
ICANN82 | CF – GAC Afrika Meeting
Monday, March 10, 2025 – 16:30 to 17:30 PST

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Recording in progress. Okay. Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the GAC Africa session. We have a great agenda today, and we are in great company. So I am Christine Arida, I am GAC Vice Chair, and I'm having to my right Nico Caballero, GAC Chair, and to my left, Lacina Kone, Director General, CEO, Smart Africa. We also are joined by Bob Ochieng, Senior Director, New gTLD Program, ICANN, and Rodrigue Guiguemde from Smart Africa. We are going today to have an update from Smart Africa on initiatives regarding governance issues in the continent, and then we will have highlights on the ongoing New gTLD initiatives for the ongoing New gTLD next round process for Africa, and then we will try to have a proposal for a call for action for Africa. So without further ado, I would like to give the floor to Nico for his opening remarks.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, and welcome, everyone. It is an honor to be here. You know, not only the new round of New gTLDs, but many other issues that are very important for the African continent. One thing I can tell you is that you're in very good hands. You know, Christine Arida as the Vice Chair in the GAC, and of course, Manal, you know, the former GAC Chair, and also participating in the

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meeting is, you know, I would say quality assurance 100%. As Christine said, you know, we have Rodrigue Guiguemde, I hope I'm pronouncing your last name well. I'm very sorry. Apologies. If not, and Mr. Kone, again. Is that good? Kone. And to my right, Bob Ochieng. I'm lucky today with my pronunciation. So this session is going to be running for one hour, I understand, Christine, and lots and lots to unpack lots of interesting conversations. Christine has already addressed, you know, the specific topics. So all I can tell you is prepare some good questions, you know, and try to engage actively in the conversations. Your questions, ideas, and comments are more than welcome. More than welcome. So please do participate. And I'll try to be back, you know, like in 45, you know, it depends on another meeting I have, you know, overlapping agendas and everything for which I also apologize. But again, you're in very good hands. So this is going to be an awesome session. So without further ado, I'll give you the floor. Should I give the floor to Mr. Kone or to Mr. Guiguemde? Kone. Kone. Mr. Kone, the floor is yours. Please go ahead.

LACINA KONE

Thank you very much, Nico. Yeah, with respect to the update on Smart Africa's initiative regarding the governance issues on the continent here, we're here to report that, you know, Smart Africa, we really have taken, Smart Africa has taken significant steps towards the AfriNIC issue, as we all know, to ensure a sustainable digital governance on our continent. The key initiative included, not limited, of course, to number one was the creation of another committee. We did that of nine members since last time we met in

Istanbul to oversee the implementation of the resolution aimed at granting AfriNIC, you know, the status, the proper status of an international organization, at least following, you know, transparency elections. We do believe that, you know, a private entity managing public goods can be challenging sometimes. Number two is an extraordinary meeting also of African regulated council happened where a resolution were adopted to mobilize the communities to follow the electoral process with the key resolutions, including collaboration with the national committees to submit a candidate from Africa for the board of AfriNIC, closely also closely monitoring AfriNIC's electoral process, which will be published, of course, on the website, and encouraging ICANN GAC representative here actually to support the work carried out, you know, within ICANN. And also recommending the designations of GAC representative to participate in the group forum under the ICP2 process. Also lastly, and supporting the review and the contribution to the ICP2 document available in the Smart Africa digital repository. So the third part of that, this update, is that the process to establish also the network of Internet Governance Authority for Africa, this is very, very important, the reason why we actually want to elevate responsibility and accountability to a higher level, not just limited to engineers or sometimes civil servant who may or may not be able, be capable of preserving the sovereignty of our continent. And raising, of course, this network will be actually, they will be overseeing the continent-wide Internet Governance Initiative. They will be part of the Council of African Regulators. And number four will be raising the awareness, which

is very important, and mobilizing communities to support the ongoing process, ensuring that, you know, the broader participation in effective governance actually is taking place. So to highlight, you know, support initiative on the, for the ongoing next round process, Smart Africa is committed to supporting the ongoing process for the next round of gTLDs and organize an awareness session for the members of Smart Africa country members and also private sector forum of the ICANN, of ICANN's Applicant Support Program, which is ASP, to strengthen African stakeholders' understanding of ICANN's new gTLDs program. The ASP and its benefit while enhancing the awareness of the application process, fostering alignment between ICANN, of course, and Smart Africa and the private sector, and identifying key stakeholders with an action plan to support the gTLDs application. The meeting saw actually the participation of over 30 companies. And that's what I have to report as an update. Thank you.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you very much for those remarks. I think next we are going to have a presentation by Rodrigue on the updates on Smart Africa initiatives regarding governance issues on the continent. So Rodrigue, the floor is yours.

