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ICANN74 | Policy Forum – Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Meeting  
Wednesday, June 15, 2022 – 13:15 to 14:30 AMS

YESIM SAGLAM:

Hello and welcome to the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting. My name is Yesim Saglam and I am the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior.

During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will be read aloud if put into proper form as noted in the chat. Taking part via audio, if you're remote, please wait until you are called upon and unmute your Zoom microphone. For those of you in the main room, please raise your hand in Zoom and when called upon, unmute your table microphone. In the secondary room, please raise your hand in Zoom and go to the standalone mic when called upon. For the benefit of other participants, please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. On site participants may pick up a receiver and use their own headphones to listen to interpretation. virtual participants may access the interpretation via the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor over to Aziz Hilali, AFRALO vice chair.

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AZIZ HILALI: Thank you, Yesim. Welcome to this AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting. Thank you for joining us. As Yesim just told you, I am the vice chair of AFRALO. We have with us online the chair of AFRALO. Mr. Seun-unfortunately, he was unable to join us here in the Netherlands because of an issue that he had, a delay in order to get his visa. So Seun, are you with us online?

SEUN OJEDEJI: Yes. Thank you for having me. Of course, apologies once again for not being able to be there physically. I hope it's going to be fantastic session as usual. And of course, I look forward to good deliberations as we used to do, and of course, I'm sure Aziz is going to do a good job of this. And of course, I'm going to be missing all of you. I mean, it's just strange that this is my second term as chair and actually I have not physically sat in an ICANN meeting. But it's all good. Thank you very much. And thanks for the [inaudible]. Over to you, Aziz.

AZIZ HILALI: So the topic that we will now discuss in this 29th AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting is devoted to the role of the AFRALO community in mitigating DNS abuse. According to what I read on the ICANN website, there were many reports that showed that bad actors used the COVID 19 pandemic to launch detrimental campaigns online, there was an increase in the use of domain names related to COVID-19, and DNS abuse increased.

This threat includes phishing, hacking, malware, cyber fraud and other types of attacks. In certain cases, especially in Africa, bad actors convinced final users to reveal their identifier and other confidential information, making them believe that they were buying a cure for Coronavirus or protection equipment.

Each time that there is an issue that involves the entire world, of course, bad actors exploit it. So, it is in this context that we chose this theme that focuses on end users, and especially African end users, in order to help them protect themselves. The goal is to raise awareness on the different types of abuse on the DNS that are perpetrated via the Internet and also to give them the tools and the necessary resources in order to fight against the issue related to Internet security or DNS security threats, especially as this precise issue is within the remit of ICANN as the technical coordinator of the DNS.

So as usual, we will give you at the end of the meeting a statement that is addressed to the board of ICANN, to the deciding entity. It was written by a committee, AFRALO-AfrICANN committee that we would like to thank at this point. So we will give the floor to the team that drafted this statement. Thank you. Also at the level of our RALO, we organize several webinars during the pandemic in order to first keep our members and also the series of webinars that we started. It was actually a new initiative. It was related to the meeting that we will have with AFRALO-AfrICANN at the next meeting.

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Our members are very much aware of the topic. And this statement is the result of the work of the people who wrote it, but also of all people throughout Africa. I think that Bram might be with us online as well. Tijani Ben Jemaa is here in The Hague. But he's unfortunately at the NomCom at this point. They are co-chairs of the series of webinars that we put together. We always do it, actually, but during the pandemic, we ended up with a bigger series of webinars.

So before we give the floor to our guests, I would like to thank them, because of their support, because of this tradition that is being continued. We started it in 2010. And during each meeting, we have this AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting in order to address the issues that affect our region the most. So I will now, without further ado, give the floor to Maureen, our chair. If you would like to go ahead. Thank you very much for being here, and you have the floor.

MAUREEN HILYARD:

Thank you so much, Aziz and Seun, who I must admit, it's great to be here, as always, at your session, and this is our first hybrid ICANN meeting. So it's always sad to sort of think that Seun and Sarah aren't Here. I'm talking from my At-Large leadership perspective. But I just want to assure you that your leadership members in Dave and Raymond and other At-Large leadership team and the AFRALO community in general here on site have

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really been a great credit to the AFRALO region and it's been a real honor and privilege to meet so many of them, who have actually come up to me which I really have appreciated.

But just wanted to mention too that I'm really looking forward to you all being available of course when you come to my region in Kuala Lumpur in September. I'm looking forward to seeing you there at the AGM meeting in 2022.

I'm really looking forward to the presentation of your paper. As you mentioned. The topic, as always, is something that's on top for us within At-Large. And it focuses very appropriately on a topic of great interest and emphasizes the value of our end user community and why ALAC matters to ICANN. And it is entitled the role of the AFRALO community in mitigating DNS abuse.

