
ICANN79 | CF – Africa Space Work Session
Monday, March 4, 2024 – 10:30 to 12:00 SJU

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Welcome everyone to this Africa Space work session at ICANN 79. My name is Yaovi Atohoun. I'm Director for Stakeholder Engagement and Operations for Africa at ICANN. We thank you again for participating in this session. Per the agenda, we'll have some opening remarks. Then we'll hear from Mariana about the Coalition for Digital Africa general updates. Then some partners will share with us the latest information about the projects they are involved in, in the Coalition. I want to remind us that we have interpretation in many languages. In your menu, you can select the language you can use. Also, we have a 60-minute session, so if you have some questions, please type them in the Q&A section in the Zoom menu. With this, I want to hand over to Pierre Dandjinou for his opening remarks. Pierre, over to you.

MARIANA MARINHO: Thank you, Yaovi. We're waiting for our panelists to arrive from the opening session. We'll start the session soon.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: My name is Yaovi Atohoun. Apologies for the delay in starting the session. We hope to start very soon. Apologies for the delay. My name is Yaovi Atohoun. We are sorry for the room being so silent. We are just waiting for some speakers. We hope to start very soon. Thank you for your patience.

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MARIANA MARINHO: Thank you, Yaovi. We're starting in a minute.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Okay. Good morning to everyone. Sorry for the delay. It happens that we are facing one or two things. People need to grab their coffee. This is the first time we are having this Africa Space on Monday, right after the opening ceremony. Bear with us. We'll just start because we need to stop at 12:00 sharp. We've been informed.

We know that normally at our Africa Space, one hour or one hour and a half for us is not enough. We normally have an issue with the interpreters and whoever is there. We are going to start away and then our colleague will be coming in. Thanks so much for all of you to be here again.

Of course, the Africa Space at ICANN is always the place you have to come to actually get a few updates on how we are doing in terms of what you call the Africa Strategy. Also, now the Coalition for Digital Africa, we really want to be showing you a few facts on some of the impact we may be having. But altogether, to thank you also for your association with what we are doing. Also, ask for more sort of collaboration on the ground where we are working.

Today we are going to have this Africa Space around a few things, which are going to be basically the Coalition for Digital Africa. Now we do have what we are counting on 12 partners, different partners. I'm going to give them the floor and for a few minutes they are going to quickly elaborate on updates on what they are doing, the projects they are

having on the ground. Also, we are going to share a few information with you later on.

So having done this, I would like also to introduce our panelists. Of course, they are also with us in this journey for digital transformation in Africa. On my right here I see Adiel Akplogan, whom you certainly know. Adiel is from our OCTO department and in charge of technical engagement in Africa. You also know him for his many other lives, as he chairs AfriNIC as you know.

Patrick will be coming. Patrick is our GSE director. He will be around. He told me he is on his way here. We are hearing from him, from his remarks. I think we do have one or two board members who are likely to join. With that, I will say we are also here to listen to you. We want to have ample time for questions and answers. Let me also say we need to finish by 12:00 sharp. Thanks so much for your attention. I would like to hand over to Adiel for his very brief remarks.

ADIEL AKPLOGAN:

Thank you, Pierre. It is always a pleasure to meet the community from Africa, very dear to my heart. As an introduction, I just want to say how committed my team is to support, particularly the CDA initiative. We have increased our engagement with Pierre and his team from the technical aspect of the CDA. In terms of technical engagement, you know that Africa has been one of our, I would say, focus over the past few years, even though we have teams in other regions. The need in Africa region is high, and CDA is providing us a good framework and umbrella to be able to channel our engagement, not specifically targeting those priorities defined within the CDA initiative. I would just

say that we will continue providing that support. But beyond the CDA, we have a few other areas that we are engaging in in the region to help improve, for us, what matters is the overall security and stability of the DNS ecosystem in general. We will continue doing that using all other channels, but with a little bit more precise focus on CDA in the coming month and year. I will be happy to have your feedback as well, from what you are seeing on the ground, what we can do more to support you, and what areas where improvement are probably needed. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Adiel. Patrick is on his way, so no problem. When he comes, he will just deliver his remarks. Let me hand over to Mariana. Mariana is our project manager. For the rest, you do have a few slides for us.

MARIANA MARINHO:

Thank you, Pierre. For those who are not familiar with the Coalition for Digital Africa, I would like to talk a little bit more about it, do a quick overview. The Coalition is an alliance of global and regional organizations united to the community to expand access to the Internet in Africa and support the development of the digital economy in the region. We believe that by working together as a coalition, we will be able to achieve greater results.

What I see that has happened differently since we started this coalition, that even at ICANN, things and projects that we just go ahead and ourselves and do it, we think, "Who else can we bring in to make this

project stronger?" That really has been a shift in our mind. We always worked with partners, but I think now we just ask this question more often.

The coalition has three areas of focus. The first one is robust DNS infrastructure. That's really securing the stability of the DNS and therefore strengthening the overall Internet infrastructure in Africa and also enhancing security and resilience. The second focus is meaningful connectivity, is fostering the multilingual Internet and encouraging local content development. And the third area is capacity development that we're going to be talking a little bit more.

Some highlights where we are at the moment. We have 12 partners, as Pierre mentioned, seven initiatives. We are doing work and having people participating in activities from 27 countries. And that's five more from the last time we provided this update in--I guess 78. And really it's like those 27 countries really covering 50% of the continent right now. And we are still looking to expand not only to new countries, projects in new countries, activities in new countries, but also the depth of our activities within the different countries.

And here I have a list of our coalition partners. And with that, I'm just going to move for a quick like projects updates. And I would like to invite Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini from the Association of African Universities to take the floor and provide us an update on the project that we are working with them. Oh, before that, I will give the floor to Pierre.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Yeah, Patrick just joined. I need you. You are the one that helped me through those things. So please, a few words. Welcome to us and then we continue. Please.