RODRIGUE GUIGUEMDE

Yes, thank you very much, Christine. And thank you for all of you present in this room this afternoon, this evening, I can say. So here today we wanted to give some update on what we are trying to do to solve some issues in the continent around internet governance,

because as you know we have a lot of challenges and we wanted to work to see how Smart Africa can contribute to strengthen our approach on internet governance and the critical infrastructure across the continent. And so I just want to give you some heads up on what the guidance we received from our leadership for the leadership for Smart Africa. I'm talking about the board members regarding AfriNIC issue last year. And so this resolution and guidance we received from the board members was really the resolution around the action we should take to support the process for the changing of the status of AfriNIC at the end, and of course to see how we can make some diplomacy, I think, with the Chinese government. These are the main resolution we took during this board meeting. And of course after that Smart Africa took some measures, some measures have been taken. And so the first one in Smart Africa side, we created a committee to monitor this resolution and ensure transparent election of course and to this other committee is focusing on how we can support to give another status to AfriNIC at the end. This is the first action we took. And we have another key action regarding the area we, the body we should create to monitor all of these things ongoing. So, the first one is we have the government of Africa, the government of Africa, we have the government of Africa, the secretary-general, three words he gave us. He talked about the consult of Africa governance, internet governance authorities. This is something very important for us and we need the government, the representative from the on some countries to see how they can support the process, because sometimes the community needs really this kind of support to

understand first what we are talking about, and to know how they can make things happen. So this is the third one. And of course, we try to contact, aligning on the guidance received from the board, we try to keep in touch with the Chinese government to see really how we can discuss and find a solution regarding this issue. And we organized last year an extraordinary council for the regulators. This is something very important in our process, because we believe the regulators are really a body where we can leverage to access to all the community to make the best and the right thing to support the AfriNIC issue and other issues we have in the continent. So this is another point. And of course, in the cyber diplomacy actions, our director general made a visit on Mauritius to discuss with the Mauritius authorities to see how they can support to have transparent elections, and to see how the Mauritius authorities can support really on the process. So these are the main things we made regarding this issue and, of course, we need the government on this process. The regulators are the main key stakeholders for us to support on this process. That's why I think this session is very important for us to discuss with you, to give you this heads up, and to see how you can support in your country. Because in GAC, we have some representatives coming from ministries, and others is coming from regulators. So we want you really to support us on this process, because these resources is for all the continent, and we don't have to sleep. We don't have to go to sleep and let this issue stay. So I wanted in my second slide to give you some key resolution we took during this extraordinary meeting we made last year. Because as I said, this regulator, this council, is really a body

we want to empower to make what we are doing really great. The first resolution we took with this regulator is on the fact we, of course, align on the framework we are creating in Smart Africa, because internet governance is not only focused on African issues. We have an holistic approach. So we create a framework in Smart Africa. We are trying to drive a truth and action plan. This is the first thing. And the council acknowledge the recent development, of course, because we shared during this meeting some heads up on what is ongoing on AfriNIC issues, because this is a long-term thing we got and we are doing. Yes, and we are doing. So it was very important for us to give this heads up. So in third point, we took some decision with this regulator. Most of them are in this room. I saw most of them is coming and joining us currently. So the third one is for us, really, the council decide to collaborate with national communities to submit candidates. This is very important. As a regulator, you are in charge of the monitoring of all the ecosystem in your country. So ESP, FIE, et cetera, these are the main customer in AfriNIC. So in each country, you can talk with them to see how they can make the good vote. So Smart Africa established a list of candidates. We want to leverage, really, to be sure that we get the good candidate for this upcoming election will be held in April. I think that 25 April. So it's urgent for us to be in the process and to support. And of course, this council agree on the fact we need to create some groups and to keep in touch on the update and relevant information we have to share. I saw a lot of initiatives around this AfriNIC issue, and this is something good. We are not saying that we have to be focused on Smart Africa process, so all