So I'd like to remind everyone that AFRALO led the first of our At-Large policy sessions this week with my colleague here, former ALAC member Hadia, drawing At-Large and ICANN attention to some important safeguards and tools that can assist end users to be able to report incidents of DNS abuse.

So we really appreciated her introduction to the Net Beacon program, and to Graeme Bunton of the DNS Abuse Institute, and of course, from Public Interest Registry, which supports it. And no doubt, we'll hear more about this new initiative in later ICANN meetings, which will actually support the paper that you're putting forward today.

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But I always want to thank the AFRALO community for continually bringing important end user issues to the ICANN meeting on behalf of At-Large and I hope those of you who are here in The Hague at the moment, and those who are attending remotely, that you enjoy the rest of the meeting. But I do look forward to welcoming you all to what will be my final meeting as the ALAC chair in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in September. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Maureen. Our CEO, Mr. Göran Marby. Thank you for your support. And you have the floor.

GÖRAN MARBY:

Thank you very much [inaudible] I come and talk to you. And I have to say I really enjoy it. And thank you for taking into and talking about DNS abuse. So you know that over the last couple of years, we have developed new tools to look at the issue of DNS abuse. For instance, we have the DAAR system where we on a monthly basis report on the level of DNS abuse inside the definition that is sort of agreed by the ICANN community.

I don't know if someone can post it in chat as well, we did a five-year study of DNS abuse. Interesting enough, it has gone down. Someone from IT can help you to do that in the blog. Well, I'm not saying it's over. I'm not saying it's a big problem. It is a big problem. What I understand is one of the problems with DNS

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abuse itself is the fact that we often talk about fake news and [inaudible] and all of that.

And it's hard sometimes to make the difference what happens on the actual Internet on the DNS level, on the content level, on a webpage, which ICANN is no part of and shouldn't be, or what happens in social media where you know that—it's very hard how you distinguish between those sorts of different layers, you call it, platforms, social media. And as I usually say, when you go into a social media platform, you actually do leave the Internet, you're inside of someone else's computer. What happens in the actual string or the domain name and what happens as content on the webpage.

ICANN and the community has been working on many things for decades. One of the first policies I think ever set in place for instance, the protection of trademarks. So just want you to think about this. It's not like we're walking into a completely uncharted territory.

The other thing we did, which we've talked about before, is that a couple of years ago when COVID came around, if you remember that one—that's why we're wearing masks—we decided to look into how many domain name registrations contained words like COVID, vaccines or corona as many call it still. And we did that in many different languages, many different scripts, and in the first couple of weeks, we saw a lot of registration. We checked

hundreds of millions of domain names. We saw a lot of new registrations.

And it was interesting because when we actually did an extra check, most of them were inactive, which says that there was a lot of speculation going around. People bought domain name because they thought they could sell it. And there were very few of them that actually we saw were fraudulent. And what we did together with the registrars is that we sent that information to registrars, they look for it and then took it down.

And that's another example how we in the community create tools to do specific things. A reminder on that is also when the war in Ukraine broke out, what we did was we actually started looking into things for that, for the Ukrainian situation as well. We also looked in Ukrainian language, we added Ukrainian language for registrations that contained, “Give me money, I will stop the war” sort of. So we've done that as well.

And one thing—[inaudible] thought about this one—was we're always looking for new strings that we can look at. And maybe one point in time, you can invite John Crain or someone on his team and talk about the practicalities of we call the DNS TICR. And by the way, we're going to rename it. I have a new theory that we should call things what they are, instead of coming up with yet another acronym.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to update you a little bit our activities in Africa, if you're interested. I came to you, I think, one year ago and talked about our plans that we are going to start to invest in what we call IMRS clusters in the African region. This is the first time. We build two in the US, we build one in Singapore. And now we have officially decided for the first installation in Kenya. And I would like to say thank you very much to the Kenyan government who helped make it happen.

So the IMRS cluster, as someone of you know, it used to be called the L root, where we actually built a fairly large capacity for Internet users. What is basically done is that it shortens the time for you when you go online. Remember, every time you go online, you hit about something that originates from ICANN. We don't set policies for everything. But we have a technical responsibility which starts with IANA, goes through the root servers, goes through resolvers and hits your computer.

And what we're trying to do there is to make the time shorter and more predictable when you go online and you ask to find a domain name. You all know this, because sometimes you go online, you write in a domain name and nothing happens. And then you click Enter again, and suddenly you find it. And that is what we're trying to make sure that that connection works better. So it's an investment for us. We're really pleased to do that.

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Last week, I was in Kigali, Rwanda, along with others, at the development program where we actually did a promise or a pledge. So one of the most important parts of the Internet you might not think about is actually the relevance of the country code operators. We think and we believe together with country code operators that to have functioning country code operators actually locally creates an ecosystem that actually you can build upon in your country. Otherwise, you have to go to a platform. But just having the starting point with this identifier on the Internet for your country or your region is an essential part. It is as important as having AfriNIC distributing local African IP addresses.

