ICANN75 | AGM – Joint AFRALO-AfrICANN Session
Wednesday, September 21, 2022 – 13:15 to 14:30 KUL

YESIM SAGLAM: Hello and welcome to the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting. My name is Yesim Saglam, and I'm 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 in the proper form, as noted in the chat.

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On-site participants may pick up a receiver and use their own headphones to listen to interpretation. However, please remember to take off your headsets when using the table microphones in order to avoid interference. Virtual participants may access the interpretation via the Zoom toolbar. With that, I will hand the floor over to Seun Ojedeji, AFRALO Chair. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. Good afternoon from Malaysia. And of course, good morning to our colleagues who are joining from Africa. Good afternoon and good evening to the rest of the world who

are joining remotely. And you are welcome to the AFRALO-AfrICANN session. This is a session we hold at every ICANN meeting and I like to use this opportunity to welcome our guest speakers who are present. And of course, I like to also recognize the vice chair of AFRALO, as Aziz Hilali who is on the on the Zoom.

AZIZ HILALI: Good morning, good day to everyone. I am here. Thank you and good luck for this meeting.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much, Aziz, and of course, are we missing you physically. But thanks to the Internet, we are able to hear you. So we move to look at the agenda today. If staff could display that briefly. That is we have quite a lot to go through today. And you will notice that the agenda this time around with regards to the guest speakers kind of in different items. This is based on the availability. And of course, we might actually shuffle things as we go along. Nevertheless, that's the agenda in front of us. If I have not seen any comments to review the agenda, I would like to request that we adopt the agenda. Any suggestion for modification? Seeing no hands up and hearing no voice, we work with the agenda as presented.

And we do one of the things that we don't usually do in the past. We need to do a tribute. It's a very challenging one for AFRALO in the last few months, whereby we lost two of our members. Baudouin was very renowned, and of course, early contributor to AFRALO, not just AFRALO but also to Internet space within Africa and of course, globally,

especially within IGF. Baudouin actually contributed a lot to the development of AFRALO. And, of course, we're very sad by his exit. I've met him a couple of times. And when I heard the news, it was quite surprising. And of course, it's a big loss to us at AFRALO, because he was a very big contributor. And we are still trying to survive that.

Then we heard about the unfortunate loss of Paul. We consider Paul as a youth just like myself. And there's something in Africa, that when a young person goes, it's not something that we'll find very—that we can bear. So I kind of felt this was quite very emotional for me at the time. And I believe it's also the same for quite a number of us within the Africa space. Paul being staff of AfriNIC, I almost said staff of AFRALO, because Paul actually was one of the contributors to monthly calls, especially when it comes to capacity building. And himself and Yazid and the rest of the GSC team, they're always on our call. They're always also receptive to all our requests, whenever we ask them, especially with regards to capacity building, and of course, with regards to the outreach webinar series that we normally hold. And so it's really a big loss for us. And I really hope that we'll continue to remember him as one who actually was very selfless in terms of doing his job. And of course, as one will continue to contribute to the development of Internet in Africa, and of course, globally. Rest in peace. And of course, for Baudouin as well. Before we go to the next item on the agenda, I would just like to see if there's anyone that would like to add, make a few remarks. And of course, I also saw that there was a news in regards to Paul, that was done by ICANN. So maybe Pierre can also talk about that. I think, we'll take the next two to three minutes to hear from one or two persons on tributes on Paul and Baudouin. So anyone wants to make a

brief …? I see León is here now. So maybe we'll start from León to give his remark. Sébastien, I see you as well. We ask León to just give his remark, and then we'll move to the next person on the queue.

LEÓN SANCHEZ: Thank you very much, Seun. Sébastien, did you want to say something before I speak? Please.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Seun. Thank you, León. This is both a complicated but more lighthearted topic. So I'd like to take advantage of this opportunity that to really underscore Baudouin's impact on the French speaking community. He worked so hard to make sure to be present at French language meetings of the French language community with regards to Internet governance and French language. I do not claim to represent the French speaking community. Nevertheless, I think it's important to remember his contribution in our shared beautiful language. And thank you for taking time to remember him during this meeting. Thank you, and good luck to everyone.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much, Sébastien. León.