PATRICK JOHNES: Well, thank you. Apologies for being late. And I wanted to thank everyone for continuing to follow the work of the engagement team in Africa and the amazing projects that are underway with the Coalition for Digital Africa and upcoming events. We're hosting the – even though it's called the Middle East DNS Forum, it will be in Morocco. And the Africa community is more than welcome to be a participant in that event and the related trainings that will be held there in collaboration with our partners from the Coalition for Digital Africa. Perhaps I'll turn it back to you, Pierre and Mariana.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thanks so much, Patrick, for finding time and coming to visit us. Mariana, yes, I think it's going to be the Africa – Okay. Ms. Nodumo, the floor is yours for a few minutes.

NODUMO DHLAMINI: Thank you very much. The Association of African Universities is working within the Coalition to implement universal acceptance curricula in higher education institutions. And I believe we are all aware of what universal acceptance is, but it has become a critical requirement for a truly multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet. So one of the areas where we believe that we could have more impact in is actually addressing issues of capacity and ensuring that universities are

upgrading their curricula for computer science and information technology training at an undergraduate level.

But the universal acceptance project has broader objectives. We are also working with the universities to ensure their readiness of their email systems, websites, and we have a goal to ensure that 200 universities at least are compliant by June 2025.

So in terms of supporting universities to integrate universal acceptance curricula, we had two key events in February. One was with Anglophone deans and heads of departments of faculty of computer science and IT. So we held a workshop and the purpose of the workshop was to sort of highlight the importance of them updating their curricula and also getting feedback in terms of what their thought processes were around how they could go about this. So the Anglophone webinar had 125 attendees. The Francophone webinar had 25 attendees.

The key issues that came up for discussion during these webinars were universities were keen to understand how many hours would be required for the universal acceptance curricula to be integrated. They were also keen to understand who would teach and what type of support they needed to be able to competently teach these components. And we also discussed how universities were currently adding new content into their curricula. And there are different ways that universities could add content. Some could do it by ensuring that there are seminars, regular seminars, to address new issues or go into specific courses and actually update those courses. There are some approval processes within universities when curricula are actually updated. And there are also standards and benchmarks that their

curricula are up to date. So we did propose that they consider either extending their course or updating a number of courses that are impacted by universal acceptance.

So the next steps that we are moving towards, we have sent out an expression of interest to the universities that attended the workshops. And I think to date we have 11 of them that have expressed interest to take this forward. We would follow up with a workshop, I think we are trying to make sure the workshop happens during the Middle East DNS Forum in Morocco. And after that we hope to run pilots of the integration of universal acceptance and maybe with five or so universities. We believe that these pilots will then inform us in terms of how to scale up and bring in a larger number of universities. So thank you very much. This is our update from the AAU.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you very much Nodumo for this brief. And we might have questions for you later on. Now let me move on to the ISPs. Internet Society is around?

JEAN-BAPTISTE MILLOGO:

Good morning everyone. Thank you Pierre and thanks Mariana for this opportunity. So I will share with you the IXP initiative update. And our main target is to support to work and keep traffic local. Next slide please. So as you may know there is a cooperation between Internet Society and ICANN through the Coalition for Africa to build five IXPs by 2025. And currently since last year we are working with three countries, Benin, Malawi and Rwanda. And our call for application is ongoing. So

in the coming slides I will share more detail on each country where we operate now and how to do to be part of the coming call. Next please.

So for Benin, last year we have shared some updates where we started granting funds for the Benin team. And up to now we have run capacity building in December in Benin where we will be able to meet 38 attendees during the IXP workshop but more than 100 attendees in high school in Benin. This is a part of Net Champion formation in each country. And we are currently working with Benin project team to build a comprehensive business plan and support long-term viability of this IXP in Benin. So the next development will be shared at our upcoming meeting.

For Malawi, up to now the tender for equipment and supply chains have been completed. And there is a workshop planning in April where we will have trainers from ISOC, ICANN and [PCH.] And the topic will cover advanced routing, DNS, ccTLD work and also anything related to best practice with those trainers. Next slide please.

For Rwanda, the third country we support last year was capacity building with 48 representatives from public and private institutions in this country. And it was a good opportunity also to share training on IXP, I would say IXP skills but also covering routing security and also DNS. Our plan is anytime we can have activity in Win-Win for those or all the participants of the coalition, so it should be good. Which means that where we are going, we have ICANN, ISOC but maybe third-party member of the coalition when need is present. Next please.

So, I have mentioned it currently our '24 call for application is ongoing. So here is how we can work together in your country, in your region. As

you may know, this IXP project is especially for African country and you can apply from any country from Africa. Your community just need to be part of those three criteria. You need to be in the market in Africa, you need to be an existing or new IXP. But you can also be interested to run a kind of capacity building and best practice for your community. So if those kind of thing is something you are thinking to run in your country, feel free to apply or be in touch with us if there is any question for clarification before you apply. So, and we will be happy to come and support the development of internet, I would say in your country. Next slide please.

So, apart of supporting I would say technical infrastructure and bringing, sharing more traffic locally, we are also bringing Africa and abroad experts in the event. Most of you may know now since 13 years now African Peering and Interconnection Forum, AFPIF. And for this year, we will be happy to welcome you in Kinshasa. And the main activity, call for paper, call for fellowship and call for next AFPIF will be open I think by end of March. Up to now you can save a date and happy to meet most of you in DFC soon. Next please.

