member of the board of ICANN. He's an active member of the community. I think you all know Alan. So, Alan, you have the floor.

ALAN BARRETT: Thank you very much. I'll say a couple of things. I'll try to keep it short. As an ICANN board director, I very much welcome participation by Africans in ICANN structures. You always organize a meeting like this, and I think that's great. I hope it continues. On the question of board members from Africa, yes, as Leon explained, the bylaws do require at least one board member from each region. And the way that is implemented is on the NomCom. So, it's up to the NomCom every year to ensure that there is at least one from every region. Right now, I am that one. I wish there was more. I do wish there were more.

Okay. Now, as an African, I would like to see the African internet structure strengthened. And you all know that AFRINIC is going through some hard times. I hope that that can be resolved. I know that ICANN is ready and willing to support AFRINIC as much as they can without interfering. So, there's a line between support and interference. ICANN needs to make sure that they do not stray to the interference side of that line. But I know that there is support. And personally, I hope that sometime soon there may be an AFRINIC board election. And for those of you who are associated with AFRINIC members, I hope you will win. And if that election comes around, I hope you will examine the candidates very carefully and choose your vote wisely. Thank you.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much, Alan. Pierre Dandjinou now speaking, vice president of ICANN Africa. You have the floor, Pierre.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much. I'd like to speak to what we are doing in Africa. I'm Pierre Dandjinou, stakeholder engagement for Africa. So, first and foremost, we address the strategy in Africa. As you know, you contributed to the writing of that strategy two and a half years ago. And that strategy was adapted and modelled after the ICANN strategy. So, it's not revolutionary, but we tried to highlight the needs of Africa, the needs outlined in the document that you proposed. So, I'm working with two or three other staff members with GSE Africa, and we're rolling out that strategy. We'll also be linking a URL so you know exactly what I'm referring to.

So, it's mostly capacity building, and we're making efforts to make sure that Africa participates in the work of ICANN. And we're also working for Africa to use the existing tools in order to really enter and access the industry of the Internet. So, that's the first part. And we'll have time to address that in Accra. I'll come back to that.

Second, Abdeldjalil said it, and it's our flagship project at the moment. It'll be rolled out over three years at least. And it's about partnerships for a digital Africa. Now, why? That's the question. Why do we need a partnership? Well, the time is perfect now. The circumstances are there to accelerate the digital transformation of the continent. Connectivity is on the rise. We're on 39, 40, 41 percent, and we can definitely increase that number. But the concept of CDA, so Coalition for Digital Africa, the goal here is to go further. We're striving for a meaningful, solid connectivity, because in Africa, as we often say, it's not just about using WhatsApp daily. It goes far beyond that. We need transformative, life-changing applications.

So I'll just speak to the components of that project. Right now, we have a partnership with 10 institutions that agree with this project, and they're ready to make efforts in order to increase connectivity in Africa. One of the first projects that we put in place is an IMRS cluster. So, as you know, ICANN works with L Root, and around that, we built clusters. And that allows us to play with information traffic. And before we put in place that cluster in Nairobi, Kenya, we noticed that regional traffic to the tune of 60 to 80 percent went outside of Africa, only to come back to Africa. So that's why we put in place this infrastructure. And since, we went from 60 to 40 percent. So that definitely reduces lag and latency. So that sort of mechanism definitely enables connectivity.

The second project is internet exchange points, and that's a partnership that we have with ISOC. Five countries are included in the first phase, and we have more ambitions. And since we mentioned meaningful connectivity, we also have to think about the African script. There are numerous African languages today, but we have tools to bring them onto the internet. You mentioned universal acceptance. Well, that's exactly it. We launched a project with the Association of African Universities, 400 roughly, and they will do their best to include those languages and make them compatible with universal acceptance. Another project is a DNS market study in Africa. It's an update. We hope to have results by July, and that will give us a snapshot of this DNS sector in Africa, and that will guide us in our decision making. And we'll put in place an observatory. There's already something in place in French-speaking nations. We want something even more dense and robust, and then we'll take appropriate measures.

And now, when it comes to security, DNSSEC, we've already started in Burkina Faso. There are six countries to cover, and we have Africa ccTLD capacity building. The problem with ccTLDs in Africa is that, for management and promotion, we have partnerships in this sector to enhance ccTLDs in Africa. And the thrust of it will be marketing. Of course, there's a technological component, but security is key also. And concretely speaking, we have a secretariat in Nairobi, and we've hired staff already, and I think it's underway.