It is something to build upon. And Africa is a big continent with many different countries who are in different parts of development. Some are very advanced, and some are less. So we made this pledge together with some country code operators, including the French country code operator, to do extra training, not only about security but also business models and ecosystems and how to do a country code operator in a good way in those countries.

I want to say that ICANN's role in this is facilitating it. We have a strong belief that the African Internet belongs to Africans, it doesn't belong to us. But we are facilitating and helping to set it up. We did a press announcement a week ago about the first 10 countries and I'm really proud to do that.

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So it's the second thing we are now doing in the African continent. The third thing is also we entering a relationship—and I hope it's official, because if it's not, please don't tweet it or tell anyone. We and ISOC are going in together to finance exchange points in Africa as well. So why is this important for us and why is it important for me?

The Internet penetration in Africa has now reached 40% plus, but as you all know, it's concentrated to certain countries, and it's concentrated in certain areas. And maybe even more important is concentrated to what I would call the elite. People who have money who understand English and so on.

To reach the development goals, to reach one more billion users, there's a lot of work to be done in Africa. Later this year, we will come with more announcements, our investments in how we do things in Africa, which we hope will help the end users.

[inaudible] Africa as any region—and it's hard to say Africa, like a continents, we're talking about 54 countries and it's rather a lot. By the way, this is a bad joke, I sometimes take the US [geography] and I put it on top of Africa to show how small the US is as a country compared to Africa as a continent. It's quite fun, actually.

But we have to work differently, we have to work together, and we have to take in the African differences. The last thing is important. And that's actually the next round. The next round is

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all about creating an opportunity, not in the English language, not in Latin script, not reading from left to right. So we can create an Internet and change it for what we call IDNs and universal acceptance. So you, everybody, can utilize the Internet based on their language, their keyboard, their narrative to build communities on the Internet.

Today, we have the biggest community existing in the world, the Internet users. We have been able to create five and a half billion users. I say that to some of my friends working on social media platforms, “Oh, you have 500 million users, I've got five and a half billion users.”

But what we have to understand is that the Internet is global and local at the same time. The next generation with all those initiatives, including the next round, is to make sure that we get more local. You shouldn't need to read from left to right, know what a dot is, use an English or Latin script keyboard, to be able to do this. Because then we will never get what Internet really does. Internet takes away one of the biggest challenges of being poor: the access to information. Having information has always been the rich man's right. If we get more people online, they will have access to the same information. And I happen to believe strongly that that is actually what makes Internet so beautiful. So thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me. It's always a pleasure to be here. And as always, what I do is that I have so

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many meetings, I'm rushing here and then I have to leave. Any questions before I leave?

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Göran. We do appreciate what you say and what you do for Africa and the places where people are not connected very well. If you have a question for Göran, please go ahead. Chokri.

CHOKRI BEN ROMDHANE:

Thank you very much, Aziz. [inaudible] African people are confronting in order to join this meeting. But I'm going to ask about a topic like the DNS abuse that we are [updating] in this session. But also of other topic, that seen as out of scope of ICANN but it's impacting the activity of ICANN. I mean by such topic, the [emerging] technology like blockchain, DNS managed by blockchain or artificial intelligence, or as I have heard more that the IDN variant couldn't be managed by the DNS level, which will be impacted a lot the activity of ICANN, but it will be out of scope of ICANN since it will be managed at another level.

So my question is whether it is possible to open the door to such topic in order to integrate them to the scope or the topic that will be treated by ICANN, officially, not other that the effort provided by the community in order to cover this topic. Thank you.

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GÖRAN MARBY:

Thank you. There are many questions there. And I'm not smart enough to answer all of them. Sorry. But I think that one of your question was interesting when we talk about what is often referred to as alternative namespaces and integration of that. I think that the first time ICANN wrote about that was back probably 15-20 years ago, and I can't remember the actual paper about it. So one thing to remember is that Internet is a voluntary system. Your computer makes a choice to go into what we call the DNS, or use the combined efforts of what we do. [It's based upon that you use] this IP address and this DNS name. That's how Internet is working.

There have always been initiatives to build alternatives to this, and they have many different names. There's nothing new. And if there's technology coming around that could replace what we do and get enough Internet users, bring it into the ICANN community and talk about it. But the essence is that you should always remember it's not the same Internet.

We often talk about the splinternet. Splinternet doesn't exist. Five and a half billion users are today using the same principle, the same IP protocol, the same identifier systems, the same IP numbers. And we made a blog about this, what we called customer beware, where we said there is a lot of ones selling alternative namespace, alternative network, but it's not on the same Internet.