So, those are the updates I would like to share with you. So, what we have done since the launch of this program and how you can maybe join the movement and work together to improve internet in your country but also meet experts and share best practice and discuss on how to build better internet in Africa. So, thanks and see you soon.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thank you. Thank you Jean-Baptiste for this briefing and also for the invitations to a few of your other activities and definitely DRC where we

might be meeting there as well to talk about AFPIF. Next one we are going to hear from the ccTLDs. Okay. They are quite important partners to us. They are fundamental to so many things you know in terms of digital transformation in Africa. We have a kind of partnership and also agreement you know with the AFTLD which is the Association of African ccTLDs. They are here to talk about what they have been doing so far. So, please. Floor is yours Serge. Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

SERGE SANOU:

Okay. I'm Serge Sanou from .bf Burkina Faso but also the president of the executive committee of AFTLD. So, AFTLD is the Association of African ccTLDs. So, our involvement into the Coalition for Digital Africa is related to you know that there are three areas and the last one is related to capacity development. So, that is why AFTLD is also involved in capacity development. So, I would like to give you some update on what we are doing now when talking about capacity development.

So, the first question is who are we? So, AFTLD is the home of national African national TLDs but we are always acting as a focal point for all the African TLD managers to discuss matters of policies that could affect ccTLDs globally and then to present also the group's position as one voice. Slide. We are structured in three parts. So, we have a general assembly of 32 full members and so a board of directors of seven members and then a staff of one member. Slide.

Now, coming to some updates regarding the Coalition for Digital Africa ccTLD Tracks. So, we have been involved since May 2023. So, it means that there are some actions that we have already done regarding the

Coalition. To date, we have launched successfully in the 14th February a webinar. So, it was an inception call in which nine out of ten ccTLDs were identified as beneficiaries and they participated in the inception call. So, these countries are Angola, Benin, Burundi, Comoros, Congo Brazzaville, Gambia, Madagascar, Togo, Zimbabwe and Niger.

So, what is important to notice here is that we have chosen some representatives. So, this webinar was a kick-off meeting to let the ccTLDs better know themselves because we have some discussion with them and discussion around the things that are challenges. So, and the next that will be the Coalition for Digital Africa.

Another thing is related to the partner engagement. So, when we are talking about capacity development, so AFTLD cannot alone run some capacity development without also requiring the help of some partners. So, that's why we have partnered with ICANN normally and also NSRC, AFNIC, which are also engaged in a process of mapping the responsibilities of various partners. So, this will pave way for the first capacity building session to take place after this session of ICANN, ICANN 79.

So, the question that is coming in mind is what are the next steps? So, I can say that the CDA ccTLD track project will be implemented in the next six months because today we have a deadline of June, so June 2024. And then we will employ a mix of online sessions and face-to-face also, face-to-face training sessions. So, this will be followed by a period of monitoring and evaluations.

Our implementation approach, so when building the capacity development, we have created four components in terms of approach.

The first three components are training-oriented, but the last one is just for supervision and monitoring. The first component is what we call the package number one, is about technical skills and capabilities. So, this package covers all the activities that will be carried out to technically strengthen human resource. So, this reinforcement covers aspects such as the fundamental and advanced aspects of DNS, DNS infrastructure, DNS security, resilience, disaster recovery, and software solution, and so on. So, you will notice that this package is technical-oriented.

And the second one is for governance and policy management. So, this package addresses the political, organizational, and governance aspect with a view to ensuring the sustainable and efficient operation of the registry while working toward a regulatory framework favorable to the development of the Internet and the DNS ecosystem. This block includes training activities on the registry governance, legal framework, and business model. Next slide.

So, the third package is for registry expansion and strategic development. This package aims to provide the skills needed to bring the registry into line with new Internet governance policies and programs to catalyze the expansion of the domain name industry, to promote the development of the digital economy, and above all, to contribute to the implementation of national development strategies within the country. This block covers topics such as internationalized domain names, universal acceptance, business plan writing, and marketing, building a network of registrars.

And the last package that I was talking about is related to supervision and monitoring of key indicators. Just to let you know that for this

package, we are now hiring a project coordinator that will be -- and this project coordinator will lead this package. Next.

This is a look on the timeline. So, if you look at the first step, so it's a CDP kickoff, so capacity development program kickoff, so we are okay with that. So, the number two, so we can say that at this time, we are with the step two, so which is related to action plan. So, it means that now we are discussing with all the ccTLDs and also with partners to build an action plan that will be launched in the next step, which is the training sessions that we'll deliver. And then we'll move to the coaching and monitoring.

And then there is a point on the peer exchange. I wanted to say that peer exchange can be seen as what we can say a benchmarking trip, so to bring some registries to visit other registries and to discuss matters on the activities. And then we have also the monitoring at the last level. Next.

So, to finish, so this is just a description of the timeline. So, I want to say that each package leader has the following role. So, first, to elaborate a timeline of different activities in line with the overall project, and then plan and organize all the activities of the package by identifying and gathering required resources. Ensure a weekly basis follow-up of the package activities, participate to the monthly project coordination meeting, elaborate the different reports relating to each package, and then participate to the overall project communication and deliverables dissemination within the community. So, this was just a [inaudible], and thank you very much for what is our involvement, so regarding the

Coalition for Digital Africa, and I will remain available for any comment and questions. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Serge, for this brief, and definitely we are also happy to be working with you. With that, we still have maybe two or three quick presentations.

MARIANA MARINHO: Yes, we have some additional updates on other projects that I can run quickly, and then we open the session for Q&A. So, I'm very happy to be here and share with you some additional accomplishments that we had since we were talking about the Coalition for Digital Africa at ICANN 78. So, last time we spoke, ICANN had deployed one ICANN management root server system cluster in Nairobi, Kenya in 2022, and since then we have also launched another IMRS installation in Cairo, Egypt in November 2023. And the purpose of this project of MRS infrastructure is to increase the security, resiliency, and speed of the internet in Africa, installing IMRS infrastructure. And what I'm going to be sharing with you are the results of this and the impact of both installations in the region.