Now, your contribution, you know already you have to support us. That's something you've been doing already in the rollout of those projects. And regarding our next meeting, African Engagement Forum, it will take place in Accra, Ghana, from July 25th to 27th, and we will be

reporting on the ongoing work and will also present the various functions of ICANN. You are all invited. But I'm already delighted to know that we'll have the AFRALO General Assembly on July 24th and 25th, so we'll be welcoming you with open arms, and we hope that we'll be able to talk about the connectivity problems in Africa in depth. We're also working on other issues. There's AFRINIC. Still working on solutions. So I'll stop here for now and yield the floor. Thank you.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you for this update, Pierre. We thank you so much for your support to AFRALO, and especially for the Coalition for Digital Africa. And of course, everybody's invited to that forum you talked about. It is open. We will now go to the fourth point of the agenda, and we are going to share our declaration. As you know, during each meeting of ICANN, we prepare a statement for the ICANN community, and of course, we talk about the voluntary work. And this year, we had a lot of individual members, which are the ALSes, voluntary members, staff of ICANN. We will make sure that everybody can take the floor. Chokri, Hadia, Amina, we thank them all for having written this statement. You can take the floor. Raymond, would you like to take the floor?

RAYMOND MAMATTAH: Thank you very much, Bong. My name is Raymond Mamattah. So having realized that though the African region is acknowledged for various works that is done within the ICANN, we still thought it wise that we could still do more. In this regard, we decided to work on the topic of improvement of African participation in ICANN. So the statement is in three folds. It starts with an introduction, suggestion, then with a

conclusion. So I'll start with the introduction, then my colleagues will continue with the rest.

So in the introduction, we acknowledge the effort of the various stakeholders in the region, including the various initiatives that ICANN has done in the region, which is improving our various activities and our engagement. So Jacob, over to you.

JACOB ODAME-BAIDEN: Thank you very much, Raymond. Yes, so having identified how important the region is, and then also the work by ICANN in the region to deepen the engagement, we also then made a proposal of how we believe our participation in ICANN can be enhanced. So we identified up to, I think, eight key areas that can be improved. And I think it's good to state here that it was very collaborative. We had as many as, I think, 20 people in this drafting team and suggesting the various areas by which we can improve. And I think that was very impressive. And we had close to six pen holders working collaboratively and editing the key points. And that's led to the suggestions or the areas by which we could improve the participation. Yeah, thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Inclusion and diversity are at the top of At-Large priorities. And this statement further supports the inclusion of the African community at ICANN. So in this statement, we mentioned a few elements, eight elements that are not difficult to implement, but could have actually significant impact on the participation of Africans at ICANN.

I would like only to point out the first point about Africa having a dedicated seat at the ICANN board. So indeed, the bylaws do say that Africa is entitled to one seat. But if we speak here about effective and impactful participation, if you have one region that can actually have five seats and another region with one seat, that definitely does not provide equal and effective participation from the region that, I would say, does not have the same amount of participation. So I guess what we really mean here is like effective and impactful participation from the region. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ:

Thanks, Hadia. Just want to say that right now you have a very meaningful and impactful board member who is seated right beside me. I can tell you that he is very effective and has huge impact on what we do. And I mean, of course, the bylaws need to provide some wiggle room, some flexibility as to how the board is conformed, right? So that is why it says never less than one, never more than five. And I don't have the numbers to back what I'm about to say. But to my recollection, there has been times in which the African region has had three seats at the same time in the board. And that has been also the case for Latin America and the Caribbean. And I believe Asia Pacific and Europe and North America as well. So you can see that seats change, right? The allocation of seats amongst geographical regions switches. And the NomCom does a part of that job in allocating those seats. Also, the different constituencies, different SOs and ACs that appoint board members also need to take care of that, right? So it's a matter of everyone contributing to foster that balance, I guess.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you, Leon. We have 25 minutes left, so we will let Sébastien take the floor and carry on.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you. You are mentioning something super important. I think you could have two revendications. The first claim would be not less than two members per region. And in second, when Leon mentions the fact that NomCom has a role to play. But unfortunately, NomCom does not have the role. They should at least ensure that we have one seat so it has no role in this sense in order to rebalance, to balance to the regions, the organizations, or to do a gender balance.

That could be the second claim. The NomCom should have a role to make sure that there is a maximum diversity. When I was at NomCom, I was told no, no, no, we choose, we don't care about regions, we don't care about the gender, because there is already enough. So then we just go, we do what we want. Thank you. That could be the second claim. Again, thank you very much. You do a great job.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you for your comment, Sébastien. Your proposals are very important. We have 20 minutes left, so we will go straight to the agenda point number five, and I will read the declaration. The joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting, we are talking about improvement and of African participation in ICANN. We, the African ICANN community members participating in the ICANN 77 policy forum in Washington, D.C., United

States, June 12 to 15, 2023, and attending the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting on June 14, 2023, have discussed the question, improvement of African participation in ICANN.