LEÓN SANCHEZ: Thank you very much. Yes, these are definitely trying times for all who knew both Baudouin and Paul. And it's good that we recognize them that we acknowledge the legacy that they have in our community. And

to that end, ICANN has created a Fellow award in honor of Paul Muchene. I don't know if you're aware of this. But yesterday it was published that a new initiative in memory of Paul, who was a fellow, as some of us were, has been created as a tribute to him. And now, these awards will take his name. So I think it's just fair, again, that by creating this award under his name, we acknowledge and recognize everything he did for our community and as a fellow alumni, and someone who is very attached to the fellowship program, I continue to be engaged with the fellows. Of course, Paul was another proof of the benefit of this program and how it attracts wonderful people like him. So I convey my condolences to all who had the privilege to know Paul, those of us who are his friend, and of course, his family. Thank you, Seun.

SEUN OJEDEJI: All right. Thank you very much. Thanks a lot, León. And on behalf of AFRALO, we'd like to also appreciate ICANN for actually keeping the memories of Paul alive through the award. And of course, thanks a lot as well Sébastien for those memories of Baudouin which you also mentioned. I can take two more brief tributes before we move on to the next item. Aziz, you have the floor.

AZIZ HILALI: Thank you, Seun. I just wanted to say a few words about Baudouin. I didn't know Paul as well. You should see a picture where you saw Paul, on the left of the screen. You saw Paul with Baudouin and this was taken in 2005 when ALAC was created. There it is. And a lot of people who are at the forefront of Internet in Africa were present at that meeting. It was

a very powerful moment. And I thank you for putting that picture because it really is proof positive of the fact that he was one of the pioneers in Africa of our cause and he joined ICANN. We do have for the French speaking community as Sébastien said, he was very active in our community at the local level, and also within ICANN. Thank you. That's all I wanted to say about Baudouin. He participated in several African meetings at ICANN. The last one I can remember was back in Joburg at the AFRALO GA. So that's all I wanted to say about him and those who have left us. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thanks a lot, Aziz. And of course, for us, the young ones, we kind of are more familiar with Paul And of course, it's good that the old ones have fantastic history of Baudouin as well. I will now recognize Pierre, who wants to also say a few words, before we go to the next item. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much. Just to say that Baudouin and Paul, I knew all of them, and particularly talking about Baudouin, of course, we know that he's coming from a place which is tough. I member he was trying to persuade everyone to support Democratic Republic of Congo. I remember my many trips there in DRC. Baudouin of course, he's always supportive, he always managed to organize my visits, and then also trying to do whatever he could in such a huge place, so, we can only commend what he was able to achieve which is an eternal peace. As for Paul, well, Paul has become a staff member. So, one of our technical engagement staff. That was a pleasure for us to actually work—to hire

him first, and then working with him and relying on him. So as we are deploying our strategy in Africa. Of course, he will be missed. So we'll be visiting, certainly, his family while in Nairobi for the DNS forum. There is a plan to visit the family and whatever we put. So again, big loss, but such is life. We have to cope with that.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much. And may I ask that we take the next seconds in silence in honor of Paul and Baudouin? May their souls rest in peace. So we move on the agenda. We have quite a number of guests as usual who'll be speaking with us. Of course, before we go on to the other items on the agenda, I see that some of our guest speakers are already here, and considering their schedules, would like to just take their remarks. Of course, we are happy to still have them if they can stay through the call. But of course, we understand their schedules. So I will just start with León. León has been our strong supporter when it comes to At-Large he always also—I don't know how he does it, tries to attend our meetings. And I think he also does it for other RALOs. I don't know how he actually manages. But again, we really appreciate you and of course, we thank you for your continued support for AFRALO, and of course, the At-Large as a whole. [inaudible] I invite you to also appreciate León for us, and of course, you have the floor. Thank you very much.

LEÓN SANCHEZ: Thank you very much. And yes, you're right, I always enjoy joining the monthly meetings for AFRALO. And of course, as I've said many times,

attending these AFRALO-AfrICANN joint meetings are something that I always put on top of my agenda and on top of my schedule as a priority. So it's good to be here again, and I'd like to congratulate you for the statement that you are about to discuss. I had the opportunity of reading it beforehand. And universal acceptance is of course of the utmost importance in these times, if we want to continue to progress and advance in narrowing or eliminating the digital divide that exists throughout the world, I think universal acceptance is key. And you have put this in a very nice way in your document, and the actions that you propose as a way to try to embrace and to progress in universal acceptance, I think, are spot on. And to this end, I think that AFRALO as a Regional At-Large Organization, and the different, or the many ALSes that are part of AFRALO, are key to achieving and to executing these actions. So you have a tough job to actually materialize these proposals, this action plan that you have set in the document, and I'm pretty sure that ICANN is happy to support the efforts that you will undertake in that task. And of course, myself being on the board, you can count with my support as well in anything that is within my reach to help you guys to undertake this task.