So, internet users in Africa now have more resilient and stable access to DNS root server services, with 80% of Africa-based DNS root queries to the IMRS being resolved in the region. Here is where we were, where the African root server queries were to the MRS, were before the MRS in Nairobi, and this is just like a visual that you can see. You see a lot of the

queries being resolved in Europe, and then after the IMRS installation in Nairobi, you can see the shift for the queries being resolved in Kenya.

And here is where the Africa root zone queries to the MRS went before the installation of the IMRS Egypt, and here is after. So, for the MRS Egypt, the main shift that we saw is that after that installation, 90% of Egypt's DNS queries were being resolved within Egypt, the Egypt IMRS. So, that was the completion of this first phase of the project. But we understand that the MRS infrastructure, you know, there is still opportunity for strengthening through the deployment of IMRS singles. The IMRS single is a single service appliance designed to be hosted by an organization to improve DNS stability and user experience by having root server instances closer proximity to the DNS resolvers.

So, in this project, ICANN is partnering with AAU, the Association of African Universities, and where AU is really on the role of our, like, communications partner and providing, like, sharing this opportunity within their network and members. ICANN is currently accepting expression of interest to host Africa-based IMRS single. This opportunity is open to African-based organizations with large networks, such as ISPs, enterprise networks, including universities and government networks, Internet exchange points, etc. Limited funding may be available to assist with the purchasing of the necessary hardware, and we are accepting express of interest by, if you want the financial assistance, by April 15th. And we have more information about this on the coalition website.

Another project that we have completed is the project to expand the top-level domain performance monitoring. And the project aimed to

deploy two new monitoring probe nodes for ICANN service-level agreement monitoring system in Africa to enhance the SLAM probe network. So, ICANN has 40 probe nodes distributed around the globe. Until this project, we only had one probe node in Johannesburg, and since the project, we have now three, one additional one in Lagos and one in Nairobi. And since we, at ICANN 78, now we have all the probe nodes have been enhanced to support IPv6 connectivity. And what this is doing really, it's like enhancing our capacity to understand the user experience and identifying opportunities for improvement.

We also, if you're following us, you are probably aware that we recently had a webinar about the draft report of the Africa domain name system, domain name industry study. The public comment closed on February 8th. We are working, the vendors, Powersoft, the authors of this report are working to update the report based on the public comment received. And we expect to have a report, the final report published soon. And we'll have a presentation about this report at ICANN 80 in Kigali. So, I hope to see you all there.

And finally, we continue giving support to ccTLDs interested in deploying DNSSEC. And we have, it's like one of the project partners with us is the African Telecommunication Union. Since ICANN 78, we continue to provide support to Botswana and Burkina Faso. And from the last update we had, Burkina seems to be pretty close to sign in DNSSEC. And I think a key point about this project is that ICANN is not, or other consultants that are involved are not doing this for the ccTLDs. They are really, the ccTLDs themselves are the ones driving this process. And we're soon going to be working with another seven ccTLDs to

provide them support for them to host the roadshow. And more information, we're going to have a lot of updates on that at ICANN 80.

With that, Pierre, I would like to hand over to you. But before I do that, I would just like to encourage everyone to go to the Coalition for Digital Africa webpage. Follow us on social media. We are always providing updates. We're trying to, you know, about how the different projects are going. So with that, thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you very much, Mariana, for this. And here we continue. We are okay. We still have some time here. Let me recognize, before we go to questions and answers, the presence of a few key sort of partners or contributors. I see John. John, our colleague and the director of the CTO who joined us. Thank you so much, John. Yeah, John, have a few things to tell us. Whatever, but if a question, because you happen to be at our Africa Internet Summit. You know so much about Africa now in terms of issues. So probably you might have a few things to say if a question comes. And then also I would like to recognize the presence of our delegation from Rwanda. I will give them the opportunity to certainly formally invite you all. I don't know whether they are paying for tickets, but they are here anyway. They will be letting you know. And also the NomCom also, they are here, and they also want to pass a few information to you. But before that now, the floor is yours. We are going to have close to 30 minutes for your questions, and then we'll provide any answers, you know, please. Let's take the first to intervene.

HOUDA CHIH: Hello, everyone. My question is in particular for AAU speaker. I want to know what are the challenges that she faces when updating the curricula.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you. Who else? Maybe we take all the questions.

WIDOM DONKOR: Okay. Thank you very much. My name is Wisdom Donkor, for the record. I have been listening especially to the first lady that did a presentation from the university. Yeah, she did speak about capacity building. So I want to find out in the area of law enforcement and also attorneys from our region. It looks as if when it comes to solving legal issues with regards to DNS and all of that, we are lacking that within our continent. Recently, from my community, we had a program, and then we tried to bring legal attorneys and also law enforcement, but we scout everywhere, and it was difficult to get someone to really come in and speak to issues of registrars and all of that. So what are we doing in terms of capacity building to bring some of these people to this area?

The second, what to do with the community involvement, it looks as if a lot is being done, but then some of us are not aware of what is going on. So what can we do to improve that? Because when we are talking about building capacity and all of that, it involves our community. So if the African university is doing something, and then some of us are not aware, it becomes difficult for them. So these are my few.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you. Thank you very much for those valuable questions. Yes, please.

