
ICANN80 | PF – Africa Space
Wednesday, June 12, 2024 – 15:30 to 17:00 KGL

MAGALI JEAN:

Hello and welcome to the Africa Space. My name is Magali Jean and I'm the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN's expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will be read aloud if put in the proper form as noted in the chat. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called up, virtual participants will unmute their microphone in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Interpretation for this session will include English and French. For the benefit of other participants, please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. With that, I will hand the floor over to Yaovi Atohoun, stakeholder engagement and operations director. Thank you, Yaovi.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Magali. We have the agenda on the screen for those in the room and those joining remotely. Because we are a bit late, I'm not going to go through the agenda. We'll have first some welcome remarks and after that, we'll have the presentation but before that, of the study, the result, we will have that. Again, also the coalition for Digital Africa will have some partners present a bit and then we'll have a time for you to discuss or to interact. So with this, I would like to invite

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

Pierre Dandjinou, who is the vice president for stakeholder engagement for Africa, to start the welcoming remarks. Thank you. Over to you, Pierre.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thank you very much, Yaovi, and good afternoon to everyone. My pleasure, of course, to have you here, but also the Africa space is that time during ICANN meeting where we kind of update the community on what we've been doing in terms of our Africa strategy. You will remember that there was a strategy there and what we've been doing in Africa actually is under this strategy. But the good thing also is that we do have this new initiative, the CDA, that is really also helping, you know, move, I would say, quite practically on some of the issues that were raised in this strategy. Details of them are going to happen. We do have a few partners that are in the room. They will be telling more about those things.

I think briefly, I would just say that I would like to thank all of you and also those who've been assisting in the different places where we go. We do have statistics on where we are now standing in terms of the eight sort of flagship projects that we have under the CDA. You'll be hearing more on those ones. Just to say that we provide updates and you do have questions. Since we've been presenting CDA now, we are having different questions and then interests that are being kind of shown that to join this coalition. We'll take time to think about this. So, yeah, without any further ado, I would like to just hand over to John. He's available. We do have kind of 15 minutes to have all our welcome remarks. And I'd also like to thank our colleague who came here, who

took time to come to the Africa space, naming John, of course. But also we have Alan Barrett, Catherine there from the board, and of course our own Sally Costerton. Thank you very much. So if John is available, I would like to hand it over to him. So John is going to be contributing online. So I'll just move to Alan Barrett, please.

ALAN BARRETT:

Yeah, hello, this is Alan Barrett. Yeah, thank you for inviting me. I think we all know Pierre has been doing very good work in stakeholder engagement in Africa. I think he's going to later on tell us about the Coalition for Digital Africa. And I know we're going to hear from William and Mark about the domain name study. So I don't wanna take any of your time. Just to say that it's a pleasure to be here and to acknowledge all the good work that other people are doing. Thanks.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Yeah, thank you very much, Alan. And then I would like to hand over to Sally. Sally, please.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Thank you very much. And good afternoon. And it's always good to be here with you as part of this gathering of the Africa community at ICANN. And today, in particular, I am thrilled to officially launch the 2023 Africa Domain Name Industry Study, which provides a comprehensive analysis of the DNS landscape across the continent. This study was a major undertaking, and it demonstrates ICANN's commitment to support DNS infrastructure growth and development in

Africa. The research offers a detailed look at the current state, but also serves as a call to action to leverage opportunities, highlight the region's digital growth potential, and address the challenges facing Africa's digital ecosystem. The team from Powersoft Africa, which conducted the survey, will present an overview of the findings and recommendations shortly. But I wanted to highlight a few key takeaways.

According to the study, there has been a significant increase in domains registered under African ccTLDs, which numbered over 4.3 million as of November, with an additional 1.4 million gTLD registrations from African entities. It also shows major infrastructure advancements with more than 1.1 million kilometers of terrestrial and submarine fibre cables now spanning the continent, enhancing cross-border communication and internet access. But despite these strides, high internet access costs continue to pose a significant barrier, with the African average African spending about 4% of their monthly income on just one gigabyte of data, which is twice the global affordability target.

The study's recommendations focus on strengthening regional internet infrastructure, enhancing internet service demand through the protection of online rights, simplifying the domain registration and payment processes, and promoting local content in African languages. It also proposes a trial observatory to continuously monitor the status and growth of the DNS industry in Africa.

We urge all of our community members and stakeholders in this region to explore the study, and we're eager to hear your feedback. ICANN continues to support Africa's digital transformation through various

initiatives under the Coalition for Digital Africa, which is also contributing to the implementation of the Africa Regional Plan, of which the study was a key element.

The internet economy in Africa has the potential to grow to \$180 billion by 2025, 5.2% of the continent's GDP, according to a report by the International Finance Corporation. And the three primary components of developing Africa's digital economy are affordable internet infrastructure, meaningful connectivity, and talent development, all of which are reflected in the Coalition for Digital Africa's activities. These include efforts to increase digital inclusivity by promoting universal acceptance, expanding internet infrastructure through ICANN managed root server clusters, DNSSEC roadshows, and ccTLD capacity building.

For now, I would like to thank all of you for joining us today and everyone who is helping to shape the future of the internet in Africa. And be sure to join our cocktail reception at five o'clock local time, where we will be celebrating the launch of the study. Thank you very much. Back to you, Pierre.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Sally. And now we move to, is John available? If no less, okay. Let me give the floor to our board member, Catherine Adeya.

