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BUENOS AIRES – The African Strategy Roll-Out: An Update

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ICANN – Buenos Aires, Argentina

PIERRE DANDJINO:

...French – we can take it back in French anyway. So, what I'm trying to do here is spend maybe 15 minutes to brief you on progress since Durban. I will also be listening to, kind of, five to ten minute presentation by Bob, whom we try to put into the youth entrepreneurship thing, so that you hear about what we've done so far.

And then we do have half of the time for question and answer, your contribution as well. So thanks for having coming here. A little background. The African strategy was presented at the Durban meeting. And then we actually started, generally, in 2013. Starting with a few project that we've felt that we should implement, and then so that we get the ball rolling in Africa.

What I could tell you from Durban to today is that we tried to recruit some more people. We have two managers now. The idea of the manager actually came after the [August] meeting where Fadi promised we should have more people on the ground to do the engagement work.

So we do have two of them, and we are planning to have more of them. Of course, one is covering West Africa and also having the sensibility for operations, because we need to operate. We don't have any engagement center for now in Africa, but we still need to do some operation. So he's taking care of operations as well, helping me.

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And then we did hire a younger one, Bob, from Nairobi, who is also, helping us through engagement knowing is Africa. The idea for us was to have managers know that are quite either young or new to the system, because we wanted to make sure that younger generation is part of this, also that we do have more – we broaden the scope for participation to ICANN.

The other thing that we managed to do is that as a group, we have now a work plan, an action plan for financially year 14, which is quite important. So we do have a budget, and to do a few things. And these things [?] 11 through projects, you know, that we would like to roll out for this year.

Of course, the DNS roadshow is still on. We want to broaden the scope. It went away for a few countries, say Nigeria, Tanzania, for instance. Kenya still needs more of it, but a bit of – eight to 10 countries would like to part of this, so we are going to move forward on that DNS. So we will need more consultants, for instance, on this DNSSEC, because I think now we are using services of [?].

Within ICANN we would like to be doing this, but I know also for Africa. So I would say we need more experts from Africa after this, to help us do this. The other project we are doing is the partnership with AFTLD, and yeah, FGLD and ISOC, is what you are calling an assessment of the African ccTLDs. The issue we are facing today is that we don't have that much data about African ccTLDs.

If you are to talk about DNS market in Africa today, you don't know where to start. Statistics are not there. Or if you talk about the registrar, they say they are not making money, but you don't even know

what they are doing right now. There are issues that we need to really step forward so we can deal with that.

This study was quite a good idea, by FTLD, we are actually trying to launch it, that looking for – I mean, I think consultants were being selected. And so our colleague from ISOC and FTLD are definitely taking care of that part. This will give us a way to launch what we are calling the Observatory for Domain Names in Africa, which is something we will be doing in partnership again with potential partners, for instance, AfriNIC is one of them.

We are still looking for them. Another project is the one which we really want to deal with this issue of business development in Africa. And for that, we are building on what we did in Durban, where we invited the younger generation to tell us about what we have been doing, we visited a few hubs, and we are just talking with this entrepreneur.

Bob will maybe then take 10 minutes to tell us briefly about what he has done so far. But, what we want to do now is to have a clear-cut picture. On what the younger generation is doing, whether they are talking about hubs, what are the issues, what can we expect from them.

Adding to that, after the DNS forum in Durban, a few international sort of registrar and registries approached me and said, “Well, we are ready to start something with you. We shall call it the mentorship or the exchange programs.” So they are ready to see how they called eventually except a few Africans, that really want to get into that business. They will stay maybe two or six months there.

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So we need to find out how to organize those things. These are concrete things we would like to be doing, and we are preparing for that one. Of course, the other issue is about the domain name awards. Now, we've launched in Durban, which we will continue. I think the other thing that we need now is how we do engage further with the whole spectrum of stakeholders.

When you take African governments, how do you engage with them? When you take the business sector? How do you make sure people [?]? Civil society, of course, we are well covered, we want to do more. We have a friend from AFRALO doing a great job. Well we need to reach out to more and more people, how we do those things.