the initiative is coming is good. But we need just to be sure that all this initiative is going to solve AfriNIC's issue. This is the main important thing. And in the six points, I think that the council encourage the members to attend AfriNIC General Assembly. If any General Assembly is coming, it's better for all the members to attend, because in the past, we didn't see a big mobilization around AfriNIC, and we want, really, the members and the right people on the members. I'm talking about the leadership who can take decision to be part of all the Assembly AfriNIC will organize. And of course, in Istanbul, most of you were in Istanbul, I think. We discussed on the ICP2 process. We saw that any representative from Africa was appointed to be part of this AfriNIC ICP2 process working group. So here in GAC, we propose a statement. I think we propose a statement and apply, and we hope that for the process, this is something that we consider, because Africa should be represented in this kind of bodies. And here, we have another. I think that is the last one. It's just on the fact Africa GAC representative should be aligned on the fact they should support all the works we are doing on ICANN, globally, on all the ICANN consistencies to support the process around these issues. I'm talking about ICP2 and initiative in DNS consistency, et cetera. So we have to support and be really focused on this, because this period we have currently is critical. So we have to be focused on all your countries. You have to monitor and be sure that everything will be good. So I just want to give you this heads up. And of course, it's not the one topic for this meeting. And of course, other topics we put on this agenda is the ISP program for Africa to support

private sectors for the next rounds coming for new DTLDs, so the ISP program. So please, Christine, thank you. I hope that I didn't take too much time.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you. And I think this is very useful in continuation to the meeting that we have had in Istanbul. So I really appreciate that. So I think I can pause slightly here and see if there are any questions on that topic before we move to Bob with the next topic. So if there are online or in the room any questions, please raise your hand. Okay, please. Go ahead.

HERVÉ CLEMENT

Thank you, Rodrigue. So it's Hervé Clément, chair of the ASOAC, for the record. You mentioned the problematic of not representation of AFRINIC representative for the ICP2 discussion, so it's something the ICP2 and the drafting of the update of the ICP2 is something the ASOAC is in charge of. So you say that you made a position for having an AFRINIC representative and you know that not having an AFRINIC representative within the ASOAC is a big concern for us and we are not responsible of. So is your submission, is the idea of the submission to have somebody in the Council from the AFRINIC? So what's the idea of having somebody from the AFRINIC exactly?

RODRIGUE GUIGUEMDE

Yes, I think that for that I will let Christine respond, but this is a statement we give from GAC during the process where we apply. We want something to our point to the working group, ICP2 process

working group, but I think that Christine is one to support us in the GAC Africa to make this statement. Maybe she wants to give a few words, Christine.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

I think the point is clear, that's exactly the point that was discussed in our previous meeting that we think given that it is not, it's beyond your hands and our hands, it is only fair to have those seats or at least one seat filled to have some African representative in the process. Thank you. Any other questions in the room? Okay. I think we can turn to Bob now. So Bob, I understand you're giving us a highlight on support initiatives for the ongoing new gTLD next round process for Africa, the flow resource.

BOB OCHIENG

Thank you, Christine. And I know we have been making various presentations and updates regarding the next round in the past, I should say, three days now or two. And therefore, a bit of this information is, you know, already with most of us, but I think we wanted to reinforce that the information we've been giving, especially for the African group, so that we at least can invite you to collaborate more. So this will be a bit brief, but also I'll be inviting you to specific subsequent sessions where we'll be making detailed updates on the program itself that is already scheduled on the agenda, especially the one on Thursday. So very quickly, if I can get the next slide. I think this is just, you know, an overview of what we already know. What we use gTLDs for, depending on, you know, your motivation for a gTLD. The next round is really, you know, a