CATHERINE ADEYA: Thank you very much, Pierre. I was saying, Sally has basically said what I was going to share. But I mean, I think even from Monday, and even

during the high-level government forum, I did quote from this study. I found it a very useful study, and especially the data that is there. And it's definitely going to be a basis for discussion. And I'm looking forward to hearing from the rest of you after it's been presented. I think the only thing I'll pick from what Sally shared was the trial observatory to continuously monitor the status and the growth of the DNS industry in Africa. I found this potentially a very interesting tool, because it will be able to gather comprehensive data on DNS registrations and infrastructure development. I think what we've been keen for in Africa, in all areas to do with the internet development, internet infrastructure, is empirical data. And here's an opportunity to get evidence-based insights to help inform policy decisions, stakeholder collaboration against governments. If you were here on Sunday, you had the government, the legislators were concerned that where do they get the data. These are good examples. And of course, to develop strategies for sustainability in the sector. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

Thank you very much. Catherine, can we hear from John? No? Okay. So let's move on. Should I pass it over to Yaovi for the rest of the agenda, please?

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Pierre. The next step is to have the team from Powersoft Africa to briefly present some findings from this report. So we'll hand over to the team from Powersoft Africa. Thank you.

WILLIAM STUCKE:

Thank you, Yaovi. I'm William Stucke and this is Mark Elkins. And we led a team of 48 people from all over Africa in carrying out the study. Can we see the first slide, please? That's the one. Thank you. Next slide. Next slide.

We looked at a total of 64 top-level domains, including the six IDNs, the three dot city domains, and of course, dot Africa. And the graph shows the relative cost per capita of internet access. Slide three, please. People often don't realize quite how big Africa is. It has 54 countries. It's big enough to fit in China, the US, India, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Mexico, and even Japan. It's huge. Next slide.

We used an online survey tool in which we had six languages and we had seven different questionnaires for various stakeholders. Next slide, please. The different stakeholders that we were addressing. Next slide. We examined not just the name service, but also the website for every domain so that we could look at things like where it's hosted and the languages used, whether they're using IPv6 or DNSSEC, and we analyzed things on a regional and language basis as well. Slide six, please.

It's important to note that we did not have complete data by any stretch of the imagination. So the numbers that we produced are underestimates in terms of the total things, but we did in fact examine 4.5 million domains in detail. Next slide.

Africa is a very diverse region, and as has been mentioned, internet access is really expensive in Africa. Most of the access is via cell phones, using smart social media, which means that there is on one hand a low

demand for domain names, but on the other hand, as people get more and more used to using the internet and particularly if they want to set up their own small business or whatever, then the growth for domain names increases. So these are two trends.

We found 63 fully operational internet exchange points in 38 countries, and this is up from 36 in 26 countries in our previous study seven years ago. And it's worth noting that 18% of the world's population is using less than 3% of IP resources. Next slide, please.

We've gone down from four and a half to three domains per thousand people, and this is basically because the population is growing faster than the domain name industry. Africa has the fastest growing population in the world, and it also has to a large extent the youngest population in the world. We found 51 functioning ccTLDs, and by that I don't mean that there's a name server running. I mean that it's possible to actually register domain names. And we valued the industry at a minimum of 137% US dollars as a direct cost, but applying standard multipliers, it could be over one billion. Next slide, please.

Thank you. So in terms of the key success factors, one could say the usual stuff. We need the right infrastructure. We need digital awareness. We need good policy, regulatory and governance frameworks. We need easy way to pay things. It needs to be cheap, and it needs to be easy. Next slide, please.

So in conclusion, Africa is a very diverse region with much poverty and instability. The market is still small, but it is growing, and it's growing fast in some places. While there are far too many hindrances to growth,

some countries have got it right. We need to simplify, automate and expedite domain registration processes. And in particular, we need to reduce the cost of TLD registration. The average cost is \$103 compared to about \$10 for a .com domain. As long as it's cheaper to buy a .com domain or other gTLD, African TLDs will not sell their domain names. And it's worth noting that the countries that have the higher revenue have the lowest prices.

In terms of the wider environment, access issues need to be addressed, and policies and so on. And in particular, countries without local hosting need to build Internet exchange point data centers and fiber networks. And the pie charts, which you will see at the bottom of our page reports on the trial DNS observatory, give good hints of where to build data centers. And it's important that government not only offers a range of services online, but also uses their own ccTLD for their own email addresses and websites. Next slide, please.

Domain names should be low. You should only be recovering the direct cost, not paying for a board of directors or anything fancy premises. The direct cost of running the registry. Have simple rules. Make it easy to do it. Keep it cheap, keep it simple. Next slide, please.

So is price really important? This is a question that's been asked. And here we do a direct comparison between Kenya and South Africa, which have the most successful countries in terms of domains. They're similar in many ways. But where they are different is that Kenya charges five times as much as South Africa, and South Africa sold 20 times as many domains. I think that tells you something.

In terms of the barriers to buying - to domain names, you'll see first of all there's a 45% growth over the last six years. And that having no restrictions on domain names doubles domain sales. Look at the figure of 9,000 versus 18,000. Just as a note, Freenom is mentioned here. We explained that in the study. Freenom and SafeCow were entities that until recently were giving away free - not really - domains. In fact, you never had the rights to the domain, and they monetized it, and ICANN withdrew their registration, shall we say. So there were four countries in particular where they were operating. So that makes some significant inflation in the figures, but has changed now. Next slide, please.

Countries that are using web and/or EPP-based registries sell 10 times as many domains, and the cheaper countries sell six times as many domains. So these are very simple principles that one can use to improve the efficiency of your ccTLD registry. And in terms of the domain name market - next - you need all the good things. In particular, you need - we recommend using the 3R model. That's where you separate the registry, the registrar and registrant. We need enough registrars, about 20, to ensure adequate competition, and you need a cheap and quick alternative dispute resolution in place. Next slide, please. Mark is now going to take us through the observatory.

MARK ELKINS:

Good afternoon, everybody. Yes, my name is Mark Elkins. So in reality, look, we did a study in 2017, and we've done the study now, but doing a study is a bit like taking a photograph. You have an instantaneous idea of what's going on, but you have no idea when what happened before or what might happen afterwards. The one thing I really like about this

particular slide is it states if you can't measure it, you can't manage it. The only bad thing about this slide is the word "trial". Yes, it was a trial, but it's now something that's certainly in operation. Next slide, please.