We really need your assistance in this area. Managers will be visiting countries to spread the word, of course, about ICANN and see how we could collaborate. So please, when they come to your country, please assist them because most of the time what they do is be in touch with different stakeholders and see what are the issues, and how they could help implement the strategy.

What I could tell you so far is that, this strategy came as a new contract between ICANN and Africa. But at the same time, different countries, different regions also develop their own strategy of, in the way of developing their strategies. Some of the ideas we have, for instance, DNS forum has been implicated here, and I'm told that it is also going to be replicated in London.

So that's good. We brought something to ICANN in that regard, but still we need to move forward because there are so many things to do in Africa. So, in terms of progress report, that is what I could tell you. In

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the last three months, that's what we did. Staffing wise, we have multiple – we hope to have more of them.

We work on our action plan, already with that we know what project we actually want to actually [?] that's final. The last thing I would like to do before I leave it to Bob, is that we need to firm up the partnership. That's important. ICANN can only bring certain part of resources that we need, but we do believe that resources are there.

How do we partner formally? Of course, within Africa but also outside Africa. That is something which personally is of interest to me, and I would like to also have your views on that. Of course, we're already working with, those two guys, you know, AfriNIC, of course, is where we actually went – where we generated this strategy. But we want to do more.

So please come up and offer whatever you want to offer, and you can formalize the partnership. So this is what I have to say. What I suggest is maybe that we listen to Bob, if he's around. And then we can take questions or your contributions. So thanks very much for your attention. And I would like to hand it over, if he's around. Is he around? Okay. So, yeah, that's what I wanted to present as a progress report to you guys, and thank you.

Is that Bob? Okay, Bob. So could you please, in 10 minutes, tell us where we are in terms of engaging with the – [?] DNS incubation in Africa, and the entrepreneurship.

BOB O'CHIENG:

...in this industry, I think it is incumbent upon us to take some first step in understanding just how the hubs and the labs work. A number of hubs have been formed in different countries. But how are they setup? What is their business model? What are the current challenges? And what are the successes so far?

Now, with that understanding, we can then deduce where, as ICANN we can come in to support, bearing in mind that our main objective is to grow the DNS industry in Africa, and to promote innovation in the youth. So to do this, in the last moments, we have went into overdrive and strived to meet as many operators of these hubs as possible.

I'll just give you an overview of the different labs that we have met, starting with Afri Labs, which is an [?] organization for the hubs in Africa. Currently with a membership of around 23 hubs. We have also met [?], we have also met the I Hub of Ghana, and also [?] hub of Zambia. We are conducting these meetings as part of our outreach mentions to this region.

So when we visit these regions, not only do we talk to our normal stakeholders, the ccTLDs, the registries, but the hubs as well in [?] so that we understand what they are doing. We are planning more meeting, specifically the South Africa hubs, and Nigeria, Zimbabwe, with an end result of getting a representative overview of actually how these hubs work, and an idea of what is the challenges and opportunity for ICANN in Africa as a whole.

So far, what are we hearing from the meetings that we had? On top of the list, is the need and the gap in capacity building. A number of managers of this hub, and their members, are pointing out the need to

support them in capacity building. This includes both technical and soft skills trainings, which is very key.

You understand that most of the youth are coming into these hubs directly from college. They have no business skills. So capacity building is an area that we can seek and find a niche and implement something for the hubs. The other one is infrastructure support.

Some of this [?] with various [?] resources. And when they hear of ICANN and what ICANN does, it's synonymous to Internet, and yet this is one commodity that some of them critically lack. So they're asking, can they get support in Internet infrastructure as a package, including storied solutions and the rest?

So that is for us to debate and decide on. And as a verse for the creation of a set of excellence on Internet management. You understand in most of our universities today, the Internet remains obscure. Nobody actually goes outside there and elaborates and even enlightens the different graduates, how the Internet works. So they're asking, can ICANN consider developing a set of excellence in Africa?

And then lastly, we hear messages of [?] program issues, where some of these leaders, some of these startups, can extend ideas that have established industry players, so that they share knowledge, both technical knowledge and soft knowledge? So that we bridge this gap.