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And one of the questions I ask myself is that you set the rules for this Internet, we've done decades of policy for this. AfriNIC is making policies for distribution of IP addresses in their region, you have the other ones, you have the country code operators setting policies for that. We've done some really remarkable things.

And here comes another technology. But I often hear behind those technologies is a business interest, or don't like the multistakeholder model interest. I didn't get what I wanted out of multi-stakeholder model, therefore I want to create another technology.

You literally have to go and reprogram your computer to be able to reach those alternatives. We call them alternative namespaces. So what are we afraid of is really to create collisions in the systems so you don't get where you want to go on the Internet.

I'm not technical enough to explain how that works. But I think we all have defended the integrity of the things that we do. It's all voluntarily. But by doing that, ICANN technology wise has become the center point of the Internet. And we are trusted.

And just to give you something I said in other areas, in September, October last year—and I can't remember which month it was, it was 8.3 trillion requests into the system. It was the biggest Internet day in the world so far. We have no idea, because we

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don't know what people does. But it's quite amazing that this technology that was founded so many years ago has been able to survive all the technology changes. There was no mobile. There was no voice over IP. There was no Zoom. There was nothing.

But this system that those gray beards actually did produce, you have been able to build all those technologies on top of it, and it's going to be new one, it's going to be changed. Artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, all of those have been able to build on those simple free principles.

So what I guess my answer is always going to be to anyone who asks anything, yes, we should always make sure that technical innovation can happen on top of it. So that's why we sometimes are very conservative of changing things [inaudible], because we don't have to look down only tomorrow but we have to look down a billion more users. I hope that was an answer to your question. I can go on at length now. But I'm going to bore you to death.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Göran. And indeed, it is a debate that has come back year over year, the question of fragmentation, the creation of new networks. It is a topic that I've had personally with Chokri. So thank you for supporting what I told him yesterday. There is one single Internet, this is the way it works and that's good. As a community, we are in favor of a single Internet. as Vint Cerf said in the first IGF, it was in Athens, a journalist asked him the

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question, “Why ICANN and so forth?” And he said if you take ICANN away, it will be replaced by something that will look like ICANN. But for now we have one single Internet. So thank you very much, Göran. If you would like to leave, go ahead. Thank you so much.

And next we have Mr. Eddy Kayihura. We just met with him. He is the CEO of the African Network Information Center. Thank you very much for being with us. And thank you again for coming. I will now give him the floor.

EDDY KAYIHURA:

Thank you, Aziz. Thank you again to the AFRALO community to have invited us. It is an honor for us to be able to discuss the current situation. It is true that at the level of the DNS and DNSSEC, we are trying to support as much as possible. But it is also important that I inform you of certain situations that create a risk for the governance of the Internet.

I think that you all know that last year, we had blocked accounts for two and a half months. The accounts were reopened in October. But the situation is not entirely over. There still are new cases. We have 36 cases today. 16 of them were still ongoing. But we just received two new ones. And it is an attack on the governance of the Internet or the governance of AfriNIC. We were not able to carry out our elections during the annual meeting of the members that occurred on June 3. The meeting is online. And

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you can see, if you look at it, how much resistance there was from the different members.

What it is, is that they want to prevent us from operating to do the tasks that we have that were given to us by the community as our responsibility. And so as I mentioned, there is an attack in terms of governance and the goal is to paralyze, to prevent the voting because of a lack of quorum. We are resisting, we are working with the courts in Mauritius. And my promise as well as the promise of my colleagues is that we will continue to do everything we possibly can in order to serve the African community in order to serve the world. Because in the end, what we do is within a multi stakeholder context. Whatever happens in Africa has an impact on the other regions as well.

But it is time, I believe, that we see better commitments on the part of the stakeholders, because we are in a bottom up context and a multi stakeholder context. And in this context, we can see that there is this phenomenon that happen which is not normal, where one member, one of our customers tried or tries to buy the votes of other members and to buy them in a quite absurd manner, because he is buying the access to the accounts of the members.

It is an incredible breach of security, it is not acceptable at all. But unfortunately, this is what we are encountering right now on the

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ground. We were alerted by the members who received this proposal, \$2000, \$3000 \$4000 in order to sell their access.

I could have given you maybe a cleaner image, an image of things working well. But I think that you are entitled to know the truth, to know the types of challenges that we are faced with. And the best line of defense is based on the bottom-up principle with a healthy basis that refuses to be carried away or taken by this type of manipulation that prevents us to work well.

It wasn't stopped, policies were approved, contracts were set up. But we will make sure that the contracts are followed as a registry. Not doing it would be not carrying out our mission in the stability of the Internet. A little bit like Göran, I will have to leave you because I have a train to catch. But if you allow me at the end of the presentation, I will have to leave you unfortunately. Thank you so much.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Eddie. This is truly unfortunate what we just heard, but you have the support of the African community on behalf of AFRALO. I can say that I was there when AfriNIC started. And I think also Hadia was one of the founders of AfriNIC. I think it was in 2005. And it is quite unfortunate what we're hearing today. And I hope that you have the ability to quickly find a solution, because Africa deserves it.