So normal criteria need four factors to be successful, an extensive connectivity supplied by interconnected IXPs, robust routing, robust and extensive DNS system, and a security system and infrastructure which impacts on all three of the above. Next slide, please.

So we have a trial observatory, a trial DNS observatory. Its primary objectives, yes, are to track the growth of African domain names, ccTLDs, gTLDs, we've got four of those, IDNs, we've got six of those, and second levels when they're not actually part of the ccTLD directly.

The second objective to make things a bit sweeter is - and to make the internet a better place is we're looking at providing an Anycast name server, because it's through the Anycast name server that we're able to collect the data. So, yes, we set up that secondary name server, available, free of charge, etc., very similar to the model in Africa, and it's available to all African ccTLDs, African TLDs. That's accessible. If you are a zone manager for an African domain, I ask you deeply to please go to the URL that is on the screen at the moment, sign yourself up so that we can properly capture your data. Your data is probably already available on the internet, but the information that we have on you is incorrect. We would rather have the correct information. Once we have the correct information, we can give you a lot of data about your zone. So the front end allows for a TLD or a second level manager to register their zones, et cetera. Next, please.

So once we have that information, or even if we don't have that information, we do provide publicly available statistics, lovely graphs with lines and things. But, however, you get private information about your zone. You get to see what's potentially wrong or how things could be improved or where your clients are perhaps not doing the right thing. So there's no loss of privacy or anything like that or risk of damage to your zone. It's a name server like any other name server. You can choose to use it as long as you supply it information. And eventually we've got promises of turning this, like I said, into an Anycast instance. Next slide, please.

So like I said, it's got some private information. Examples of data reports, et cetera, such as downloadable information on the list of domains that are broken, e.g., the child doesn't work or does not exist anymore. It's in the parent. So the parent was able to get their money and they're happy. But the child does not exist. A list of domains where the name servers are on the same IP. So, yes, they've complied with the general policy of having at least two name servers. But if they're both on the same IP address, that kind of ignores the purpose of doing that. Or another one. For example, I'm very much into both the universal acceptance. So I like IDNs. But I'm also on the DNSSEC and security workshop committee. So I like DNSSEC. And I like to see these things grow. So you can actually view a list of domains, local domains or other domains that have CDS records without a corresponding DS record in the zone. As an example, Rwanda has been a great friend. And she has given me permission to speak about her domain. There are four domains in the Rwanda, .RW domain that have DS records. Four domains that are secure. However, when you go back into the

background, she has the ability to see there's another 60 odd domains that are actually signed. But no one's bothered to move the data up to the Rwandan domain itself. You can also see things like number of name server domains. And we're still open. This is still open work in progress. So if there's bright ideas that you would like to see, then you're most welcome to let us know. Next slide, please.

So the format that we chose was to use the AfriNIC's idea of what a region is. And those are countries within that region. If a name is in green, thank you very much, Rwanda, then we actually get proper information from them. One thing that you do see is, like I said, I'm into DNSSEC. There's the DNSSEC algorithm column. So we can see that, for example, Kenya, Rwanda are using algorithm 8. And Tanzania is using algorithm 13. And that's something that excites me. I'm sorry if it doesn't excite you. There's also a list of record numbers and things like that there. I've already seen that it would make sense to also add the number of IDN domains per country. So that from an African point of view, we can instantly see how many countries have got IDN and how many IDN domains there are. At the bottom, there is a small total of 2.3 million domains. That number might be completely incorrect, but never mind. But we can see we're 46% of the way there from a DNS point of view. Next slide, please.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

So next. Please, Mark, you can continue from your end. We are sorting out the technical issue. So we'll come back. We'll not have the slide on the screen, but if you can try to continue.

MARK ELKINS:

Okay. So if you then click on a country or an SLD, it will give you information about that SLD or that country. So you'll see, for example, the number of working domains. We are more interested in working domains than domains that used to work. You can also see records on how many websites there are, how many websites have SSL signatures. You can see the number of IDNs there. So I do care about IDNs. And you can also see information about DNSSEC there, whether there are domains with DNSSEC. After that, we issue -- I'm kind of reading what the slide says. We show you the domain names for that zone that you're looking at. Thank you very much. And then if there's a DS record there and/or a CDS record, we also show that. So you can see whether something is completely signed or not. Next slide, please.

So we then graph what's been going on. So I run edu.za and I've been doing that since 2010. And the regulator was bugging me, asking me how many domains have I got. And he kept bugging me. So I graphed it so he doesn't bug me anymore. That's where this particular idea came from. It's a small number. It's only 184 domains here. But you can at least see that there has been growth over time. And you can see the growth of -- well, IDN is not shown there. But I'll probably add it after this. But you can see obviously how many domains there are. How many have websites. How many of those websites are SSL signed. How many of those websites are reachable by IPv6. And whether is DNSSEC involved in that particular domain.

What this means from our point of view in Africa is when ICANN goes and spends a lot of money running around teaching people how to do

DNSSEC in a workshop, we can see these numbers grow. That to me is important. It's the future. This is not a photograph. This is something that's live. It updates on the first day of every month from those who are involved in the project. And it works. And that to me is I think the important thing. And it's not just DNSSEC. It's IDN and it's IPv6. And all of these things together are helping to create a better, more secure Internet system in Africa. And that's why I really love this project. Last slide, please.