At the end of our engagements, we expect to come up with a concept paper on promoting digital entrepreneurship in Africa. After having listened to as many hubs as possible, and expect to do this by December

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this year. So in brief, this is what the project is all about and we are asking for your support to help us move this idea forward. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you Ben. Thank you for this briefing. And of course as you heard it, this was a side that I try to see, to make sure that we know – we actually know what the situation is in terms of entrepreneurship, digital entrepreneurship in Africa. Well, you heard it. We are on time. We said that half of time is going to be questions and answers or whatever contributions that you have.

So briefly, I introduced you to the progress report since Durban, and also I wanted you to listen to Ben on the what conclusion we can draw so far in terms of this digital entrepreneurship in Africa. Now I think the floor is yours for any questions or any contribution that you may have. So please go ahead. Open mic, is there? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED:

Any questions that you may have, please step up to the mic and speak into it. Thank you.

MARY:

Thank you. My name is Mary [?] from Nigeria Internet Registration Association, and I want to say that we are the first beneficiaries of the DNSSEC outreach, but it didn't come without difficulties. We need to understand the channel of communication ICANN has.

Let us know whom you talk to in a country, and let us know who are the people the stakeholders that you work with ICANN in our countries,



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because it took majority, and it took doggedness for us to get – to pull the DNS program through. While the government organization was looking forward to panel room with ICANN on the DNSSEC, the business community was looking forward to partnering – the business community was communicating with ICANN, so much that there was almost a division.

They took the majority of our own organization, that is nearer, to be able to broke out the piece, for us to have that program. So channel of communication for each country is very important for us to drive this strategy through. So, we need to know, whom do you communicate with?

And we also have the African – I think we call it [?]. Okay? And we add [?]... We had told ICANN that we have a platform, the AFTLD that is there, and for ICANN to partner with us from that level, to be able to, because the AFTLD is an important organization for the cc's, and the cc's are closer to the government than the orders.

So I need ICANN to take that into consideration, where there have not been channels of communication and while developing this strategy or implementing these strategies. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you very much Mary, I think that's valid point and I would like us to thank you for your support in Nigeria during this DNSSEC event, and for so many other things because I know I'm always talking to you when I reach out to your VIPs and ministers.

You are very assisting us. And yes, I've taken note to that and we will try to do better next time in terms of communication. I mean, the whole point is about who is delivering actually on the group. And also, the way we communicate, as you said, with the [?] is quite important.

Yes, what happened with Nigeria was a bad government part and then business, the other part. It also calls for some work on the country level to also harmonize, you know, the views. So your points are taken. For the AFTLD, there is a MOU actually, I think, between ICANN and FTLD, if I'm not mistaken.

But, yeah, there is a MOU at least from what the chair of AFTLD told me. So, whatever we are doing, we're still partnered, AFTLD. Now let be frank with you, and I want to be blunt on that. I really want AFTLD to be behind the wheel, to be driving the process. We are conducting, we want to conduct, we are putting some money there, some resources, to conduct this assessment, for the ccTLD.

I want it to be done by AFTLD. ISOC, ICANN, whoever is coming is just providing some resources, but you guys should be behind the wheel in driving the process. That's something that I would like to be seen, please. So I'm sorry if I'm being blunt, but this is the way I see it. So, yeah.

And of course, not all ccTLDs are members of AFTLD now. So we need to – I mean, we don't even have 50 percent of them, so we need to work on that, correctively, to see how more and more ccTLD are within AFTLD. So thank you for that. Yes, another lady, that's wonderful. Go ahead Fatimata.

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FATIMATA: Thank you Pierre. I wanted to speak in French, but I see that anybody has the mic, so I will just continue in English. I wanted to congratulate Bob for his presentation, but also I have a question. It's not directed only to you Pierre, but also to, ideally, all the others in this room.

I notice that we only have I hubs in English speaking countries. Is this, the I hubs visited are only in English speaking countries. Does that mean that there is none in Francophone countries? I just wonder. Yeah, thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Evan in Senegal [?]. Bob what you are saying, what I'm hearing, you are right is that we need to broaden the scope, but definitely it's going to be an African sort of thing. So the Francophone and the [?] will be visited, don't worry. Thank you for that. Yes, another lady, that's wonderful.