mission by the community to really make the DNS or names specifically contribute to greater inclusivity of the Internet. And really, there are different motivations for applying for a gTLD, whether you are a brand, whether you are a government, whether you are, you know, an indigenous community, a number of motivations. So some do that for monetization purposes, some do that for brand management, some do that to control policies on who can register or who can access their name. And really, that is the opportunity that the next round will open again. So regardless of what your motivation would be, you will have a chance to apply for a name in the next round when it is opened. Next slide. I think the other area that we really want to remind you about, and I'm saying remind you because we have variously been highlighting this, that the program is quite broad. And it has a number of parts or projects within it. Two key projects within it is a project that you have heard about, which is the applicant support program that you know is currently underway. And probably you have seen statistics in terms of applications so far. We shall also just remind you again of in this session, this program is targeted to be closed on 19th November this year, having run for 12 months. So it was opened in November 19, 2024. So that is what you see there on the blue line. So we want to keep reminding, you know, especially the GAC and your networks to, apart from being aware about this, but also to, you know, help us reach out to, you know, the potential candidates for applicant support. The idea is that hopefully this time around, no one is left behind that would have benefited from this program. Especially from the underserved regions, which is really the

intention of applicant support program. You will also see the lines or the timelines in red. That is for the subproject that we call the rigid service provider evaluation project, component of the next round program as a whole. And it has two phases. So the first phase of applications is currently ongoing, was also opened on 19 November, 2024. And is due to close on 20th of May this year. So in a couple of months. It will open again when the round itself opens, projected in April next year. So you will see the red timeline times two. The other longer process that has been running that is expected to also finalize and actually be published by December is the development of the applicant guidebook, which you understand is the rule book for the program. All these sections of that document, or chapters, I should say, are out for public comment. And obviously we are also inviting comments from our respective regions. So these timelines are very important. And we really, this is what we are working under with a plan to hopefully open the program in Q2 of 2026 or April timeline of 2026. So this is for your awareness. Next slide. So I think coupled with this is really to also just highlight to you how the kind of efforts we've been making on the engagement front. You do remember that in the last round, when it was finally implemented, that is the 2012 round, and there was a survey afterwards, sort of a postmortem on how especially we performed on engagement front, there was a couple of feedback points. Largely three components. The first one is that there wasn't enough time to really engage and create awareness about the program last time. We are hoping that we will do better this time, and hence the reason why, you know, we have started

this, you know, for quite a while, and hoping to drive this for the rest of this year, and hopefully by then we shall have reached out to potentially every potential applicant, be it for applicant support or for gTLD, and they can make their mind within enough time to actually apply. So the other one was on applicant support and how it was implemented last time. For those of you who remember, you would apply for support at the same time when the program opened. That meant that you needed to pay the full fees for the program, and if you are successful for applicant support, then you will get a reimbursement for that. Now if you are not able to raise the full fees, then in that case you do not apply, or you would miss the opportunity. So this time around, applicant support is running ahead of time, so that for those that have been successful, they will only pay, you know, the applicable fees after the discount is implemented. Now this engagement or outreach has been really done on a regional focus. You know your respective RVPs for the different regions. As you know, ICANN has got their staff, you know, across the regions, and I'm sure you have been in touch with most of them. So the outreach is really localized, and you know we are targeting very specific entities when you look at applicant support, and also very specific entities when you look at potential applicants for the next round. I'm going to talk a little bit about the application support and the application support and the application support. Those are two very different groups. Applicant support is targeting entities. The next round is targeting potential applicants. And for the applicant support, you have four broad categories of those entities. The next round, obviously, is much

broader than that. So, for the application support, you have four categories. And the application support is targeting those entities in every category and the applicant support, who would apply? Do we have their contacts? Do we know people that can help us reach out to them? And then how do we reach out to them? So, that is what has been going on in the background. And the next slide will show you just statistics in terms of what we achieved along those lines for the application support. So, the next slide will show you what we achieved in terms of the applicant support. Next one. Yeah. So, looking at that framework of a very regional approach, so, we are in March. For the better part of 2024, our engagement focus was on applicant support, potential applicants. Remember, applicant support is a global approach. So, we are in the middle of a global regional compact, I think uses the language, the global majority. It so happens that the underserved regions and the less-developed economies are really the majority today. So, you will notice that that engagement, so, across 2024, that is January to December 2024. And that is because of the regional compact, the under-developed economies, and the less-developed economies. We see that in the global events, regional meetings, ICANN meetings. You'll find that you'll see that the greater majority of that was in those underserved regions as per the intention of applicant support. So that's what you're seeing there. And that's what we're trying to do. Obviously, this is the intention of applicant support. So that engagement was largely focused on applicant support. That's what you're seeing there. But that will change this year, because now we are going after potential gTLD applicants