I implore you to contact us. Those are our details. William and myself. And to thoroughly support the observatory.Africa. Very easy to remember. Observatory.Africa. And Africa is a great domain to keep this observatory in. That last comment is so that Lucky allows me to go to his party after this meeting. Thank you very much.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Mark and William, for the presentation. We have provision for the community for us to interact. And we have four community group representatives here. They will just going to take 90 seconds to give first feedback. We can start with the business community represented by Lawrence. So just 90 seconds so that we can move. Thank you so much.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE ROBERTS:

Thank you. I appreciate every time given for this to happen. I wanted to start with thanking ICANN for even facilitating this study. It definitely has revealed a lot. So the report was definitely an interesting one for the

business constituency of ICANN, especially for the fact that it touches a lot on the challenges that the region experiences. We could see that we have about 4.3 million registrations across board. About 1.4 million. And this is a continent that is about 1.5 billion. So we don't see this as a challenge. We just see this. This just affirms the fact that Africa is a green field in terms of the domain name marketplace.

The report highlights also a fact that for there to be growth in Africa, the Internet exchange points, data center infrastructure generally has to improve and has to increase. And we anticipate the fact that and this is definitely another invitation for business. You know, that if we were to see the kind of upticks that we really desire to see, that infrastructure has to—

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Lawrence. We want to hear from Hadia in also 60 seconds. Hadia promised to make it 60 seconds. Hadia, over to you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

Thank you, Yaovi. So first I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to everyone who made this study possible. This study was published in May of this year. So the study presents key findings that highlight advancements as well as ongoing challenges. I find the study serving as a valuable foundation as we develop the ICANN Africa regional plan for fiscal years 2026-2031. Also, the trial observatory can be very helpful when deciding on policies. So I also wish to see this go forward as well.

And I had one question in relation to how we define success of TLDs. So is the success of a TLD only defined by the number of domain names registered under the TLD? Or maybe we can define success in other ways and other means. Maybe also DNS traffic could be one of those. I'm not sure. So this is just a question about success. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Hadia. We thank AFRALO through Hadia. And then during the interaction, we'll have an answer to your question. We have NPOC represented by Vitus, also in 60 seconds, the first feedback. Vitus.

EMMANUEL VITUS:

Civil society is always difficult to speak 90 seconds, but I'll try. So yeah, my name is Emmanuel Vitus. I represent the Not-for-Profit Organizational Constituency. So one of the major challenges that civil societies face in Africa when it comes to this whole industry or the ecosystem is the availability of data to support the advocacy. And I think that with an accurate data like what this report has just highlighted, we are hopeful that it will inform not just the policy makers, but also support some of the issues that were raised in the report, like the local content, the creation of content in native African languages, and push most of our government to actually use the advantages of the DNS to provide local services and government services. So we hope that this report and insights will empower not just civil society organizations, but everybody to do more in terms of the upcoming round for gTLDs. I know a lot of organizations, especially our members,

are trying to apply, and most of them will apply for the next round, and we hope that they can use the data and the insight from this report to support their, how do you call it, their requests for the applicant support program, et cetera. So thank you very much for this comprehensive report. I had a chance to contribute in 2016 to the report, and last year to the report, and I can say that it's a great job. Thank you very much, and we hope it continues.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Vitus. We want to hear from NCUC, represented by Benjamin.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE:

Thank you. Thank you for this amazing report. And as the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group, Non-Commercial User Constituency, it's exciting to see that some of the things we advocate for, we are seeing it coming out here. We see that policy is one of the barriers to growth of the market. We also see that restrictiveness of policy environment is one of the things that people responded to the surveys mentioned. Clarity of regulatory environment, all of these is important. So I would recommend that this report should also guide some of the interventions done on the continent to support the domain ecosystem. And for us, seeing that privacy proxy adoption is very minimal, not like what we would like to see. We are concerned about privacy and all of that. So this report is a great indicator to at least show us what is happening, and we hope we can engage with it more, and it can also

inform the kind of intervention capacity building done on the continent to support our community. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Benjamin. Before moving to the second part of the agenda, we want to hear also from Mr. Biyi, who is representing the ccNSO Council. So over to you, Mr. Biyi.

BIYI OLADIPO:

Thank you so much for this opportunity. The report, for me, gives two broad opportunities. One is that it gives us a basis for conversation, for us to assess where we have been and how well we've fared in the ecosystem in Africa. And secondly, it also gives us the opportunity to chart a course for ourselves in going forward, in terms of connecting the next people and also providing the basis for development of the ecosystem in Africa.

With regards to the ccNSO, the ccTLD portion, which is my own constituency, I think more work still needs to be done in assessing the health and also the current situations with specific ccTLDs. Hadia mentioned earlier about the basis for assessing the health of the TLDs. Is it just about numbers, or are we also looking at other parameters to see how healthy the ccTLDs are? I think on this basis, deeper collaborations will need to be done with the AFTLD to work on this, to be able to get where we are. Finally, the idea of developing a DNS observatory for Africa is a beautiful one, a very beautiful one. I will however suggest that this observatory be championed by the FTLD, supported by ICANN. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Biyi. This is just the first round, and as you know, this study is part of the Coalition for Digital Africa program. And then we want to have a brief update on some projects within this program. And before we move, so this is what we are going to do. We give the floor to Mariana, who will start, and then we'll have also some partners from the Coalition to share with us. So we want to hand over to Mariana. Over to you.

MARIANA MARINHO:

Thank you, Yaovi. Good afternoon, everyone. So if you've been here for the follow ICANN study program, you've probably heard about the Coalition for Digital Africa multiple times. But for those that have not, the Coalition is an alliance of like-minded organizations committed to support the development of Africa's digital economy. And we believe that by working together we're going to achieve greater results and impact.

We have 14 organizations that are currently partners of the Coalition. And I just want to highlight the two new partners that we had since this month, Lawyers Hub and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization. We're very excited to have them on board and work with them. We have three areas of focus that work, is a robust DNS infrastructure, meaningful connectivity, and capacity development.

And I wanted to highlight some progress that we've done since ICANN79. So we now have activities impacting 34 countries, and we had 14 partners, as I mentioned, two new ones, and eight initiatives in total,

and one new initiative that is internet governance capacity development for governments and lawmakers. Thank you.