I, of course, also have had trouble with universal acceptance in my own language, there are a number of emails, and there are a number of extensions, and there are a number of characters that are not universally accepted. And that is, of course, a problem. So we need to continue working, as you said, with governments, with vendors, with software developers, with the Internet service providers, as to make them aware of the importance that universal acceptance carries, and

how it affects end users when this is not actually happening. This is not taking place.

So I wish you a very successful discussion, I congratulate you again in advance for the statement that you have put on the table for discussion. And as usual, you can count on me, Seun and everyone, to help you in anything that is within my reach. And I have to apologize because I need to go to another meeting. But I usually stay till the end, but not this time. Thank you very much, Seun, and thank you, everyone.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much, León. And we always appreciate your presence, and we wish you the best. I'll call on the next guest speaker, which is Ihab, one of the board members of ICANN. Ihab, you're welcome. You have the floor.

IHAB OSMAN: Thank you, Seun. Thank you to all the members of the AFRALO and this is my first AFRALO meeting in person as a board member and will be my last as a board member as well. Allow me to go off script a bit. As a non-native English speaker of course I fully support the statement that AFRALO has made about universal acceptance. It's a straightforward statement. But off script part that I would like you to hear me about.

First of all, I think AFRALO, if you allow me, needs to put more effort to have a bigger African engagement in the ICANN community, and the numbers from ICANN org shows us that whenever there is ICANN meetings held on the African continent, then the participation of

African members of the community goes up. The last ICANN meeting on the continent was Marrakech in June of 2019. And for the foreseeable future, and with everything on the calendar of ICANN, there is nothing scheduled on the continent. And I think the meetings have been fixed until '24-'25. So to have six years, without a single meeting on the continent, I don't think it's a good thing. And it has its impact on the participation and getting new generation and members from the African Internet world to join the ICANN multistakeholder community and model.

So this is something that I would love to see you become more active in lobbying the ICANN org to bring another ICANN meeting to the African continent soon. You will always have my support in the Board or outside of the Board, will always be a voice for the African Internet community within the ICANN world. And we'll see you in the next physical meeting in Cancun, not as a Board member, but as a member of the African community. Thank you very much. Merci beaucoup.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much. Ihab, and of course, it is interesting. It makes for the two of us actually, this is also my first time of having a tent card as chair of AFRALO, even though this is my second term. So, yeah. So thanks also for the remark with regards to the meetings. I mean, it's one of the challenges that we also see, and for us, as AFRALO, we are also hoping to hold a General Assembly sometime next year. I mean, even though there's not going to be an ICANN meeting, but at least let's do something small that can get the community together. So we are hoping to do that. But as you said, we hope that in near future, ICANN

meeting will come to Africa. And we also use this opportunity to also ask Alan, who's still on the Board, to also kindly continue to support us which guests to that. And of course, we hope that we'll also have hosts from Africa actually also express interest to be able to host the meetings. And of course, we cannot underestimate the impact that those kinds of meetings have in the region whenever they go there. So it's important to follow. Thanks so much once again, Ihab. Is a hand up?

EBERHARD LISSE: We have expressed interest for a couple of years and even had a site survey in Namibia. But we were told it's a hard destination. And I think they mean Africa is a hard destination. We're still interested. We're still trying to pursue it. But earliest opportunity will be in 2025.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You have my support.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thanks, Lisse. Sébastien, you have your hand up.,

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: IThank you for those comments. Keep in mind, it's not just Africa that needs us to come to Africa. The whole world needs us to come to Africa. If we band together, we need to make sure that we have meetings all over the world. So you should consider us to be your allies in this cause. And please do not think that we're against you, because it's together that we'll be able to better organize meeting.

You might not know this, but I participated in the meeting review working group. And one of the reasons why we organized shorter, more compact meetings throughout the year was precisely so we could go to places where we couldn't go anymore, because we became so huge that people said that we had outgrown a lot of—most cities in the world. So that's also one of the reasons why.

And I think it's unacceptable to only have a meeting once on the African soil once every five years. And I think that it's not written black and white, but I think that it absolutely should be that and I wholeheartedly support the initiative to have a meeting in Africa as soon as possible. And I'm sure that there are several venues where we could be welcomed and where we could carry out our work. So we support you, thank you very much.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thanks a lot, Sébastien, for that intervention. And of course, we keep at it and hope that something will happen very soon. Okay, Abdulkarim, please.