themselves. So if the round is to open in 2026, then it means that we now have a new category of applicants. And that category is not just ASP applicants, which are two different groups. So you'll see that going into 2025, we've started or we are now focusing on a different category of audiences. Next slide. So for the purposes of the GAC and governments in general, and you know what I'm saying, we have a number of things that we need to do, and we need to make sure that we have a number of resources, and a number of things potentially are needed, or an applicant will need very many things. So there are a number of things that governments could help us with. First of all, we know that, you know, using your networks, you could help us with particular audiences. So we need to do that. We also need to, you know, encourage the idea of the next round because if anyone were to approach those organizations, potentially ICANN might not have the best of relations with some of these organizations. So governments hold, you know, better relations with some of those entities, and we are, you know, seeking their support to engage those entities. At the same time, it is possible that, So, you know, I'm sure you can only respond, you know, either positively or properly to such requests if you understand what the program is all about. So, over and above, you know, understanding the program, it will allow you to, you know, engage with potential applicants appropriately. So, it is important that, you know, government and especially GAC members follow the program and understand the program so that they can interact with it appropriately. We've developed Champions Toolkit, which has got a lot of material and

content and context and presentations, webinars that have been recorded that you can download and follow, and we encourage you to access that material to help you, you know, familiarize yourself with details of the program. Next one. And next one. So, this is just, of course, a slide that you have seen. It is just to highlight applications as they come so far. So, as of 6th of March, there are about 31 applications that have come so far. So, as of 6th of March, there are about 31 applications for applicant support. Spread across the regions in this manner. So, Africa, for example, there are four applications from two countries. In the APAC region, for example, there are nine applications spread around six countries. So, the number of applications in the APAC region, for example, is much larger than the APAC region. So, you might not see the Middle East region, for example, because it is part of the Asia region in terms of ICANN regions. So, our GSE regions are much longer as opposed to the ICANN official regions. And, therefore, the numbers you are seeing in APAC region, for example, are much larger than the APAC region. So, this is just the spread to indicate two things for your consumption. And, of course, you could actually, we could ask ourselves a question whether this is a good report so far. But it is meant to help us engage further depending on the numbers that you are seeing. So, that by the time the period for the APAC region is over, we should be in a scenario where there is not enough engagement. So, by the time we get to 2025, we shouldn't be in a scenario where particular regions, you know, are in a position where, you know, they feel there was not enough engagement. So, this is why we want to enlist including the support of the GAC and

make you aware about these numbers as we go along. By the way, these numbers are online on the website. So, if you are interested, you can go to the GAC website and you can go to the APAC region and see how the different regions are performing in the applications. I think I have a last call that we do make monthly updates to the IRT. And if you want to remain informed and keep informed and follow what we are doing on the next round, we are making a monthly update to the IRT. So, if you are interested to join that session, the following one will be on 16th. And we do have a next round booth right at the door as you come to the GAC room. So, please, if you have further questions, please drop by. And we would be very glad to, you know, answer your questions. With that, thank you very much.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I would like to open the floor for any questions to Bob on the topic. Please.

JAY SUDOWSKI

Thank you. I have two questions. One is I appreciate and approve of ICANN's willingness to help people in developing countries to develop a better, a more robust registry structure. And the other one is I would like to know if you would be willing to help Africa as well as other developing regions to obtain a larger set of registrars who can tell people more about the Internet and help educate people?