In terms of key achievements, and I remember when I was with you all in the first presentation, the Africa space, the question was, but this talk is beautiful, but doesn't mean anything unless we're making real impact in Africa's internet. And I'm happy, I'm very excited about this slide. It's just the beginning. But as you can see, we have already launched two IMRS installations, one in Kenya, one in Cairo, and with that, users in Africa have now more resilient and stable access to the DNS zone services with 80% of Africa-based internet DNS queries to them are as resolved in the region. Before, that metric was around like 40%.

We have also expanded and diversified the top-level domain performance monitoring system that it basically enhanced ICANN's ability to detect incidents related to new gTLDs, and we have two probe nodes installed, one in Nigeria and one in Kenya.

As we talked, we had recent the publication of the Africa DNS study, which we're very excited about, and thank you, Mark and William, for the excellent work. And as of recently, as part of our DNSSEC roadshow project, the ccTLD in Botswana, WW, signed DNSSEC, and that's really like bringing a more secure environment for the ccTLD.

In terms of what are we working right now, we continue focusing on enhancing the IMRS infrastructure. We have received 20 expressions of interest to become hosts of IMRS single instances and receive financial support to purchase IMRS appliance. So we're very excited about this

and we hope to be providing updates on this soon. So this group have an idea. Currently, we have 13 IMRS single instances in Africa. So if these organizations are qualified and meet our technical criteria and other criteria as well, we could potentially be more than doubling our capacity for IMRS singles.

We are also working in partnership with AFTLD, AFNIC, NSRC, ITU, to enhance on the projects for ccTLD registry capacity development, and we're going to have our AFTLD friends talking about the project soon. We continue to work on DNSSEC roadshows, supporting DNSSEC deployment in more countries in collaboration with the African Telecommunication Union with the aim to create a safer online environment by enhancing the security of ccTLDs. As I mentioned, Botswana recently deployed DNSSEC and we're working with five other ccTLDs right now in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, and Nigeria. And later this year, we're going to be working, again, asking for new ccTLDs to join this project.

We have the University Acceptance in Higher Education Institution that will be present. Our colleague is from the Association of African Universities will be presenting more about this project. We also have a project on IXP development that is led by the Internet Society and they're working to enhance the infrastructure of IXPs in Benin, Malawi, and Rwanda. And finally, the newest project that we have, Internet Governance Capacity Development for Governments and Lawmakers. This is a collaboration between ICANN, Smart Africa, and the Association of Parliamentarians, the African Parliamentarian Network in Internet Governance. And Smart Africa will be presenting a little bit

more about this initiative soon. And we had also wanted to note that we recently, like, during just before ICANN 80, we had a training with, like, 23 parliamentarians. And we have them participating in the high level government meeting, which is, like, very exciting. And with that—

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Mariana. I think we have a general overview of the project and then we want really to interact. We have three partners who are going also to share. But we want really to ask them to take the main slide and then in four or five minutes they can share. Then we can have time for the participants, for the community. We have a lot of questions in the chat room and we want to thank remote participants. So the next to speak will be the Africa top level domain organizations, represented by Eyitayo. So if you can do that in four minutes, we will really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

EYITAYO IYORTIM:

I'll try, Yaovi. Good afternoon, everyone. Eyitayo for the records. Next slide. Basically I'm going to speak a little bit about the capacity development project, which is part of the coalition for digital Africa. And you can see the partners on the screen. So let's go right to the objectives. Next slide. The project was designed to focus on capacity development, security in DNS infrastructure and enhanced engagement across stakeholder groups with a view for the government, academia, civil society to properly collaborate. The workshop covers business, marketing and the technical aspects related to DNS. And the goal obviously is to strengthen the registries.

So the objective first was to identify needs of the ccTLD operators in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. We're looking at assisting government, assisting the ccTLD operators and obviously offering tailored capacity development activities led by industry experts through the online courses. We have hands on workshops. We have webinars, peer exchanges and learning by doing activities. The participants for this particular project have been drawn from ten countries. We're going to have one representative share in one minute what her experience was from Madagascar about the training. Next slide.

So these are some of the sessions that have already been covered. They were here earlier in Kigali. Governance and policy management, sales and marketing, identification of opportunities and then performance metrics. And you know we're speaking now about how do we measure the success of ccTLDs. I think that's a valid conversation to have. We have the next session which is a training, technical training in Kenya. This will cover the DNS ecosystem, UNIX, DNS operations, DNS software and an overview of security and resilience. Next slide.

So these are the expected outcomes and I think this is a great focus. That we will see a growth in ccTLD domain registrations assessed between 6 to 12 months after the recommended updates and the support that will be provided. That there will be a visible improvement in ccTLD governance and operations in the countries that have attended this capacity development training. And that there will be enhanced community participation within the AFTLD and to support AFTLD. And the future we're hoping that as the AFTLD partners with

ICANN and the other partners, we will see growth and development of the registries in Africa. The infrastructure coverage will be increased and improved. We need to bring more people online. We need to push to increase the number of users and we're looking towards a decade of growth for African ccTLDs.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you. I think we want to give a round of applause to her because she really helped us. We'll have a time when we'll come back with the other person. And we want to also hear from the African Association of African Universities on one of the projects of this Coalition for Digital Africa. So briefly. I think you'll do better than the previous lady.

NODUMO DHLAMINI:

Thank you, Yaovi. AAU is working on a project to promote IDNs, EAI and UA uptake by African higher education institutions. This project has four objectives. We are benchmarking, evaluating the readiness of universities, we're creating awareness and building capacity, providing technical support and helping computer science faculties to adopt a UA. We are also encouraging academics to be involved in the UA steering group.