UNIDENTIFIED: I think this is the only continent where the ladies are allowed to just talk, and talk, and talk, and talk. Thanks Bob for your presentation. I have a challenge [?] to Pierre and your team. You realize, a lot of the ccTLDs that are not members of AFTLD, are being run by entities not on the African continent.

So the biggest challenge you have to be able to get them to be part of AFTLD, is to help them through the regulation process. Help the governments, work with the governments in the industry in those

respective countries, together with AFTLD, so those ccTLDs are established in their countries.

Until that happens, if any of these are called to account for an AFTLD meeting or any other meeting, they will shy away because they do not feel like they have a right to be there. So the onerous is on you Pierre and your team, I think, to reach out to them, and to help them improve. And the other thing I want to say is, it's nice that you've given us that report but I think what also would help us in terms of knowing whether the strategy that you are proposing is right or not, is where are the challenges?

In terms of, yes, you are going to help the innovation hubs. Your right to identify that... Sorry, Fatimata, has identified that there is none, there seems to be none in the Francophone countries, why is that? And what, when you are going in to work on that, what really are you going to be emphasizing? Because it doesn't help, when you keep coming to Nairobi for an I Lab or a I Hub engaging them, when there is no I Lab or similar in Togo.

We are not going to be growing together, and as long as we're not making a concerted effort to grow together, we will not be able to work together because part of us will feel that we are ignored, and the other part will feel that – and they will fill others that are running.

Let us try and create a balance so that we move together.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Thank you. I think this is quite a good point. On the ccTLD, you are right. When I took up this job, I didn't – I knew that we were having

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some issue about re delegation in Africa, but let me tell you that today, I have at least 10 African countries that are expecting ICANN to do something about re delegation, 10 of them.

And I am in touch with all of them, and I'm even having meetings with some of the countries here. But what I can do, as, I mean, as me, whatever as VP is kind of serve as an intermediary. Because IANA's rules are clear. We are facing issues and we are working around that one.

You said that this is being managed outside of the country, yes and no. There are ccTLDs also being managed within the country, but still there is no consensus about how they go about it. We know countries, it's been going on for ages, and then governments say, "Now we want to have a say." And regulators say, "We want to have a say on that," but they are not finding the right way of doing this thing.

Until such a time they don't have this consensus, IANA cannot re delegate. We speak of transferring those things are possible, but it takes [?]. Of course, my good friend from Namibia will say, "Well, how do you do this if whoever is running this doesn't want to listen to you?"

But then, that's not ICANN. I mean, you need to discuss at your country level. I know, even we went... Now when I say we it isn't ICANN, but it's me, before I wear this hat as ICANN, we say, "Okay, government, maybe you want to propose a deal to that guy who is in your country who is doing this because, as far as IANA is concerned, it is running perfectly. There is no issue."

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So the [?], I don't know. Anyway. We can, like we said, we can facilitate this dialogue, but you are right, we need to make sure that all ccTLDs are coming under a kind of umbrella if you want to deliver properly to them. There are issues, for instance, I'm thinking about the whole issues of branding, branding, intellectual property for instance.

Where are the ccTLDs in Africa? The whole discussion about TCM, whatever clearinghouse that we are hearing these days, where are the ccTLDs in Africa on this debate? Yet, sorry? I see. So these are important things that we need to sort out, if you really want to deliver in Africa. Yes.

So good points. Challenges are there for the I hubs. Some of the I hubs we are listening from the web bank, some of them have even facilitated, but the point is how do you scale up all of this? How does it really become part of your own digital economy in your country? What decision has been taken by the governments?

It's not just about other agencies, you know, putting hundred K to you to start an I hub. How do you maintain it later and how do you scale it up? And what do you put there together so that people really thrive with that one? I mean, these are the issues that we need to face in Africa.

Because the paper that Bob is working on and of course, all of us will be assisting him, is to come up with those challenges, explain them, but also see whether there is any options for operation arise, what we are thinking as ICANN. So, yes, these are good points. Any other...? FTLD. Quick, no, we still have some time. Okay. Go ahead please.

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BARACK: Thank you Pierre and all of you. I think I need to mention a few points now that we have been adversely mentioned.

UNIDENTIFIED: Can you please state your name? For the record, can you please state your name?