This question being an important topic for AFALO, we're making this statement on the participation of the African community in the multi-stakeholder model of the ICANN ecosystem and to suggest ways by which African participation can be improved. Africa is still playing catch-up in comparison to the rapid development and growth of the internet when it comes to global digital inclusion, with the effect that the region lags behind in terms of access to modern information and communication technologies.

The effective participation of the African stakeholders, such as government, private sector companies, civil society, technical community, end-users, academia, etc., in the work of ICANN is one that cannot be undermined. This stems from the fact that Africa has the most youthful population, the youngest in the world. According to a UN report, as of 2022, 70 percent of sub-Saharan Africa is under the age of 30. This high number of young people on the continent creates a unique opportunity to foster African development. The effective participation of the African community in the policy development processes within ICANN would mean that Africans can contribute to the development of the internet, which is undoubtedly one of the most important global resources of our time. ICANN has in recent times demonstrated its commitment for the cause of the African community through the work of the Africa Stakeholder Engagement Team and also by launching the Coalition for Digital Africa initiative. These efforts are well appreciated by the community at large, and despite all good efforts and the

achievements stated above, we still need to urgently take proactive steps and adopt a more pragmatic approach to improve Africa's participation in ICANN's work. This will ensure that Africans are fully engaged and are at the table contributing meaningfully in shaping the policy development of the global internet.

Below are the recommendations for the African community in order to improve the participation of Africans in ICANN. One, Africa should have a dedicated seat on the ICANN board. We reckon the efforts done to make the ICANN board as diverse and inclusive as possible. However, a situation may arise when there is no representation from Africa on the board. Therefore, conscious efforts should be made to ensure that Africa has a fair representation on the ICANN board at all times. We demand that there should be a specific ICANN board seat created for only Africans. This will ensure that Africa is represented on the ICANN board again at all times.

Two, we need to rotate ICANN meetings among the five regions. The ICANN meetings are held in the five regions of the world. However, we demand that the organization and hosting of ICANN meetings be done in a rotating manner between the five continents. This will ensure that Africa gets the opportunity to host ICANN meetings each two years. In doing so, the African region will also benefit from the related ICANN meetings activity, such as NextGen programs and physical attendance in meetings.

Three, that special visas assistance for Africans to attend ICANN meetings. We thank ICANN for providing funded travel assistance to participants throughout the world. Many Africans who get funding to

participate in ICANN meetings have problems securing the required visa on time. Sometimes the embassies have waiting times as long as one year. In this case, because of visa issues, most Africans miss out on the opportunity to participate in ICANN meetings. Therefore, we suggest the following.

A, ICANN org travel support should use the international reputation of ICANN to reach out to the host country and request them to inform all the embassies in Africa about the meeting. B, special attention should be given to the Africans who need additional support with regards to visa issues. C, a dedicated travel support staff should be assigned who possibly can be an African and understand the woes of Africans with regards to visa issues to provide support to Africans to overcome these visa issues. D, consider the visa process as the main criteria when designating ICANN meeting hosts. E, provide financial support in the form of stipend and hotel in home country for Africans who belong to the programs like ICANN Fellowship, NextGen, or any AC/SO groups who have no option but to participate in the meetings virtually as a result of visa issues.

Point number four, support youth engagement programs. We recognize the importance of youth participation in shaping the future of the internet and promote youth engagement programs with ICANN. We recommend more mentorship initiatives, internships, and fellowships specifically targeting young Africans who are interested in DNS governance. We encourage the inclusion of youth representatives in ICANN's working group and policymaking bodies, ensuring the perspective are heard and integrated in decision-making processes. To achieve the above, ICANN should consider having a program for African

youth so that this platform can be used to spread the word about ICANN.

Fifth recommendation, we must expand outreach efforts into local languages, recognize the linguistic diversity across Africa, and expand ICANN's outreach effort by A, providing information and resources in local languages. B, translate key ICANN documents, guidelines, and educational materials into widely spoken African languages to enhancing engagement. C, bringing more end-users group to the ICANN community by encouraging more ALSes and individual members to become part of our fellow and the At-Large community, therefore allowing diverse participation across the continent.

Sixth recommendation, ambassadors for universal acceptance. The UASG should intensify efforts to have a lot more relevant UA ambassadors within the region and country if required. This will help reach indigenous Africans who are not easily accessible via regular awareness campaign online due to language barriers and logistical issues. It will also help drive the efforts of bringing the next billion people online and bridging the existing digital divide within Africa, which is a bedrock for digital inclusion.