In terms of what we have done, when we tested 421 universities in April 2023, 21% of them had compliant email systems. We are currently working on redoing that assessment and we found that the number has gone up to 71% in terms of those whose email systems are compliant. However, for the websites, the data is not yet ready. We also have focused on capacity building and you will see the figures in the previous

slides, previous slide, please, the number of workshops and webinars that we've run, number of universities that have attended physical workshops and webinars and participants that have attended our physical workshops and webinars. We also engaged 283 deans of computer science faculty through webinars and we have 20 universities that we are currently working with who expressed interest in piloting the integration of a UA curricula. Finally, the opportunities I think are in scaling up the technical support to a wider number of universities. Second, refining the self-help manuals for universities, technical staff to do self-help in terms of making their systems compliant and training academic faculty to harness or rather integrate UA curricula. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Ms. Nodumo. I want to tell you that we'll try to have the presentations uploaded no later than tomorrow so that we can continue interacting. So after the next project, which is from Smart Africa, we'll have interaction, but I want to mention again that we'll continue this interaction from 5 outside. So from 5 outside we'll continue the interaction. So after the last presenter, who is Smart Africa, we can have an interaction in the room. So we want to give the microphone to Mr. Rodrigue from Smart Africa, also to take five minutes to give us the key point. Thank you.

RODRIGUE GUIDUEMDE:

Thank you very much, Yaovi. I just wanted to talk on behalf of [inaudible] Lacina Koné just a few words. Okay, first of all, I would like to thank you, the coalition for Digital Africa, for this invitation. It's a real

pleasure to see all the key members of our meeting stakeholder ecosystem gathering in this room. This is a good way. Your dedication and contribution to the advancement of internal governance topics across Africa are commendable, and it is an honor for me to speak on behalf of Lacina Koné.

As you know, Smart Africa Alliance has always been committed to promoting a digital Africa through various flagship projects, including internal governance projects, which is crucial for advancing the domain name industry, ensuring Africa's sovereignty in this complex economic and geostrategic landscape.

To tackle existing challenges, our initial objective has been to consolidate and to strengthen the ecosystem around terms of interest to Africa. This has included establishment, a thematic think tank to address the under-representation of African actors in international decision-making bodies. Moreover, the current context of internet governance in Africa, marked by the crisis with organization, ongoing global discussion by the United Nations Secretariat on the new digital pact, underscores the need for deep reflection and proactive measures.

Our approach to awareness and capacity building is based on main strategy. Three. The first one is awareness and capacity building establish a professional body on internet governance in Africa to provide experience, guidance, and coordination for effective policy development and implementation. This includes engagement, engaging local stakeholders, and assisting government bodies in understanding the technical working group of the internet, particularly in the domain name systems.

Two. African participation in global discussion, encouraging African involvement in global internet governance forums, such as Governmental Advisory Committee of ICANN. This ensures that African voice and concern are represented and heard.

Three. Technical expertise for policy makers, providing provide technical expertise to government and legislator to help them to formulate policies and regulations that foster digital transformation. These initiatives aim to serve as a catalyst for proactive measures that enhance the resilience and securities of Africa's internet ecosystem, which are essential condition for sustainable development and innovation.

Through tailored capacity building program, government representatives and parliamentarians will gain a deeper understanding of the technical function of the internet, including DNS. The initiative we hope to engage with the coalition aims to support these officials in their effort towards national digital transformation and to enable more effective participation in global internet discussions. We are confident that these efforts will enable African government to address their specific challenge and engage more main full in the global internet governance landscape.

In collaboration with African parliamentary network in internet governance, APNIC and partner like ICANN, this initiative will help identify regional issues and facilitate active participation in forums such as GAC of ICANN. Today I'm proud of this partnership with the coalition around the capacity building initiative and we hope to benefit from commitment to organizing a peer learning session for the coalition

members, governmental actors and parliamentarians in [Thailand] of our upcoming transform Africa summit to be held from August 28 to 30 August in Nairobi, Kenya, under the topics powering Africa digital prosperity beyond border, beyond limits.

Your support and collaboration will be essential to achieving our common goals of digital inclusion, robust internet governance and sustainable development across the continent. Thank you for your attention and continuous support. Let's work together to build a resilient and innovative digital future for Africa. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much, Rodrigue, from Smart Africa. Now we have the presenters also in the room and we want also to thank people interacting in the chat, remote participants and also speakers who are already responding to some questions. So we'll take some questions from the room, we'll take like five questions from the room and also after that we go back to the remote participants or to the chat. So please you just raise your hand, you introduce yourself, your name and then you ask the question. We have 15 minutes to do this exercise and then we'll continue up there where we are having the reception and also before that we'll have the official launch of the report, the study from the report. So if you want to take the microphone you just raise your hand and then we can take like two, three people first and then we move to the chat. So we have Dr. Matogoro. We have Hervé. Okay. First we'll have the lady from Madagascar, Dr. Matogoro, Hervé. No more name? We have Sebastien and Remmy. So let's take first, okay, [Bashar.] Okay, we'll make it quick. We'll try to make it and everyone

can take like 60 seconds. That will help so that everyone can say something before we leave. So we can give the microphone to [Fanad] from Madagascar first. Sorry if I spell wrongly the name.

[FANAD ASALAM:]

Hello everyone. I'm going to speak in French if I may. Let me speak in French. And I am Fanad Asalam from Madagascar. And for us, it was extremely interesting to go to that workshop with our coalition for digital Africa. I'm a marketing consultant and we started working on consultant on marketing studies and we have some marketing strategies. So it was a perfect timing for us to have this workshop organized by the coalition. And we did a challenge. Our thinking, we have a very strong input and this is very, very interesting for us. And in marketing for six years, I am very interested in those issues, of those computer issues. This is quite specific, but quite fascinating. And I learned a lot about the technical issues and much was brought up by this workshop where we can participate and participate strongly. We did share a lot of information. We have a strong community being built around it. So we're going to have some results, I'm sure. And this is a very good spirit of communication and collaboration. I would like to thank the community. That was a great workshop, which was not a one shot and we're going to keep working to improve the situation. And I would like to thank the coalition for digital Africa, all the organizers, the trainers as well. They were great. Thank you so much.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you very much, Fanad. So it's a feedback from the workshop, which takes place during the weekend a year. I want to remind us again that we have the board of the coalition here. If you have some feedback, you can go there and provide this feedback. That will help the team, the partners to improve what we have started doing. Thank you again. So now let's give the microphone to Dr. Matogoro.