BARACK: Okay. Thank you very much. My name is Barack [?] from Africa Top Level Domains organization. First I want to thank the community, and ICANN and ISOC, for the things that we've been able to do together. If you visit the AFTLD website, and I encourage all of you to visit [www.aftld.org](http://www.aftld.org), you'll see we have a five year strategic plan and we have a clear path that we are following.

And of course, we recognize the fact that there are many players on the continent. ICANN is one of them, ISOC is one of them, and even before AFTLD became strong, a lot of what we are currently doing was being done by the Internet Society. So I just want to ensure you Pierre, that we are on the driving seat, although sometimes it may appear that someone else...

There may be an impression that someone else is on lead, but really we are on the driving seat because at the end of the day, we walk jointly with all of the stakeholders. We've walked closely with ICANN. We've walked closely with ISOC, and LACTLD center, our partners from across the region to reach where we are.

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And what I just want to emphasize, and which has been said by the speakers who were here before, is I think we need to consult greatly before arriving at greater decisions. I'm having in mind, like the hubs, we have seen a number of hubs established by a number of universities, in particular in my country, which have gone down.

And what I would like to propose is we may want to do some research to be able to understand why have we been studying these hubs? Because the World Bank has indeed been supporting quite a number of hubs previously on the continent, which have not worked well, but we still have cases that have worked well.

So we may want to understand why did the previous hubs probably collapse, and why is it that there are some which are doing well at this point in time? But I just want to encourage us to work closely together. As AFTLD, we are working with LACTLD, we are working with Centre, we are working with APTLD, which allows us to get a lot of statistics from the other regions.

Going into 2014, we are going to be speaking in one voice, as regional organizations. And I believe as a continent or as a region, we need to tap into some of the best practices that have been applied in the other regions, because we are at risk of reinventing the wheel. That is the challenge I foresee going forward.

But just to emphasize that we are on the driving seat here, and we appreciate the partnership that we are having with ICANN and with ISOC, who are not represented here but they are also playing a crucial role in supporting ccTLDs on the continent.



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And a lot has been said, it's not easy, ccTLDs are not easy, and in particular across the continent, because of the variety of stakeholders that are involved, so we need more community involvement to make sure that our ccTLDs are being run according to best practice. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Thank you very much. Does AFTLD work with African registrars? You have any working relationship with African registrars?

BARACK: Yes. I would say we work closely with quite a number of African registrars, as associate members of AFTLD. We have the registries, and then registrars are allowed to join as associates because of the nature of the bylaws of AFTLD. And I think going forward, we want to strengthen even our relation because we are in the same ecosystem.

PIERRE DANDJINO: Okay. Thank you very much Barack, at least you assure us that you are driving the car, that's fine. Please.

MARILYN CADE: My name is Marilyn Cade, and I am the CSG, the commercial stakeholder group officer. One of the, for the business constituency. And I see many friends and colleagues here, who have been helping to build ICANN, and are now contributing to evolving and strengthening the regional strategy for Africa.

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It's a real pleasure to come and say a few things to you, and to recognize some previous activities. I was very privileged to be invited to come to Nigeria, at an event that was organized and stimulated by some of the people in this room, by Mary and by someone who is not in this room, [?], who founded [Avicta], but Roger [Latchman] is here, and is on the Board of [Avicta].

[Avicta] held its first summit in Nigeria, and the convening of that summit, I think all of us who are interested in seeing the growth of the ICT sector in Africa, so I look forward to seeing more engagement, but I want to offer two thoughts. I want to ensure that as the strategies, at a regional level, are developing, that we continue to make sure that the voice of the region and the participants of the region, continues to be as vitally engaging the global discussions.

That you are not just meeting here, but you are also coming to the public forums, and that you are ensuring that the rest of the community is paying attention to what you are doing and to your views about what needs to grow, evolve, or change. And I say that because I think we have a real risk of...

By now, we have a real risk of losing our global perspective, because we have so much going on, and the regional perspective, and the national perspective is what is going to strengthen the global perspective. My second point is that, for us, the business constituency represents business users. We are not contracted parties.