MISTURA ARUNA: Good morning, everyone. My name is Mistura. While looking at the agenda, I didn't see anything on the ICANN 80, but now that you mentioned that the floor will be given to my colleague to talk about it, I think it's okay. Secondly, I just want to ask whether the GAC is organizing or planning the high-level governmental meeting during the ICANN 80. I think it will be a very good opportunity for the Coalition for Digital Africa to showcase what is going on. And that is where we have all the ministers so that we can get some buy-in from them. And lastly, I just want to know what outreach is being done in the region to at least attract or invite people to Kigali, because I think we need more of that outreach. Thank you so much.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you. Thank you very much for this. And then we'll respond. Who else? Let me -- in the back. Yes, please. Uganda.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Pierre. I hope I'm in a free space and I can freely say what I want to say. When I looked at the agenda, I would have expected since we're speaking about Africa, and this is an African engagement—thank you so much for the work you're doing around the region. I would have loved to see a slot or something about AFRINIC, and especially that we are all lining to go to Kigali, Rwanda and we have all these heads of

institutions that are going to be there so that we could hear from you.
Thank you very much.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you very much, Uganda. But we knew that was going to come anyway. Thank you for that. Any other hands, please, in the back here? Oh. You can wait until the end. Okay. So let's give a chance to [inaudible]. Yes, please. Maybe you can come to the mic.

KENNEDY WABUGE: Thank you, everyone. I am an ICANN 79 fellow. I really enjoyed the session, and it was really interactive. And I like the updates about what you're doing about robust DNS, meaningful connectivity, and capacity developments in Africa. So my question is that what are your efforts when working with the African telecommunication companies in achieving these three goals? Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you very much. Do you have questions online? Okay. Maybe you can just read.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So I'm going to the remote participants right now. We had a question from Rapudo Hawi. How can community networks as micro IXPs be part of IXP application at ISOC? And I also would like to invite those with the hands up on Zoom to ask the questions. First, Joel.

JOEL: Thank you very much. This is Joel, also from Kenya. I have two questions. One concerns the grant that is soon opening to support IXPs and also ccTLDs in terms of DNS security. We are asking, is it open to Africa-wide because we have so many countries? And if not, it would be nice to focus on specific areas to ensure that we have the best impact.

Now, my second question, you know, goes to the forum and especially the ICANN 79. We want to hear, especially from the African team, specific resolutions, follow-up on what we had discussed in Ghana concerning AFRINIC. Because this process does not seem to move forward. We want it to move forward. We want AFRINIC to be back on its foot. And we want a full board so that we derive maximum benefits from this organization. Thank you very much.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you. I would like to invite Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Okay. So if we are done with the questions, this is --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. Thank you so much.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Okay. Let's take the last one and then we'll just proceed to responding to the question. But we still have some time.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you so much. And I would like to thank ICANN office in Africa for what they are doing in the level of effort. I'm concerned about the policy activity when it comes to DNS in Africa. So how prepare we when it comes to policy engagement? You know, from Africa. Because I see that a lot is actually lacking from there. A lot of people. How is the [inaudible] engagement in Africa preparing people to engage in policy activity? That's one aspect. The second aspect we touch on DNS abuse. Because when we look at DNS abuse, how ready are we in Africa to actually fight DNS abuse? And what is the cost when we're fighting DNS abuse to the registrant? So what do we need to do? How is ICANN office, engagement office in Africa helping with regards to that? The third one would be concerning engagement of the academia in terms of research. So we need to actually bring them in to be able to conduct research when it comes to jurisdiction, geopolitics aspect of the Internet as well as DNS abuse, security, cyber security. And when we're looking about the dark web, the dark net, so how does this actually affect DNS in Africa? The fourth one I would like to talk about is the uptake of DNS in Africa. So how are we, what are we doing in ensuring that we make sure that people actually register domain name? Because what is ICANN office doing in ensuring that we, people actually knows to register ccTLD, the register domain name and the inflow that is coming from Africa, actually stay in Africa, not going outside of Africa. So these are the things that we need to talk.

So I would also like to talk about the grass root environment. So when it comes to local content, what are we doing? We're talking about IDN, we're talking about we want people to come on board, but we don't

address local content. Language barrier is an issue. How many of our people in the village read English and we want them to come to and we say, oh, digital inclusion. So what are we doing with respect to this? So these are the things that we need to talk about. How do we take Internet down to the grass root? So do we, do ISP actually ready to go to grass root community, the village to give people Internet? So these are the things that we need to start talking about.

There is an initiative I am involved with which is called [ACIP.] It talked about Internet backpack. I'm sure that a lot of us on this table would have heard about this initiative that we're trying to reach out. So we need to take Internet to the grass root where people will have access to local content. I'm sure that this is going to promote DNS, domain name uptake and there about. I just want to hear your thoughts and other stakeholders' thoughts on this. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thank you very much for those questions.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

I'm the AFRALO chair and I'm happy to announce that At-Large, AFRALO is organizing during ICANN 80 in Kigali three events. We are talking about one of the topics actually that you've raised. So those three events, the first one will be a roundtable discussion, a two-part roundtable discussion. The first part will be about strengthening the Internet infrastructure, its stability and security. And the second part will be about a multilingual Internet. We will talk—and also promoting local content in Africa. And we will, of course, this will include universal

acceptance, IDNs and the new gTLD program. The second event will be a capacity building event. We will be partnering with universities in Africa and bringing over universities, university students for a capacity building program. And then the third event is a networking event. So that's it. And thank you so much for giving me the mic.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you, Hadia. I didn't know that you were going to do those announcements. They are paid for. Sorry about that. Yeah, we do have many questions, many interesting questions. Of course, I might take some of those that concern the CDA directly. There are also some about the policy, DNS policy, and I'm so happy my colleagues are here from OCTO. So people online who would like to respond. So many questions that you have. And also some of them certainly may not be directly, you know, about, you know, kind of ICANN's remit. Because ICANN's remit is just about the DNS and all those things. You know, we are not here to actually be the one to actually spend on digital sort of -- I mean, connectivity, you know, in Africa because it's a tiny remit that we do have. Having said that, thanks very much for all of you because the questions are quite interesting. And of course, AFRINIC, you know, also came up here.