BOB OCHIENG

George knows the answer to this question. And probably, and I recognize that my colleague, who is leading engagement in Africa, is in the room. I know he might want to better respond to the efforts that ICANN in partnership and today, of course, with organizations including Smart Africa is doing around capacity building very broadly on the DNS industry working with ccTLDs, working with registrars, to really create awareness but also to demonstrate the value of the domain name industry as a sector. One of the things that for example in Africa has been done is to do a study on the DNS market because part of the challenges was to really get documentation on respective economies and how the DNS industry itself is performing. Not long ago last year, ICANN published a report on the Africa DNS market space to help understand how each of the regions, each of the countries are performing where the opportunities, for example, is there a market to start with, which are critical questions. But I'm not sure if, Pierre, you want to make any further comments.

PIERRE DANDJINOU

Yeah, thank you for those questions and they are quite important to us. Of course, we understand that capacity development is quite important in Africa and this is central to what we are, I might say, we are delivering in Africa. Bob cited a few examples. For instance, this study that we kind of conducted on the DNS environment in Africa was quite telling on what exactly we are missing and where we should be working exactly on. Talking on the registrar, currently

in Africa, we do have 12 to, I would say, 13, I can sort of accredit it, registrar, for instance. We have regular webinar with them because we want really to know how much of the market, I mean, how much this is going, I mean, how, I would say, how this is going on. Here are people that understood that, okay, they should be doing a few things in the business, you know, of the main names. They went for it, but we know that the issue for them are kind of, you know, many here. I mean, the market itself does need to grow better than it's doing now, but also in terms of, you know, the technical aspect of the whole thing. And finally, what we, the kind of focus we are having now is about the ccTLDs. So many sort of activities are there, be there on the DNSSEC, for instance. But I will say also, and I would like to thank most of our partners because we launched an initiative that is called Coalition for Digital Africa, this is almost two years now, where we are actually joining forces with different partners, including Smart Africa, for instance, to actually do one or two things, which are basically about holding hands, you know, where it is needed. For instance, in Africa, apart from the technical aspect of the whole thing, managing ccTLDs can be an issue. Okay, monetizing, all of those things, you know, some of them, they are not really going forward to that. So these are things that we are doing with the support of sister, you know, registries globally. So that's in a nutshell what I could just respond to you, George.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you, Pierre. Okay, we're good. Did you have a follow-up question before I turn to Giacomo?

JAY SUDOWSKI

It's an entirely different question. Let's suppose somebody gets approved for this program. Has there any thought been given to subsidizing to some extent beyond the initial startup costs, for example, the \$25,000 per year fee to ICANN and so on? Some of these organizations may not have a lot of registrants in the beginning, and there would be a longer ramp-up period than there might be otherwise. Is there any part of this program that goes beyond the delegation of the string?

BOB OCHIENG

I'm sure you're talking about the applicant support program and the package of support, really. So it is in two parts. Of course, I think what we are very much aware of is the financial part, which is a discount of between 75 to 85 percent of the evaluation fee. But apart from that, there are a number of things that is intended to really try and make such an applicant successful. And that is the non-financial component, which includes a number of things. Initially, a lot of trainings. You know, there will be an applicant support counselor that is onboarded to really hold and, you know, train. But also, there is a lot of capacity building that, you know, we intend to do to the supported applicants. From discounting fees beyond delegation, the intention is to do that in a graduated manner. For example, the applicable, you know, ICANN fees on year one, on year two, and year three in percentages. I think the actual numbers are on the website. But I think the first year is 50 percent and then 25 percent as this particular applicant gets mature. So the

intention is really to try as much as possible to make applicants that are supported successful beyond three years, if possible. But in terms of the actual numbers, in terms of what is the discount on first year, I can get that and just post it on the chat. But yes, that is the plan.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you very much, Bob. I have a question online. Giacomo, the floor is yours.

GIACOMO MAZZONE

Thank you, Christine. Hello, everybody. I have some questions because I participate to the previous gTLD round for a community gTLD and we experienced a lot of troubles. You remember that probably was a very painful experience. In the support to applicants has been considered also this aspect to support the community applicants. And about the support to the applicants in the previous round, most of the applicants that went into conflict with other in disputes resolution with others, they had no resources for fighting with the others that are with deep pockets competing for names. And most of them in this phase failed. So it's also forecast something in case of disputes in the assistance. Thank you.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Bob, if you allow me to take another question and then you can respond for the sake of time. Abdeldjalil, the floor is yours.