Seventh recommendation, support women engagement and participation. In order to enable more diversity, equity, and inclusions in ICANN's work and policy-making bodies, conscious efforts should be made taking into account the specific activities of African women in their community. Internet governance knowledge and ICT adoption are still relatively low for most African women. Thus, ICANN should look at celebrating the few African women in the community so as to

encourage the participation of others. ICANN should consider providing more opportunity for African women in the IG space to be part of the ICANN community through initiatives such as mentor-mentee platform where intending participants can be paired with female role model in the ICANN community. This will make it easier for newcomers to want to pursue participation in ICANN, but they are restricted due to gender limitation and lack of awareness. In the light of this, there can be an initiative to participation and travel support to ICANN meetings and other regional initiatives, especially for African women in the community. Regional representation should be monitored to ensure that there is a gender parity within the space of leadership, capacity development, and engagement levels.

Eighth recommendation, increase awareness of ICANN. Increase the understanding of ICANN's mission, vision, objectives, its relevance to the African internet industry, and opportunity and benefits of active participation. This can also include the multi-stakeholder model of governance within Africa and its allied constituencies related to ICANN. Efforts must also be made to strengthen engagement between ICANN, African government, African members of parliament, civil society, and like-minded institutions, for example, the African Union Commission, the African Telecommunication Union, etc. Furthermore, some technical advisory committees like SSAC have a weak participation from the African region. Hence, it will be useful to start some specific programs that will help to increase the number of participants from the African region in those technical issues. The participation of the African region will assuredly be enhanced if a little more effort and attention

could be paid to the region, as suggested in this statement. Long live AfrICANN, long live Africa, long live AFRALO. Thank you.

We only have 12 minutes left, so we'll move on to the next agenda item. Discussions, modifications, and adoptions of this statement. I think Aziz, Vice President, is with us. You have the floor, online.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Abdeldjalil. I believe the statement is a little bit long, so we don't have a lot of time left. I will just let participants speak if there are questions. We still have two points to address on our agenda, so I believe we should move on to the other agenda items swiftly. I don't see anybody raising their hand. Do we have questions? Comments? Maybe comments on the statement?

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Mr. Peters, Olévié, and Hadia speaking.

PASTOR PETERS OMORAGBON: I have three points to just quickly say because of time. One, I endorse the statement, and by way of proposal, I may want to move that this statement be adopted as read. That is why I'm proposing that. Number two, to the ICANN board, I want to suggest that the issue of visa for African participants can be resolved. We quite appreciate what the ICANN has been doing to support our participation in the past, but a situation whereby you know of a country that is going to host, maybe in a year or two. Say, for instance, America is going to host ICANN meeting in 2025. Knowing that, preparation can be done for the African

delegates to nominate so that ICANN can, from that very start, we need to make preparation to support them. So that will reduce the problem of the timing of a visa application because of the backlog of that was caused by the COVID. So that is one area that ICANN board should be looking into so that early preparation can be started.

The last issue I want to also propose, I want to be on record, and I want the leadership of AFRALO to put it on board so that we can take this further in Ghana next month, is that we, on behalf, I mean, I'm from across the border from Nigeria, we also want to indicate the interest of Nigeria hosting the next ICANN meeting. So we can have this discussion in Ghana, and then we can agree as to which other country within Africa that should host. South Africa has hosted, Ghana is hosting, Kenya has hosted, I was in Kenya, I was in Bamako, I was in Mali. So those are the three issues I want to quickly put forward. Thank you all for the meeting.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: To host the ICANN meeting, you have to apply for hosting that meeting.

PASTOR PETERS OMORAGBON: We apply, don't worry, we'll try. Let's be on record.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The floor is for Olévié.

OLÉVIÉ KOUAMI: I just have one question, one question for Pierre about IMRS, which makes it possible to reduce latency and to increase the speed of

information transfer in Africa. We have a cluster installed in Kenya, and it was announced that a second country would see another installation. Which country will that be? Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

I will try and answer your question. I believe Sally mentioned that discussions are still underway. The board is discussing the issue, but no information has been provided. I see Pierre, Alan Barrett could probably shed light on the topic because they attend those meetings. But in the meantime, I recognize Hadia and then Hervé. Hadia first. You have the floor. Oh, the second cluster will be in Cairo, Egypt. Very good news. Thank you, Peter. Excellent. Hadia, you have the floor.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you. My suggestion for the statement is to change the wording of the first item in order actually to reflect the meaning, which is having an equal and inclusive participation. Because maybe as written, it's understood that Africa has no seats on the board while actually we do have one seat. So I would just suggest rewording the first paragraph. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much. My friend Hervé, you have the floor.