What are we doing with the telcos, any linkage with them? Definitely we are open and we do have regular webinar with the telco regulators in Africa in so many aspects. Not just because they are within the CDA sort of purview, but our usual work and engagement in Africa, we do engage with regulators regularly. So that's one thing.

There are also questions about, you know, the communication on what we are doing. You are right that being in Ghana, you should know exactly what the Association of African Universities are doing because they are also based in Ghana. We take note on that, that we also should be having some sort of local communication there. It's important. Because if you go to the website, you will see all of those we are doing. But you are right, we need to do something locally. So this point is taken.

Yeah, the question about the high-level governmental meeting, yes, but we are going to touch upon this. We do have a colleague from Rwanda. They are here. So definitely we are working on that. We just finished for one week, you know, [inaudible] in eastern Africa. We were in Kigali, Ethiopia, and Nairobi. And definitely one of the things we are doing is to make sure that we invite African ministers, you know, to the high-level governmental meeting. And we still continue this as we are talking. We are really preparing for this high-level governmental meeting because it doesn't happen anytime, so it's good there is a chance that it's happening in Africa.

What else? I will just pass the DNS aspects to my colleagues. And with that, before that, I will just recognize also the presence of a few of our board members. I can see Catherine. I don't know whether Alan Barrett is around, but Catherine is there. Okay, so Catherine might have a chance to quickly, you know, talk to us. So maybe you want to take the other DNS thing.

JOHN CRAIN:

So I'll start, and then I'll hand over to my colleague, Adiel, to my left here. So there was a lot of questions in there. There was a lot built in, and we'll try and get to some of them. I think Adiel is going to be able to talk to what we're doing with law enforcement and what we're doing with the technical engagements. And it's quite a lot, so I'll leave that to him. One of the -- I'd say topic du jour, but it's been a long-running topic, is, of course, the situation in AFRINIC. Now, ICANN is not party to any of the lawsuits, but we are following very closely. I've actually been on the island myself and met with people and talked, and I'm in regular contact with AFRINIC staff.

So the AFRINIC registration services, the ability to apply for and receive resources, is still ongoing. That's working. You can get IP addresses, etc. That's down to the commitment and the diligence of the AFRINIC staff. I think we should all thank them for that. Currently, there are a series of court cases ongoing, and probably the most -- I don't know if the word's important. I'm not a lawyer. But the most interesting one is there is an appeal about the allocation of -- or the assignment of an official receiver. Now, that appeal looks like it's going to be heard before the summer. So the way the Mauritian courts work is if you're not party to the proceedings, you can't actually get all of the documents. So we are relying on talking to other persons. But we have heard as of this morning -- so this has changed a few times -- as of this morning, the dates for the appeal are in mid-May. So at one point, they were late in the year. They have moved forward. They moved forward a little bit earlier, and now they've moved back a little bit. So we believe the appeal will be heard in mid-May. And obviously, we do not know what the judges are going to decide, but they are going to deal with this

matter. Hopefully, that means we will be able to move towards an election and reconstituting a board, etc.

So that's all that we really know at the moment. We know that AFRINIC is -- the staff are doing their job and doing it diligently. As I said, we should applaud them for that. And we know that the court is going to be heard -- that the appeal cases look like they're going to be heard before the summer. So we're hearing May at the moment. That's really the only update I have on AFRINIC. Apart from, you know, we are in touch with them, we're also in touch with the over-RIRs, and we are all watching and are prepared to help in any way we possibly can. Adiel, do you want to talk a little bit about the engagement efforts that we're doing on the continent, being as you lead that?

ADIEL AKPLOGAN:

Well, there are a few questions related to engagement. Some related to policy, some related to abuse, academic engagement, and so on and so forth. There are several tracks linked to that. I will start with the abuse. We have a very elaborate program that touches on the abuse from different angles. In the technical training itself, we have a few modules there that directly touch on threat to the DNS, how to mitigate them, and how to investigate them. And on the investigation side, we have different levels that go from, you know, simple DNS operators to law enforcement. And those programs are public, are delivered by the team locally or globally. We have Carlos Alvarez in my team that covers global engagement with law enforcement and the research community related to abuse mitigation in general. So those courses are very targeted to mitigate abuse from the technical perspective.

There are policy aspects of abuse as well. That is not really in the scope of what we do, but I think the government engagement team, the GSE team, also work with different entities in government to ensure that local policy, you know, address abuse, because you can solve the technical side through training, but that needs to be backed by policy. That's beyond the scope of what we do technically.

We have started working very, I'll say, actively with the academia as well, as you have heard during the opening. We have just concluded a very successful training early last week with a university student here in Puerto Rico. We have done two in Africa as well, so we're trying to engage with the academic community in general, doing capacity building and outreach with them. This is going to increase in the coming month, year, directly involving the African Union Association and so on and so forth, because we see a gap between the knowledge of people who come out of university and their understanding of the DNS, so to be able to participate at a different level.

I think there is also a question on engagement with telecoms. We have a program, in fact, on the engagement with telecoms. We have a program within my team for mobile operators, outreach and engagement with mobile operators specifically. We have organized last September the first mobile operators engagement activities in Tanzania, I think, where we specifically target mobile operators because they are playing more and more an important role in providing internet service in Africa, right? And they have a role to play in our goal, which is to ensure that the DNS is more secure. That program is going to spread around the region in the coming month, and those are the operators we think can have impact in what we want to achieve.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thanks very much, Adiel, for that. We still have two questions online. With that, let me give an opportunity to our board member, the board director, Catherine, who joined us. And, Catherine, if you want to -- Catherine just, you know, she's just, what, six months or five months? So not much to say, but please go ahead.