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The next speaker is our faithful friend, León Sanchez, who is the vice chair of the ICANN Board, and the Board director selected by At-Large as well.

LEÓN SANCHEZ:

Hello everyone, thank you for having me again. I'm going to try to be brief because we've already extended ourselves in the remark. But I think that what I'm hearing is that the first and last line of defense is the end users. So to that end, I believe that AFRALO plays a key role in building capacities, in creating awareness about DNS abuse. So the fact that you are discussing the role of the AFRALO community in mitigating DNS abuse, I think it's an excellent first step towards accomplishing the end or the goal of creating this awareness and building these capacities into the end user community, because you as leaders of your ALSes, as leaders of the African community, in the AFRALO body within ICANN, you are the ones who, so to speak, carry the word of ICANN to those in the ground, in your countries, in your communities.

So I praise this effort, I praise the work that you do. As I always say, it's always good to be with you guys. And Aziz won't let me tell lies here, I always ask Board Ops, who is in charge of coordinating our agendas, to give priority to these meetings in my schedule. So, happily, I was able to come here again. I am grateful also that Seun is following us on the distance. I like your spirit, bro. I like that you are happy and smiling, following our meeting.

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And as usual, if there's anything that I and my Board colleagues from the Board are able to help you and facilitate the efforts that you're carrying in your communities, in your countries, in creating this awareness and building these capacities, you can count on me and you can count on my board colleagues. I'm speaking for my board colleagues here. And I'm sure that everyone will be happy to support you and facilitate as much as we can these efforts.

So I wish you a very successful discussion and a very successful drafting of the final version of this statement from the AFRALO African community. And also want to recognize the work from AfriNIC in these very challenging times, and the support that it has had from its community in Africa and from friend organizations in the ecosystem. So we're here for you also, Eddie, and for your community. And happy to be here again. Thank you, Aziz.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, León. Yes, you were always faithful. Even at our monthly meeting, you're always present. Thank you so much for all your support. I would like to now give the floor to our Board director representative at the Board. You have the floor.

MANDLA MSIMANG:

Thank you for the invitation to address you today. This is one of my highlights at the ICANN meetings. And I can't believe that after

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two years in office, or on the Board, this is only my second face to face meeting. I feel like I've gotten to know the community quite well on Zoom. So I have tried to engage as much as I can, digitally.

But I just wanted to say DNS abuse, of course, is critical. And it's not the first time AFRALO is addressing it. And I think it reflects the importance of the matter in the community and in the region. What I think is particularly appropriate in the draft statement that was shared is the central focus on ensuring that any of the interventions in relation to DNS abuse fall squarely within ICANN's mandate, which is something that's not always well understood. And I think that it's important that AFRALO makes the distinction between content related matters and the technical issues. That's really key. And I think Göran spoke about that. So I want to spend time on it.

Also important is the recognition of the need for collaboration and for consultation amongst and between the various organizations and structures responsible for all the different aspects of mitigating DNS abuse. I think this will help to move this discussion further in a constructive manner. As I said, I won't spend too much time because I think the focus of the session should be on engagement and finalization of the statement, just to reiterate that I'm happy to be able to be part of this discussion and to facilitate any engagement that AFRALO needs to have with the Board. I always make sure that I'm here because AFRALO's active and considered participation is really meaningful. And it's

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a key component of making this multi stakeholder model work.  
Thank you again, and I look forward to the discussion.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you Mandla. The next speaker, I don't know if he's connected. So I'm going to give the floor to Yaovi.

YAOVI ATOHOUN: Pierre is connected. Go ahead.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Good afternoon, good morning to everyone and welcome to this session. And also, thanks for inviting us, the Africa engagement team, Pierre Dandjinou, and of course, my staff members are around. Well, I would like to really start by thanking AFRALO for yet another session which is an opportunity for AFRALO, of course, but also the African community to meet up and to further discuss on this statement that you are proposing, which is a good tradition so far.

As far as we are concerned in Africa, and, of course, Göran alluded to a few, I will say, support or projects that we are doing, that we started recently, and you'll be hearing more on those as we start deploying them on the ground and we start pitching of them.

But suffice for me to just say that, well, those new initiatives of course are going on in parallel with our Africa strategy, which you

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all know about, which you actually have to develop. And we are still, of course, deploying that strategy, especially some of the projects that are included there.

We are still conducting, of course, our workshop sessions. We are having many calls, webinars. And of course, I'd also like to thank you, thank specifically AFRALO, for your support your contribution to all of this.