We are the people who are, like businesses in your country, who buy the domain names and build websites and use them. Some of the members in the CSG are ISPs. So one thing I would say to you, in your

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strategy of drawing attention and awareness about ICANN, and about what you are doing, please remember that we are actually never going to be contracted parties, but we are going to be the customers that the contracted parties need.

So anything that I can do, from a global perspective, to help identify or tap into the associations where global business might have a presence in your countries, and we might be able to energize some further interaction for you as some of the business user types, who today are not very aware of ICANN, I would love to do that and so would the rest of the business constituency.

Now I'm going to say something about ccTLDs. ccTLDs are actually one of the most vitally important parts of ICANN, that often, the global business users don't fully appreciate the role that ccTLDs provide. ccTLDs actually build infrastructure at the national level, while GTLDs often do not.

ccTLDs bring with them a commitment to act within the public interest, and in the interest with the local Internet community, and so far I've been unsuccessful of getting RFC 15 91 embedded in the new gTLD registry contract. Again, I would say, as you are strengthening the role of the cc's and making it more visible, and more vital, I really applaud that, and I hope that we will continue to hear more about the work that you are doing in that way, because it really helps all of business to have an awareness about the role and the availability of the cc's.

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PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very Marilyn for this. As I insisted earlier on, it's also part of building strategic partnership for us, and I'm happy that you are mentioning the work you will be doing, and also your word of caution as not just not forgetting the global perspective of what we are doing. Thanks very much for that one.

Yes, please.

UNIDENTIFIED: Hello everyone. I know we have very little time. I just have a short question. After listening to you, I would like to congratulate you on everything that you do, congratulate on your work for the implementation of this African strategy. And my short question would be about those training centers.

I do agree with everything that was said regarding collaboration, communication, and that is why I would like to know, regarding this interest, for training centers. What are the conditions and criteria to create those training centers? Thank you very much.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you. How can I answer you? For now, regarding our strategy, we – this is a perspective that we do have for the future. For instance, people want to set up in Africa a center for excellence, an excellence center. How can we do it today? We cannot say it exactly, but for now, we are getting some more information regarding it.

We're working on it. We're working with all the different stakeholders in order to know we can position ourselves to create those centers of

excellence. They do not exist yet, but there is a need that we identify it, and we're going to work on it. We have already some centers that are very, very highly performing, but we have to see what impact they already have.

And what we can bring to them in order to reinforce them, and in order to use ICANN resources. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, but we will keep you informed on those training centers. And we'll have the report in December, and we'll let you know more about the implementation of those training centers.

We are supposed to have on remote. If you can check with, okay. Okay so we still have five minutes to go, if – to offer any comments, or if you also have any questions, we still have five minutes to go. So feel free to. Okay. Mary.

Our announcement, yes, you have to pay but no problem.

MARY:

There is meeting as well, across the road. Golden Hall, Hawn, okay. Just across, I think, the corridor there. That's the next meeting for AFRALO, I suppose. Okay. All right. Can I take one minute to make my own announcement please? Thank you.

My own announcement is that Nigeria is bidding to host ICANN meeting 2015, and we need everybody to support us. We need Mary Lynn to support us to be the African region, the next African region turn, is Nigeria has put in a bid, and we need your support please. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINO:

Of course that was a part of the strategy. Thank you very much. Thanks for having come and apparently there was no translation? Sorry, there was no translation. Anyway, okay, thank you very much for that. We'll keep on informing you on what progress we are making, but what I said, and which is still valid, is we really need you.

We need your collaboration, we need your comments, so whatever suggestion you do have because as I said, it's a journey. It's a three year journey. We are trying to have a few resources where we want to build up on that, to make sure that the ultimate goal is to achieve, well, making Africa another market, you know, and also full participate to ICANN.

This is our goal and I hope it is your goal, that's why you are here. Thank you very much for this. And we have a website, you can contact us. We are also trying to have kind of one on one with a few countries. We do have managers for other engagement, that will be travelling to your countries. Please engage with them and let them, really...

Of course, we had a question this morning but maybe it's for our next meeting. The question we are having, okay, possibly the strategy, what is the strategy doing about, you know, Internet governance? And I was saying, well these are different issues anyway, but I think in the next meeting, African, AFRALO, we might touch upon this one.

So thank you very much.

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