CATHERINE ADEYA: Thank you very much, Pierre, and thank you to all of you. My sincere apologies. This was actually clashing with another event, and then I suddenly realized, and I came running. So please just take my humble apologies. I would have liked to be here right from the beginning, and in the future I'll make sure I do that.

By the time I walked in, I had quite a few questions, comments, and I think many of them have been answered. John Crain has definitely answered on AFRINIC, which I tell you is completely in the board's radar, so I'll not say anything more on that. And I had someone -- I think it was you who asked about the high-level government engagement. It's also in the board's radar, and I think it's a good question, but also working closely with your GAC colleagues as well. Yeah, so I don't know if it was answered to, but just because I had that as well. And I think somebody else, I heard them asking online about the grant program, yeah, which Pierre has been -- you've been doing a very fantastic job around Africa talking about it. But I just wanted to verify something, so I don't want to say something which is outside, but the main thing is please encourage people also to just go to the ICANN website. And if there are any specific queries, don't hesitate to ask your queries. You'll get all the answers on

the grant program. Thank you for now, and thank you for welcoming me.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Catherine. We do have two questions online, and we have 10 minutes, and we also need to give the floor to NomCom and then to Rwanda, so let's manage time. Mariana, can we just hear from our colleague online, please?

MARIANA MARINHO: Thank you, Pierre. So the first question we have is, from Stephan Dakyi, "Can you comment on the participation of African universities so far?" And we have a second question from Meikal Mumin. "Good morning. I'm a former member of the Latin GP, Arabic GP, TF-AIDN. I saw several presentations mentioning activities related to Anglophone and Africophone communities in Africa. I would be interested to know if there are plans to attract multipliers and further cooperation partners from other major language communities, such as Lusophone and Arabophone. Maybe there are opportunities to cooperate with other ICANN unities, such as TF-AIDN, for the Arabophone communities. Thank you."

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much. For the last question, yes, we are -- LusNIC, I mean, from Portugal, they are taking care of the Lusophone ccTLDs, and then they will be supporting in Angola and also Mozambique. So they are partners, definitely. The other question, I hope Baher is around. Let me recognize Baher. So the question is about what we are doing

apart from English and French. And he's speaking from sort of perspective of what are we doing and especially time of collaboration that we may be having. And he -- the institution, I don't know, the name is too long, but I think he was thinking about Arabic. So maybe you have a few -- [inaudible] Baher is managing, you know, the ICANN, you know, hub in Turkey.

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Pierre. So other than English and French, part of the African community obviously is native Arabic-speaking community. And my team, who looks after the Middle East engagement, covers North Africa as well. Part of this engagement is being, you know, conducted in Arabic, especially the communications and meetings and, you know, one-to-one engagements. However, when it comes to engagement around technical topics in particular, like technical engagement, you know, carried out mainly by the OCTO team, Adiel, and the team in Africa, this is mostly done in English in some countries and French in other countries in North Africa. So the technical community is, you know, most of the time they're more, like, comfortable, you know, not only communicating, but even when it comes to technical topics to, you know, engage and participate in training workshops and so on in non-Arabic languages, probably because it's easier in terms of, you know, technical terms and so on. But apart from that, the, you know, regular and ongoing engagement that we do with the community is usually done in Arabic, and this also includes our, you know, when we communicate about new initiatives or projects, sometimes we do the sort of announcement and sharing information in Arabic, but then if we want to get more into a technical engagement kind of thing, then we

usually turn into either English or French, depending on the country and the community. I hope this answers the question.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you very much, Baher. I have to put you on the spot here. Now before we end, now we do have -- Is there something about universal acceptance? That's what he was asking. Oh, yes, yes. I don't have an Arabic answer.

BAHER ESMAT:

Sorry, so probably I answered the wrong question. So, yes, when it comes to IDNs and universal acceptance, many countries in Middle East and North Africa, most of them actually have gotten their IDN country code top-level domain in Arabic, including in Africa we have Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and so on, Sudan. And some of the communities there have been engaged in many of the IDN and UA related work since the early days. More recently with the groups like Universal Acceptance Steering Group, we have two ambassadors coming from North Africa.

Again, when it comes to workshops and training that we conduct in this area, we usually do it either in English or French. However, those communities do a lot of engagement at the local level in Arabic with the wider community. And, yes, so, again, the engagement could be in languages other than Arabic. However, the topic is one of the most important topics for communities in my region, including in North Africa.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you very much, Baher. I know Adiel has -- yeah, he wanted to quickly add on the university thing.

ADIEL AKPLOGAN: Well, it was a question about the research and the cooperation with the research community. I think ICANN has always been open. The research team within OCTO has always been open to collaborate and work with the researchers who are looking for contributing to our research team or working with the research team. In terms of research, there is something that we are going to want to collaborate with many people about. It's about the KINDNS initiative that we have launched recently. And we would like to measure the impact of KINDNS practice in the region, in different regions, actually, and see how it evolves. And it's a project that we are taking with ISOC, the Pulse project. And for that specifically, we will work with researchers across the world to be able to provide an impactful dashboard for the community to see how that initiative is impacting the overall security and stability of the DNA. So, yeah, happy to talk more about it.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you very much, Adiel. I have Patrick. And then I'll give the floor to NomCom, and we'll finish with Rwanda delegation. So, Patrick.