One of the things I used to say is that while we are having [inaudible] your contribution, especially the statements that you prepare, send to the Board and the [inaudible], I would like to [inaudible] or actually see more engagement of the ALSes on the ground.

Topics are quite important. In fact, many topics that you discuss in the statements are important for our community. And we need to find ways in which that really address the issue, but also that people should be seen within our community in terms of practicalities. ICANN is providing the tools and certainly different supports. But I would like us to be also seeing the ALSes much more visible in Africa, in our communities.

I'm not going to get into the details of the declaration. We read it and it's quite interesting that, of course, you were able to see what AFRALO could contribute and [inaudible] thinking that our ALSes should be much more visible, I'm repeating this one.

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So with that, I would like to of course, again, thank you. And we as ICANN staff in Africa, of course myself and my engagement team and also our technical team that I hope you all know that they are around us and assisting us, technical team that depend on OCTO [inaudible] telling you what they have been doing. So to mean that Africa is benefiting from very, I will say, important support from ICANN. I would like this to continue. Thank again for your attention and looking forward to greater discussions. Thanks. And over to you, Aziz.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much. Pierre. Pierre is the vice president for the Africa engagement team. I'm going to give the floor to Bram now. I talked about the webinars we do have. That's why I want to give the floor to the two persons that are in charge of those webinars, the series of webinars. If Bram is with us, I'm going to give the floor to Bram. Bram, tell us more about those webinars. Thank you.

I don't think that Bram is connected. So we're going to keep going with our agenda. There is another team, the team that did draft our statement. I'm going to give the floor to Hadia. Would you like to tell us more about this topic? And then we'll have Abdeldjalil read the declaration. Thank you.

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HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you, chair, Aziz, and thank you all for being with us today. So in this statement, we address malicious online activities that fall within ICANN’s remit as the technical coordinator of the DNS space. So we do not address issues related to content. We focus on two main elements. The first is the resources required to inform our discussions. And second, of the activities that we as a community need to carry on. Activities include users’ education, collaboration between stakeholders, raising awareness and telling users how to report online incidents.

We invite the community to work together, maybe if possible under a single framework or multi frameworks. So it's an invitation for all of us to think how we could work together on this issue from an end user perspective. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you, Hadia. So we have about 25 minutes left and I'm going to give the floor to Ali who's the president of AfTLD, in charge of the country codes. AfTLD collaborates a lot with AFRALO. Ali, you have a two minutes.

ALI HADJI: Thank you. I am the president of AfTLD.

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AZIZ HILALI: We're going to wait a little bit and ask him to [inaudible] down. We couldn't hear him. So I'm going to ask Abdeldjalil to read our statement. And then we'll be able to debate it. And as soon as Ali is with us, he will have the floor. Abdeldjalil, thank you so much for your work. You have the floor. And you can read in French or in English.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much. I'm going to read it in French and I would like to thank all the people that did work on the draft. Hadia, thank you so much. You were our lead and many people did contribute. Thank you so much.

We the African ICANN community members participating in the ICANN 74 meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, and attending the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting on Wednesday, June 15th 2022 discussed the role of the AFRALO community in mitigating DNS abuse as an important topic for AFRALO.

In this statement, the AFRALO community focuses on mitigating DNS abuse types perpetrated via the Internet that fall within ICANN's remit as the technical coordinator of the Domain Name System—DNS. Therefore, the community will not be addressing content related abuse.

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To start the discussion, the AFRALO community needs to identify the resources and tools that is going to use to inform DNS abuse mitigation discussions and means of mitigation.

Possible discussion resources could include, among others, data and reporting trends related to DNS security threats concentrations, the ICANN DNS abuse activity reporting project—DAAR—is a good resource in that regard. Tools provided by ICANN to help the community mitigate DNS security threats. The ICANN DNS security mitigation program is a good resource in that regard. ICANN community sessions held during DNS forums, and ICANN public meetings. ICANN RALOs related forum and session. Internet end users’ experiences, reliable resources for DNS abuse reporting in the region.

Community DNS abuse mitigation activities could include the following: identifying reliable resources within the AFRALO region that can provide trends related to DNS security threats, creating a DNS abuse related resources page on AFRALO’s Wiki. The page would act as a hub to DNS abuse mitigation activities and resources. It would include links to ICANN DNS abuse mitigation sessions, relevant sessions organized by At-Large and the RALOs and resources provided by the AFRALO community.

Launching an end user awareness and education campaign. The campaign would focus on educating users in order to reduce the risk that they fall victim to DNS abuse activities. According to

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ICANN's most recent DNS abuse trends published in March 2022, spam is the most prominent type of DNS abuse, followed by phishing.

Establishing an AFRALO working group that would form a unified strategy. The group would be responsible for coordinating DNS abuse mitigation activities and gathering end user DNS abuse related experiences.