ABDELJALIL BACHAR BONG

Thank you very much. I would like to thank Smart Africa for all the excellent efforts that have been undertaken on the AfriNIC issue. It's very important for us. And in Chad, we undertook to organize high-level meetings. We have a national committee which is working on this particular issue as a matter of fact. And we started with our first meeting with our members. And we'll have also a meeting with all the resource people in Smart Africa in Chad. And AfriNIC, I would like to thank AfriNIC and Smart Africa for their leadership in this field. That's all I wanted to say really. Thank you.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Bob, would you like to respond to the question that came before? Before we move to the next part.

BOB OCHIENG

Yes. So how are supported applicants considered for cases of contention sets? I think that's the broader question. One of the elements of trying to ensure that a supported applicant prevails in case of a contention set is using the bid credit. And I think the details of this is not finalized yet. But the intention is to deploy a bid credit for supported applicants. So that, you know, to try and actually ensure they prevail or give them sort of a preferential treatment in terms of an auction. And the details of this will be outlined in the final text of the guidebook. But, yes, the way that has been proposed at the moment is using a bid credit for supported applicants. This will be predetermined before the round

is opened itself. So it will be known by, you know, everyone that in case of a supported applicant, this is the advantage that they'll be going into an auction for example beforehand.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Okay. We have ten minutes left. I will go to our third part. Our third part, Lacina will be talking about moving forward and a proposal for a call for action for Africa. And we might have a next lecture on that. So, Lacina, if you would like to start.

LACINA KONE

Thank you very much, Christine. Moving forward, really, is a proposal for a call. First of all, we really need the support for the working group here for developing the blueprints, which is going to be like a continental blueprint for Internet governance on our continent, which will focus, of course, on mapping the key issues and defining stakeholder role, proposing continental roadmap for the Internet governance. And then, of course, we need to have effective implementation alignment with the Africa Union agenda. But we in those recommendations, what we're planning to have, we're planning to have a recommendation of putting together a coordination platform, you know, for the African GAC. We realize, you know, African GAC member, to better structure the discussion and our contributions effectively on issues relevant to the continent, the platform for a greater participation for African members in GAC. That's what we're proposing. It's really a call for action here. One is to support the blueprint. Two, out of those blueprints, you know, we are planning to have a platform which will

be coordinating our key issues for a better response. Thank you. As acknowledgement, I would like to really thank ICANN, you know, for the continued support in this capacity-building process. Together, I'm sure, you know, we can continue shaping an inclusive and secure digital future for Africa. Thank you for inviting us.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you. To Smart Africa, I think this is a very interesting call for action, and I would be interested to know if there are any comments right now or if we can maybe think about also have a call maybe before ICANN 83 to I'm just giving also time for people to reflect and maybe respond. Please. Go ahead. The floor is yours.

MARY UDUMA

Thank you very much. My name is Mary Uduma. I'm from Nigeria. During the ICANN, is it ICANN 80 in Rwanda? I think it was ICANN 80. It was ICANN 80. There were some promises and there were some proposals that Pierre shared with us, you know, relationship or engagements through the Smart Africa, how far we have gone, especially supporting the parliamentarians at the IGF. I'm from the Africa IGF MAG, and I want to know what has happened. We have a lot of discussions about what is the process. Are we still in the process? Are we still in the process? And have we followed up or is still in the process? And last year, 2024, we're talking with Africa, I mean, Smart Africa on programs of the Africa IGF, and it fell through. It didn't work. What has been the engagement? What has been the progress? I'm not sure if this would fit more in the Africa space. I'm not sure it's the session now. I think it's better to take

that question to the Africa space meeting or did it already take place? I'm not sure. But I think that Pierre wants to give some heads up. Pierre, if you'd like to briefly respond.

PIERRE DANDJINOU

Quickly, actually, we are not having an Africa space here this time. It's going to be ICANN 83. But, of course, we are already having kind of Africa space with all of the discussions we've been having. As far as the parliamentary network, things have kind of moved, actually. For instance, you heard about capacity development for the government and, in fact, parliamentarians as well, which is part of the package we've been discussing with Smart Africa. But it boils down to kind of organizing some sort of workshop through them on IG issues. Which, actually, the blueprint is going to sort of solve. But at the same time, I think they also asked for about how best, I mean, we assist them to participate in some of the meetings. And all of these are there. We are discussing this. Thank you.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you, Pierre. I just want to say that I stand to be corrected, but I see Nico at the back of the room. I think we have the African parliamentary network for Internet Governance recently joined the GAC. That's correct. So we have some activity in that respect in the GAC. Maybe that's a good thing. But I had a question. Yes, please go ahead.