JABHERA MATOGORO: Thank you, Yaovi. And for the interest of time, this is Dr. Matogoro from Tanzania. I appreciate Mark for a good presentation and the good reports. I only have a few comments on, of course, I have given it on the chat on the number of response rates. But the second is just a comment on the coalition for digital Africa, which is, I think it's important to have the representation of the African country. As I know ICANN and other partners will be putting much of the resource on the coalition for digital Africa. So it's very important that these resources equally shared within Africa. Because I know from the theoretical point of view on the technology adoption model, there are countries which are area adopters and there are also maybe who are slow adopters. So it's also important on the resources that are available to be allocated for most of the African country. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you, Dr. Matogoro. I'm sure that the Vice President also will address what you just mentioned. We now want to give the floor to Sebastien Bachollet.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you very much. I have a simple question. I wanted to know whether all those trainings, all those tasks were done in several languages and especially in Africa, in English and French. Because I am quite surprised that we heard our colleague from Madagascar speak in French, but nobody else did.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: We have a summary of this report available in French. And then the team is working to have the full report in other languages very soon. But for now, we have at least the executive summary available in French. So thank you for your comment. Let's hear from Hervé.

HERVÉ HOUNZANDJIL: Well, I will speak French. So some might know that I am a fellow, and I would like to now speak on my own behalf. I would like to first thank those who drafted the report and the presentation. My question is that depending on the numbers, it seems that there are only two good students, South Africa and Kenya, because for them it is related to the quality of their Internet infrastructure in Kenya and in South Africa. Or is it due to the quality of the registry in the country? I hope that my question is clear, because I want to relate that to what we mentioned this morning and yesterday. The issue in Africa is infrastructure. If we don't have an infrastructure, people will not be able to buy a domain name. So I wanted to know whether there is a link. Thank you so much.

-
- YAOVI ATOHOUN: I want to give the floor to Powersoft to address that before we go back to a participant online and also Remmy and [Bashar.] So I want to give the microphone to Powersoft to address what Hervé just raised.
- MARK ELKINS: Those were two wonderful questions. As I helped build CO.ZA, it is obviously perfect. And at home, I live in Pretoria, so the Teraco data center in Johannesburg is not too far away, and I pay about 50 US dollars per month for a 100 meg service over fiber at home. So the infrastructure, generally speaking in built up residential areas is very, very good. On the other hand, there are many, many places in South Africa where there is literally no Internet access and there's no cell phone access. And so I'm a great favorite of Mr. Elon Musk and his Starlink as well, which works very well.
- YAOVI ATOHOUN: Thank you very much. I want to ask the room to allow us to take two online participants. We want to take them. They are online, so we will have the opportunity even after five to interact outside. So let's take two participants who are joining remotely. So the first one is Tijani. So Tijani, over to you.
- TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you very much, Yaovi, and thank you for the team who made the study, especially Mark, my friend Mark. I know how professional he is, how organized he is and how skilled he is. My big problem is the incompleteness of the data. I know we do what we can do, but you
-

know, if we don't have complete data, the result and the accuracy and the useness of the study will be affected. I see that some set of data we have only very few. So how can we have a conclusion from this? This is the problem. I think that there must be more effort, perhaps more money, to get all the data or at least a certain percentage of the data so that the study will be really accurate. Thank you very much.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Tijani. Before we respond, let's take the question from the fellow, Megan, who is also joining online or from the room. So the microphone is to Megan. Are you in the room? Okay, Megan is in the room. So let's take the question from Megan.

MEGAN KATUHURE:

Hello. Okay. Megan, for the record, ICANN fellow. I just had a question to the AFRALO representative. We know that approximately 1% of gTLD domains are registered by Africans, and so with a new round of gTLDs coming up, what are some of the outreach activities AFRALO or CDA and AFTLD is doing to encourage the uptake of gTLDs by more African entities?

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Okay, so let's get answer from Powersoft and then also the question to AFRALO. So Powersoft, you want to respond to Tijani, please?

WILLIAM STUCKE:

Thank you. Okay, we have significantly better data than we had the previous time. Previously we got zone files from four countries. This time we got them from 11 and we've just got two more today. So that data is significantly improved. The data is incomplete. We know that. We state that. However, 4.3 million domains is a sufficiently large sample to be statistically valid. In terms of the survey responses, we had 22% of those. I think if I remember correctly, it was 308. That gave us some valuable information. And of course, between the team of us, we have a certain amount of experience in the internet in Africa. And our country leaders also produced country reports which gave us some verification of the numbers and words that were provided by the survey responses for their respective countries. So we in fact had a cross check on some of that. Does that answer your question adequately?

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much. I want to ask our colleagues, our participants, that we have only six minutes. We want to give the floor to some people, Remmy, [Bashar,] Fiona, and [Davis] online. So we take this question in 30 seconds, please. Ask the question in 30 seconds and then we'll give the floor to the Vice President. Pierre will come in first and then we take this for questions. So thank you. Pierre, over to you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU:

I'm sorry, I'm just interrupting this series of questions and the rest. But this question about data is quite important. Because the consultants were just explaining to you that they went through many issues for collecting the data and that should be said. It was not simple for them.

And then I would like to take the opportunity that we are able to kind of facilitate those things, if we understand that it's important. Because, well, from what we saw, you may have issues about the integrity of the data, the exclusiveness of the data. Those questions are there. So we cannot just shy away from them. So I wanted to raise that issue. But we do have plenty of time later on to discuss this and see how to go with this in Africa specifically. It's quite important to get the data. We should say this. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you, Pierre, for raising this. It's a very important point, as you mentioned. So we'll hear from Remmy, 30 seconds, Fiona, 30 seconds. And if Davis is in the room will interact outside, but if Davis is online, we'll give the floor to Davis. Please, let's first hear from Remmy. Remmy, over to you.