ABDULKARIM OLOYEDE: Thank you very much. I would want to suggest that the next AFRALO statement should probably address this issue of having meetings in Africa. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thanks. So, as we all know, the process by which we actually determine a topic for AFRALO statement—Abdulkarim, that is noted, all of us here

have heard that, but when the call is held, be sure to make the suggestion and of course, as usual, we will respond to the topic that gets the most support within the community for the next meeting. Thank you very much for the suggestion.

So please, we are not using the usual 90 minutes this time around, we are on a 75-minute timer, and which we are already behind schedule on. So I would like to request that further intervention be very brief so we can actually maximize our time. So the next speaker, according to the agenda, it's Maureen. Maureen is the chair of ALAC. Maureen has been a supporter as well, and of course, Friday is when she ceases to be the ALAC chair. And of course, we'd like to recognize her and of course, thank her for all she did during her time as ALAC chair, and of course, for all her contributions. Maureen, you're welcome. You have the floor.

MAUREEN HILYARD: Thank you so much. And once again, I'm really pleased to be able to address the AFRALO community as the ALAC chair even though it's the last time. First of all, just along with my other At-Large colleagues, I just want to convey my condolences to the loss to your community of two great AFRALO members who were recognized earlier.

As mentioned it is my last meeting but I've really appreciated the AFRALO's regular invitation to speak to their community. My greatest takeaways from these meetings, of course, has been, as mentioned, the regular preparation of the policy document that has come from the community and capacity building is a core component of our outreach and engagement working group. But what you do as a community

really is a beacon for what I would really like to see in other RALOs. And they focus on DNS issues that are important to ICANN, and especially to At-Large.

And as León mentioned, universal acceptance is a very important issue for us as end users. And it was really pleasing for me to be stopped today, as I was leaving the GAC meeting, and by some members of the Egyptian delegation within the GAC, who asked if we could include universal acceptance in our future discussions with them. And I think that's really great when that's the community themselves who come and ask us about what they would like us to discuss with them. And so I'll be advising Joanna and Shi Young to make sure that it is included in the next schedule of topics with the GAC in the future.

But I just really would like to thank, again, my ALAC members from AFRALO who have worked with me over the years. I've really appreciated the support. And I really am looking forward to working with them on the ALAC without being the chair and I really just wanted to say that I've appreciated all the input that I've had from the AFRALO community, and I wish you well for this meeting, and for your future endeavors, Seun, thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thanks a lot, Maureen. And congratulations for a successful tenure as well. We quickly move now to the next guest speaker, who is a familiar face to us, as some of us who were at the opening will have heard from Eddy. And Eddy is the CEO of AfriNIC. And Eddy has a few remarks to

make. Once again, we have 30 minutes left. So I would ask that our speakers be very brief. If you can do it in one minute, I would appreciate.

EDDY KYIHURA:

I'm not sure why you start with me. I would once again like to thank the AFRALO community who has always invited us, me and my predecessor, also express my sincere condolences for your loss. I only recently learned of their passing and I was very shocked. I personally was born in Rwanda, but I grew up in the Congo. And Baudouin led by example and showed us how to behave and how to work.

Other than that, I don't have much to say, just like my colleagues said, we're there for you, AFRINIC are there to help you. We're going to continue to exchange. And I must say, and reiterate the fact that we really want to do more. If you have any projects, any activities, initiatives where you'd like us to help you or get involved, we are available, because we know that being a part of a community is a shared value. We share values like excellence, passion, results, and community driven ideas. So thank you again, for inviting me, we remain there for you. And we are even there to do more if you need it. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

Thank you very much, Eddy, for the reaffirmation of the commitment, not just to AFRALO, but to the entire African community is the commitment you make. And of course, we still recognize that AFRALO has existing MOU which AFRINIC which will continue to improve our

partnership and we wish you well in the organization and of course, beyond.

I am told that the chair of AfTLD is also around, I will be recognizing him as well, after we'll take some of the other speakers, please, just a note to him so that he gets ready. We move quickly now to the next speaker on the agenda, which is Mandla. Mandla is also one of the outgoing Board members. But at the same time, I'm happy that she's able to join our call. Mandla, you have the floor.

MANDLA MSIMANG: Thanks, John. And thanks to Aziz and the whole team from AFRALO for inviting me. And it's nice to be here again, also, like Ihab, for my last time as a Board member, but not for the last time ever. I will continue to participate in the community and see everybody on the listserv and also at the meetings, hopefully, in Namibia, maybe, or in front of the other places that will be on the continent or elsewhere.