In the end, we note that mitigating and fighting DNS abuse cannot be the purpose of one group or entity but requires collaboration among all stakeholders. AFRALO in its role in defending end users' interests will be focusing on end users' community-based awareness activities. Thank you very much.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Abdeldjalil. So now, we can go to questions and answers about this declaration. But before that, I would like to give the floor for two minutes. So if you have any remarks briefly, do you have any comments or question?

ALI HADJI:

Thank you very much, Aziz. the sorry for the technical problems that I had earlier. And I wanted to thank AFRALO for giving me the opportunity to add the name of the Africa TLD. We work very closely with AFRALO and the other African structures. And together we have AF Star. And we have AfriNIC. We have AfTLD,

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AFNOG and many other structures. And I am very happy to see that AfriNIC was present.

We have much in common. We have challenges that together we can tackle. And with the help of ICANN, we heard from the CEO of ICANN talking about those new clusters that are going to be very useful for the Internet in Africa in our countries. And I would like to tell you that we have another program with ICANN. We're going to have Coalition for Digital Africa with the ccTLDs that are going to be developed on location in those African countries. AfTLD has a memorandum of understanding that has been signed. And that's what I wanted to let you know today. Thank you very much.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much, Ali. And now we will move to your questions. The first one who asked for the floor is Chokri.

CHOKRI BEN ROMDHANE:

Thank you, Mr. Aziz, for this introduction of this most important topic. So I see that the topic, the proposals are very interesting and what Hadia just put forward, the whole team put forward, is excellent. I just wanted to ask if we could also include ALSes in this effort, especially in putting together the workgroup that will be in charge of or who will address tracing the different abuses that will be reported at the level of the DNS. I don't know if this is

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a proposal that had been included in the draft. Thank you so much.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Chokri, for this proposal. Seun is here. As far as I'm concerned, I think it's a good proposal, and we can talk about it during the monthly NARALO meeting. Are there others who would like to take the floor? If you have nothing to say, it means that it is perfect according to all of you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

My question is to Chokri. So if he could elaborate a little bit on his ask. So the statement says establishing an AFRALO working group. And AFRALO here, to me, means also ALSes. However, maybe Chokri would like to put a specific item related to the ALSes. So if you could elaborate. Thank you.

CHOKRI BEN ROMDHANE:

So my suggestion was to include the ALSes in the working group efforts. If I understand there is going to be a working group within AFRALO in order to track all of the efforts that are carried out in order to elaborate necessary strategies to fight against DNS abuse. And so what I would like to suggest is that this group is made up of members or representatives designated by the different ALSes.

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AZIZ HILALI: Yes. And I would like to add to Chokri’s response. And I think that you were there. We talked about organizing a webinar with experts on DNS abuse. And we did talk about the role of end users, of registries, of all stakeholders in this issue of bad actors, and Bachar, our general secretary, you have the floor.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much, Aziz, for giving me the floor. To add to what Chokri just said, at the level of AFRALO, the working group are always open to the members of the community, whether they are ALSes or individual members. So we always do a call for candidates on the mailing list. So you will all be welcome. It's the community. There is no closed door. If you have questions, the team is here to support you. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you. Jacques Rodrigue, you have the floor.

JACQUES RODRIGUE GUIGUEMDE: Thank you very much. I wanted to react to the information that we heard in the declaration, in the statement. If I understood clearly, there is a project that is very specific on DNS abuse that is being set up at the level of ICANN. It seems that this working

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group, which will be put together, is going to anticipate the actions and to contribute.

At this point, do we have some documentation of this initiative at the level of ICANN so that we can start right away to study and contribute to the best of our abilities? That's my question. Is there documents at the level of AFRALO? Nothing has been done. You are just setting this up. But at the level of ICANN, maybe there are things that exist already.

AZIZ HILALI:

I'm not sure if I am in a good position to answer. I did search. I found a few pages in French and English. And with our experts, vice chairs, Hadia and others, maybe they have more to tell us so they know more. Maybe you have information on that. I don't know. I just want to make you speak. [Adiel.]

ADIEL AKPLOGAN:

Yes. Could you repeat the question? I'm not sure I understood clearly.

AZIZ HILALI:

The question is that when we talk amongst ourselves about the issue of attacks or DNS abuse, Africans in general or users, members, whether we have documentation on the ICANN

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website, perhaps some advice or recommendations to protect themselves against this.

ADIEL AKPLOGAN:

Okay. In terms of abuse and in terms of the measures, there are some documents of different kinds. With the technical issues, we work with DNS operators under different measures to implement in order to carry out these measures.

On the ICANN website, there is a page dedicated to the measures that ICANN carries out. If you go on the ICANN website, you will see it. But there is also more detailed documents. So for example, we have the KINDNS initiative. It's a new initiative that we are launching. The wiki is available publicly. And the objective of this measure is to identify the practices that an operator should set up in order to mitigate DNS abuse attacks.