REMMY NWEKE:

Thank you, Yaovi. Remmy Nweke for the records. I'm from DigitalSense Africa, Nigeria. My question goes to Powersoft and maybe the ICANN team. In all this, is there any dissemination strategy to ensure that the lessons learned from the exercise does not pass us by? Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you. We'll have Powersoft and Pierre respond to that. Fiona, your question, please.

FIONA ASONGA:

Thank you so much, Fiona Asonga for the record. Mine is a question on the recommendations that have been provided. We've talked about the DNS system, we've talked about exchange points, we've talked about data centers. And this is data we are collecting for a region that can feed into some of the programs even ICANN is running. And we need to be careful as we do this that we are building we are also building capacity within our region. When we make a recommendation and we say that this is a business opportunity and it's open, there's a likelihood that yes, it will be a business opportunity taken by a non-African entity. And therefore, we end up losing as the Africans in terms of opportunities that we ourselves can do for the region. So there should be an encouragement to make sure that even if they're open opportunities that they are focused on building the African ecosystem and African individuals and being able to make sure that we have African-run exchange points, African-owned data centers, African-owned infrastructure. Because it's one thing for us to say that the study has provided all these opportunities, but it's also equally important for organizations such as the Africa Exchange Point, Internet Exchange Point Association, AFRALO, AFTLD, to all come in and be part of this coalition with ICANN so that we are then moving together to make sure that the impact and the effect of what is coming out of this study helps us as the Africans building capacity within ourselves. Thank you.

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Thank you very much. I want to ask you all to allow me to close the queue, to close the queue in the room, to close the queue in the room, so that we'll have Powersoft team and the VP respond to the two

questions. So we'll close the queue in the room, we'll have answer to the two questions, and then we'll continue the discussion online and after five outside. So I thank you for understanding. So we give the microphone to Powersoft to respond to Remmy and also Fiona's questions, and then the VP also will continue. Thank you. Powersoft, over to you.

WILLIAM STUCKE:

Thank you, Yaovi. On the issue of letting lessons pass us by, this is the second time we've done this study, and we have learnt from it and we have made at least one mistake twice. So we put at the back of the report, we have listed some of the challenges we faced in addressing it, and the biggest challenge we face is actually getting good data. People don't want to answer the questions. People think that their zone files are secret. They don't know that you can go look all this information up. It's all available. There are many, many data mining services or data - the DNS observatories, monitoring services, which have information on how many domains are under each zone. And so there's absolutely no point in trying to pretend that this data is not accessible. The other thing, as Pierre noted, we had multiple entities saying to us, "Well, actually, your letter of authorization from ICANN isn't good enough. We wanted one specially for us." And this is very strange, but this does speak to the enormous difficulty in getting good data on the DNS industry in Africa. So I ask you, rather than criticizing us for not having enough data, to assist us in actually getting enough data.

MARK ELKIN: The other elephant in the room is there is more than one observatory in Africa, and the people who are working or assisting with the other observatory, asking anything from them is a bit like hitting a brick wall at high speed.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Before Pierre speaks, we want to say again that we are taking all the questions in the chat room. We'll try to provide answers to all these questions in the chat room. And again, we want to ask you to let us close the session on time, because we have to close and then we'll continue outside. It's not the end of the session. The second part will be outside. So I want to give the microphone to the Vice President to respond to the remaining questions. And again, we'll have the email address of the team in the chat room, GSEAfrica@ICANN.org. So we'll try to respond to all the questions. Again, we ask you for apologies, because we had a lot of interest in the room, a lot of questions, and we cannot give the floor to you. Please accept our apologies. So we want to give the microphone to the Vice President to address the rest of the questions. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you, Yaovi, but I don't think we do have much time to address all the questions. I don't want to be the one standing between us and the cocktail. But at least there's one question about, and it boils down to what happens next, actually. After this report, what do we do exactly? And that was the sense of the question I've been hearing. I think what, at least talking from the point of view of ICANN, of course we already kind of support, you know, the development of this report. And that was

requested by the community. So I believe that part of what happens next is also about what the community is doing with this report. That's one thing.

Of course, the second aspect of it for us is to be using whatever resources we might have to advance some of the deliverables there. For instance, the observatory. We hope that we will be having more and more conversation around this observatory to be in a position to come up with something which is, I would say, out of consensus, because we know that there are current initiatives also on the ground addressing the same issue. So I think we'll just, and as Yaovi said, we've taken note of all the questions. There will be opportunity for responding to most of the questions. And as also we plan, the conversation should be continuing after this sort of session. And so let me thank you very much for joining this session, the Africa Space Session. We hope we provided the appropriate update to you. If there's any question, please don't hesitate. And well, with that, I will just let's meet, you know, maybe close the door. I don't know where the cocktail is taking place, but it should be happening in a few seconds. So Yaovi, any information?

YAOVI ATOHOUN:

Yes. We have a group picture to take. And this is not the end of the session, the first part. The second part is happening where we used to have the cocktail every evening. So we'll have the cocktail there, and then colleagues will tell us how we'll take the group pictures. Again, our apologies to stop the session now because it is very interesting. So we'll continue outside. So we want to take the group picture. I think the photograph is suggesting we take it inside. If you can take it inside, I

think it's what I get from the photographer. Is it correct? Yeah, I think we can take it inside. So we should maybe move there, all of us. Please, don't go out. Let's take the picture inside here. Let's take the picture here, and then we move outside. Please, we can take the picture here, and then... The photographer. So can we stay there? Okay, please. Let's move for the photo, and then we'll go outside for the cocktail. Okay.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]