HERVÉ CLÉMENT:

Thank you. One thing to add. I've noticed that we are searching for an ICANN CEO. We put together a committee, but there's no African

representative on that committee. I haven't seen any statement from those in charge. I believe there should be at least one African for this CEO search. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Yes, you're absolutely right. There's a lack of representation both for the CEO search and the ICANN board. I agree. Now, we only have five minutes left. There's still one item on the GA in Accra and another item on elections. Can we move on to the next agenda item? I'm asking those who would like to take the floor. Can we move on? Hadia, Abraham, Emmanuel? Do you allow me to move on to the next point?

ABRAHAM SELBY:

All right. Thank you very much. Good evening in Ghana. My name is Abraham Selby from Ghana. I want to make this question.

AZIZ HILALI:

We only have five minutes left. Would you mind sending your comments via email? We'll definitely take them under advisement and include them in our statement because we only have five minutes left. So if you agree, we'll move on to the next point. Thank you. Sorry, Hadia, Abraham, Emmanuel. Please ask your questions on the chat. If we have time, we'll read them. So let's move on to the next item. Let's put it up on the screen.

The GA, the General Assembly on the 24th and 25th in Accra, followed by the African Forum, organized by the GSE, led by Pierre Dandjinou. So this program you see here has been prepared by the subcommittee of

the program. I had the honor of being the lead on that. So we designed it, and then we sent it for consultations among the community. We took into consideration all the remarks from the community. It's quite a dense agenda, a dense program. It's going to be one day and a half. A lot of representation at this General Assembly, I think more than 90% of ALS. It will be a very successful meeting, and we hope it will be beneficial to all.

I won't read every line of the agenda or get into each session, but what I can say is that arrival is set on July 23rd. There will be a welcome reception at the Marriott in Accra from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. On the first day, on July 24th, there will be an opening session for the AFRALO General Assembly. It will be hosted by our Chair, Seun, and it will feature guest speakers representing ICANN or Ghana. There will also be a presentation on the history of AFRALO, key performance indicators, metrics, a break in coffee. In the afternoon on the first day, there will be a capacity building within the DNS ecosystem presentation, a presentation about internationalized DNS. Pierre Dandjinou will also be presenting about capacity building, that is, how GSE—

SEUN OJEDEJI:

Colleagues can actually look through the agenda of the GA at a later time. For the sake of time, let's move on to the next item on the agenda.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much. Yes, I'm almost done. And I'm speaking to all the ALSes here. Could the staff send the links so that everybody can register? And regarding visa requests, I know that in Morocco we have

to request a visa. So do register, and when you register, you'll receive an invitation, a local invitation, and an ICANN invitation. Okay, so I'm finished. I'll ask the staff and the interpreters to wait another five minutes. Thank you. Seun, you have the floor.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Yes, on the sixth item. The update for the AFRALO elections in 2023. There are four positions, as you know. Aziz Hilali for 2023-2025, and after elections for the vice president for the president position, Hadia, here with us, and the vice president, [Bram Fudzulani] and the ALAC delegate on the NomCom, Seun Ojedeji. So thank you very much, and please applaud these new leaders.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: As you know, you'll have the agenda on wiki. You can download it and read it at length. So without further ado, we'll go straight to item number 10. I will yield the floor to Seun for the end remarks.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you, everyone, for joining this session of ours. It's a packed agenda, and sorry to some of our colleagues who wanted to take the floor but couldn't. I hope you understand the difficulty we had with the time. But before we close, I'd like to recognize one of our own, who ICANN Org have now snatched from us. That's Sarah Kiden. Sarah was secretariat with AFRALO, and of course, she has actually been very active with us at AFRALO, and we would very much miss her while we are also congratulating her on her new role and wishing her all the best

in her new role. Definitely, I expect that she will still stick with us, even though she's tough. I don't know whether she wants to say anything for 30 seconds. Sarah.

SARAH KIDEN:

Hi, everyone. Hi, Seun. This is an ambush. I wasn't expecting to say anything today. But yeah, thank you for the wishes, and thank you to everyone in the community for the support. It was really nice working with all of you, and I'm glad that I will continue to work with you in another capacity. That's all I can say. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

All right. Thank you very much. As has been said, we're going to be meeting one another in Ghana next month, and I look forward to it. For those of us who will be attending, both physically, and please note that it's a hybrid meeting, so you can actually also participate remotely in all the sessions. Please take note of that. That is very important for us to say that.

Thank you very much for all our interpreters for actually staying beyond the scheduled time. On behalf of myself and the rest of the team, I say bye for now.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]