PATRICK JONES: Thanks, Pierre. So I just want to take this as an opportunity to remind everyone that we have an opening for a position, the Coalition for Digital Africa Secretariat. We've reopened that candidate search. The position is to be based in Nairobi, Kenya. And if you are interested,

please apply. We are seeking good candidates, and we have been searching for quite a while. So we're putting it back out there and hope to fill this role rather quickly. So it's a great opportunity to work with Pierre's team and with the wider team, specifically on the Coalition for Digital Africa projects.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thanks, Patrick, for this quite important, you know, aspect. Yeah, Yaovi, wanted to --

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you, Pierre. I want to come back to the IDN, that someone mentioned local content. That's why we are helping the ALSes to work locally. But in the language area, ICANN focus also on other communities, especially in Ethiopia, for example. We have volunteers in Ethiopia that started the work, so ICANN collaborate with them. We have a generation panel in Ethiopia, completed the work, and now today in Ethiopia, people can use their own script to have domain name in that script.

Again, for the research, ICANN is collaborating in Africa, for example, [inaudible] for the Western Central Africa Research and Training Network, and [2NET.] We are working with them since many years. We are participating in the activity so that we see how we can support what we are doing. So I want to mention these important activities, and also for the academia that we organized last week, and even for the ICANN director, ICANN was also involved there to share with them what we can

do with them, how ICANN can support the research in the higher education institutions in Africa. Thank you so much.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you, Yaovi. And then, NomCom. Is there NomCom? Please, NomCom, for one or two minutes quickly, please, because we have to stop in four minutes. Sorry for that.

VANDA SCARTEZINI:

Good morning. Hello, everybody. Thank you very much for having me here. The idea is just to share with you that we are finalizing the first part of the process, NomCom. On 15 March, we will close the application. So you still have time to apply for the positions. We have three positions for the board. We have one position for non-vote member in the GNSO, one member for the ccNSO, and then, unhappily for us, this time is not for Africa, Latin America, or Asia, for ALAC, but we have European members to be selected and North American members to be selected.

So the most important issue I would like to raise also here is that there is a lot of, more than 130 applications that just started and do not finish. Maybe they are interrupted because it's a long application. But anyway, it's all the information we need to select the best candidates for each position. So please, if you have applied, finish your application, because only if you finish your application, we can consider you as a good candidate for that.

So last year, we had a possibility to select among the best persons, women from Africa, and I hope that we have another opportunity to fill

in, because nowadays I believe that we just have one African member for the next year sitting on the board. So thank you very much for this opportunity, and think about being part of the community as a leadership member. Thank you very much, and let me have the opportunity to invite everyone to the DNS Women meeting on Wednesday, 4.30, and then a cocktail is open to you. Thank you very much.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you, thank you very much, and then let's hear from Rwanda.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Once again, good morning for everyone, and probably on our continent in Africa, it is afternoon. I just want to request you once again to all attend ICANN 80, which is going to take place in Kigali. One thing I just want to highlight here, for African countries, members of AU, you don't need a visa. That is number one. You just pack your luggage, head to the airport, you are welcome in Kigali. You don't have to apply for a visa or something. All AU members, just in the morning, take your baggage, come, you are welcome. Easy.

Secondly, it is the same for Commonwealth, as well as La Francophonie. For those who are in East Africa, you don't even need to carry your passport, just your ID. Yes, that is the rules of East Africa. With your ID, you can just come to Rwanda. There are some other countries which are also listed, if you go to our immigration website, even though they are not, let's say, members of the African Union or Commonwealth, because of different bilateral agreements. So for a stay of 30 days, there

are a number of countries which can also just, they don't need a visa. Anyway, for even other countries, the visa is just \$50 and you can still get the visa on arrival. It means even for those countries that will need visa, you will still get it on arrival, which is much easier, no stress, it becomes easy to visit Rwanda.

In addition, we have a booth on the second floor, just in front of Ballroom A. There is a booth of Rwanda, there are colleagues who are there. For any other information, you can just pass by and there will be someone to give you more details about Rwanda, as well as facilitate probably all those details about the transport and other related matters.

So, once again, what I'm requesting, I know for you, you will attend, but for your ministers, those who are going to attend the [inaudible], we have sent invitations. I know there are some changes we have been receiving, depending on the changes in the governments. So, if you found that there are some changes, please let us know. We will immediately issue another invitation, as you may wish. Thank you so much. You are welcome.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thanks very much for this invitation and we will be there. With that, do we have any urgent questions, any urgent matters? Yes, sorry. Yes, please, very last second.

RONKE SOLA-OGUNSOLA:

Thank you. I hate to stand in between us and lunch. My name is Ronke from Nigeria. I just want to add my voice to that of the question on local

content. Fantastic work that Coalition of Digital Africa is doing. But what comes to mind is, yes, we can look at IDNs, universal acceptance on DNS level. But as members of various communities, I'm going back to various countries, there's that role of government policies. If government does not drive local content development, it will be a challenge. I [inaudible] my hat to that of the Nigerian government. We have a sectoral push to develop and promote local content in the telecoms communication sector. This will also help you address issues of accessibility, affordability. Sometimes, one of the challenges we have back home in Africa is the cost of device and the functionality of those devices, considering that we have different languages. Most devices that you have, especially if you're looking at remote rural people, they still come in Latin, alphabet, scripts, and all of that. We also need to engage the OEMs. We need to go back. Yes, fantastic work with the academia. Then content. If there's no content and you have the UA, it would just be as good as having highways and nobody to [inaudible] it. Thank you, and I hope we take it back to our communities and see how we promote local content from grassroots to the national level. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thank you for those words. It's also about collaborating with all of us. What we are doing is we know quite tiny in terms of what is to be done. But we hear you. We take note on that. With that, thanks so much for coming to this Africa space. Now I leave you now to the North American space. Sorry for that. Thanks so much, and bear with me. With the interpreters, we passed maybe three minutes, but sorry for that. Bye for now.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]