VINCENT NGUNDI

Thank you, Christine. Vincent Ngundi, GAC representative for Kenya for record. And thank you very much for this session that is addressing very significant issues to do with Internet Governance in Africa. Africa is indeed on a journey. Africa is indeed on a journey of digital transformation as we are all aware. And the stability and security of Internet resources delegated to Africa, and I'm looking at both Internet number resources and ccTDS in particular, remains paramount in helping us realize this agenda for Africa. As Kenya, we certainly allowed the effort by Smart Africa to rally around the Internet community from Africa towards ensuring that we realize enhanced and stronger government institutions for the African continent. That's one point. In fact, I think the fact that the challenges facing Africa have been brought to the attention of heads of state for us is very significant. And it's something that we've been hoping for a very long time. At the very least, it means that there is increased appreciation and acknowledgement of the significant role of Internet resources in our digital transformation. And it's something that we've been hoping for a very long time. And it's something that we've been hoping for a very long time. And we therefore offer our support as Kenya and encourage the proposal to form a council for Africa Internet Governance authorities. We should go a long way in enhancing Internet Governance in Africa now. You mentioned, [inaudible], about a blueprint. I think it's important to highlight that the more we understand the challenges of the Internet community from Africa, the better, so that it's not top-down, it's bottom-up, which is the spirit of Internet Governance globally. So I want to thank you once again for that

effort. We've lacked a place to hold on to when we started facing the African challenges, among other issues. As you said, ccTLD issues are significant. From a security perspective, countries are being encouraged to adopt the use of .ke and actually critical infrastructure in tgeneral, the use ccTLDs from a security point of view. We must say we appreciate the effort by Smart Africa and we look forward to continuing engagement. Thank you.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you very much. Yes, I have a last question because we have two minutes left.

KUNLE OLORUNDARE

I'm happy to hear about the blueprint that the last speaker spoke about. And as a matter of fact, my comment is going to be on the blueprint, too, so to say. Because I believe that is something that we really, really need. However, I'm just wondering at what stage that's going to come up. I'm asking because I know that if you're going to have a blueprint, then you need to carry the stakeholders along because if you are preparing a blueprint that's going to be used by Africans, so Africans are supposed to be part of those developing the blueprints because they know what they need more. They know what the importance of the new gTLD is going to be for them. For example, if you're going to prepare a blueprint, then you should be talking about, you know, the stakeholders that are going to be in need of the new gTLD, like maybe the tourism industry, the cultural industry, you know, the education industry, and especially the issue of the economy, which I think it's really,

really booming in Africa. So that's one of the considerations that should be put in place when you're talking about a blueprint. And, of course, I believe that the blueprint is something that, of course, is going to be used for, you know, capacity building purposes, maybe like seminars, webinars, and so on and so forth. So I think it's a two-way thing. So it's a two-way thing. I'm just trying to advocate for the fact that Africans should be involved in the blueprint and at the same time, it should be used to, you know, build capacity even for the Africans. Thank you very much.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you, smart Africa, I will give you the floor to wrap up and respond to the briefing.

LACINA KONE

Thank you very much for this question. The blueprint is actually not a top-down approach. It's ground up. The blueprint is an output of the work which has been organized together with a working group. That's why even a session before this, we were on the other building, we invited to enlarge the working group member so that we can all contribute. There will be a consultant, of course, structuring our idea. Nothing is going to come from top-down. It's actually ground up and look at the recommendation that we need to have together to make our work better. But thank you very much for the comment.

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Thank you very much. And I want to say that we have this vehicle of the african GAC members mailing list. I think maybe you can share the blueprint on that list, and we can take the discussion through on the mailing list online. With that, I thank you for your participation, and I thank our distinguished speakers. Thank you very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]