But there is an area that is a problem. It is at the level of the users. Because as you know, users are the weak link in terms of DNS abuse. And ICANN recently published a fact sheet page to help users have a better hygiene. This page is also available on the ICANN website. And there is a campaign that is being worked on right now in collaboration with registrars to stress this information.

On the ICANN website, it's not all centralized on one page where you have access to everything. So I think this recommendation

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could be studied with great attention to see how we could maybe put everything together on the ICANN website. But as you know, the ICANN website is being completely revamped. And certainly, the new structure will be better. But the recommendation can be reviewed and studied as well.

AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you, Adiel, for all of this. I mentioned Hadia and the team that drafted the statement. But could we add Jacques's proposal, which is to ask ICANN to include more documents on the topic of DNS abuse and documents that would be addressed to end users? Yesim would like to speak. Go ahead. Are there online questions?

YESIM SAGLAM:

Thank you very much, Aziz. We do have a remote question from Joel Karubiu. Why are African ccTLDs not subscribing to DAAR? Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI:

We have specialists. We have Ali with us. Why are African ccTLDs not subscribing to DAAR? I think that subscriptions are open. Now in terms of information, that might be the question, how can we communicate on that so that each ccTLD knows how to subscribe? There are probably forums and so forth. I think it's

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open. Maybe you can answering the chat with the link. Thank you, Ali. Adiel also wanted to add something, I think, on that.

ADIEL AKPLOGAN:

Yes. In terms of DAAR, I think that the question is quite appropriate. There is an interest for ccTLDs to have access to the information produced by DAAR. But usually, what we see, the obstacle is that most ccTLDs are not prepared to give their zone file, to give it available. That's what is necessary in the DAAR system in order to have the analysis be carried out.

And so if the AfTLD could work with the ccTLD to make sure that the protections are set up and convinced the ccTLD to share their zone files, it would be helpful. My team in Africa has been working with different ccTLDs on this, talking with them to inform them about DAAR. And perhaps another piece of information that might be reassuring is that the access to the DAAR result is private for ccTLDs. ICANN does not publish like it does for gTLD, the DAAR analysis at the level of the ccTLDs.

When you are involved in DAAR as a ccTLD, you have a special access channel. That means that you can have only your information. So it limits the risks for some ccTLDs perhaps for some who don't want to share the information. But if you have precise information, as a ccTLD, you can contact me. I am here. I've been here all week, and I can certainly help you, we can talk about it.

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AZIZ HILALI: Thank you, Adiel, for all of this. Thank you for being with us. I hope that you have the answers you need. We are almost at the end of our time, but maybe we can add a few minutes and give the floor to Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you. I just wanted to ask the community if you would like to add the KINDNS project to the document. And also, I think now I understand what Chokri was saying. He was talking specifically about sending out invitations to ALSes. I think those are details that we could agree on outside of the statement if you also all agree to that. Okay, and what else do we need to add, if any? Or maybe we can discuss over the mailing list. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI: If there are no other positions on Hadia's proposal, maybe it could be added to the statement. So we are at the end of our meeting. If no one else wants to speak, I would like to quite simply thank you for being here. And I will give the floor to Seun to conclude because he is with us. So Seun, you have the floor for the last word. Mr. Chair, go ahead.

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SEUN OJEDEJI:

Thank you very much, Aziz. Actually, you are the chair at the moment. And I'd just like to thank everyone. Thanks for the wonderful contributions. Of course, I particularly appreciate the reminder of the importance of AFRALO reactivating this MoU that we have with AfTLD, especially in terms of capacity building within Africa. So it would be good that we actually get to engage with the AfTLD colleagues, and then see how we can actually do some of this, put some of this content in the MoU into practice.

But to the extent, it's also good to also note that—I mean, this AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting is also one of the efforts to actually bring various voices, not just the AFRALO voices on the table for the African region. And I'm particularly happy with the feedbacks or the comments that we've had in this particular session, the diverse opinions that were being made, and of course, the various topics of discussion that were being made which were related to the main subjects of the particular session and discussion.

So thank you very much. And I hope that at the next meeting, we get to see face-to-face. I hope I'll be able to attend face-to-face. Thanks for all your support, and of course, all the speakers who were able to join. We appreciate your feedback, and of course, we thank you for your support. Aziz, I kind you kind of have the last word. So I'm just going to give you back in case you want to add anything. But for me, it's bye for now.

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AZIZ HILALI:

Thank you very much. And as I said earlier, we miss you, but I am certain that you'll be amongst us next time, because I don't think that you will need a visa to go to Kuala Lumpur.

Thank you all. I think it was a very fruitful meeting. I am delighted that it went well with good interventions, full of content. I would like to thank everyone who stayed with us. And thank you again. We will see each other again during the next AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting. Thank you very much.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**