So I'll keep it short because I think over the past three years, I've seen that the value in these sessions really comes from the discussion of the statement. Statement is well crafted, and on a topical and relevant issue for myself personally being an advocate for universal service and access more broadly in the telecom sector for the last two decades, but also just in terms of the Internet community and making sure that there is a multilingual approach to addressing Internet issues.

I think that the statement is particularly good because the recommendations are collaborative and multi stakeholder even beyond the ICANN community, and that's what will be needed to

support the recommendations. Like I said, I'll keep it very short. But I do want to take this opportunity to thank AfrICANN and AFRALO for all of the invitations to join you over the past three years. And it's unfortunate that due to COVID, we weren't able to meet face to face more often. I think I've done a little bit better than Ihab. Lucky for me because I was in Montreal and in The Hague. And I think we leave a lot to Alan, who will be the only board member representing us going forward. But I think that we leave the Board in good hands with him, with his representation. So thank you, everyone.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much. And, of course, we trust that you continue to remain with the community, Mandla. We look forward to having you in our monthly calls as well. Same with Ihab. Thanks a lot. We move on to the next person, which is Pierre. Pierre is the vice president for Africa. Welcome. You have the floor.

PIERRE DANDJINOU: Thank you very much, Seun, and again, welcome to everyone. Pierre Dandjinou, VP stakeholder engagement in charge of Africa. Briefly, I would like to say that always a pleasure for me to be here. And like someone wanted me to point out that I was part of those who crafted the whole ALS thing back then. So always a pleasure to see how this is now working out.

As far as the [inaudible], what you choose to work on, because this is a tradition that you now have, and we really appreciate this, that you will be working on a theme that has some, I will say might have some impact

on Africa, that you develop those statements, which is fine. We just wanted to say that this really equals our efforts on the continent because as GSE Africa, we've already organized so many workshops trying to make sure that there will be awareness on the universal acceptance and hopefully, we're also going to deepen our relation with you, I mean with the AFRALO on the ground, so that we are able to make a difference there.

First, I will be sitting with the Chair of AFRALO sometime in the week so that we kind of streamline that collaboration, especially in terms of the strategy that we are all trying to implement in Africa. So this is a promise. And as you also heard from Sally, we will be trying to really reorganize some of the things we've been doing so that we have the impact that we are looking for, for Africa.

Of course, we don't have much time, but we will be kind of announcing some of our projects, sometime by IGF early, end of November. And one of the projects that we are having here concerns the universal acceptance especially within the African Association of Universities. So thanks again for having me here. And, of course, looking forward to how shall I say, much more profound relationship in Africa. Thanks. Back to you, Seun.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much. And of course, we appreciate your continuous support for AFRALO and entire AfrICANN. And of course, we trust that the collaboration continues, and of course, like you said, bring out some of the results that we hope we expected to bring out. I know on

the agenda, we have Alan later on the call but since he's here, I think we will just take Alan's remarks now. And then we'll quickly move on to the rest of the agenda items. Alan, Board member for Africa, you have the floor.

ALAN BARRETT: Okay, thank you, Seun. It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me. I do try to attend these meetings whenever I'm at ICANN. But for the last three years, we haven't been able to do that. IDNs and universal acceptance are very important topics. So it's good that the AFRALO-AfrICANN community is producing a statement on that right now. I think that there are some technical issues that need to be addressed. Some of the large email providers don't really provide very good support for universal acceptance. One thing that people can do is test whether your email provider allows you to put non Latin characters, like any other Unicode characters in the username portion of the left hand side of your email address. And if it doesn't work, then write to their support and ask them to address that. So I don't want to take up too much time. That's just one suggestion. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much, Alan, for that. I'm not surprised with this suggestion, Alan being the techie. And of course, it's always about getting things to be fixed. Oh, you want to respond quickly. But before you do, I think you will take the two things together, you're going to give the remark on the—Okay, I see. Okay, respond to this briefly, then we'll

take Ali, the chairman of AfTLD, then we'll come back to you again to do the remark for the statement. So Hadia, you have the floor.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you. And I guess the idea about the statement here that we weren't listing out everything that needs to be listed. So we also did not mention anything about the industry or how to encourage the industry. We tried to—because I think—but not taken, we will put it but if we put that in, we will need to put many other details as well. So maybe we put one broader bullet that addresses technical aspects in general. And that would include email.

ALAN BARRETT: Thanks. I wasn't trying to suggest that the statement should be modified. It's true. You can't put everything in the statement. I think the statement is good as it is. I was trying to make a suggestion to ordinary people who are listening even if it's not in the statement, you can test your email provider and talk to them.

SEUN OJEDEJI: All right, thank you. I'm told Ali, the chair of the [inaudible] is online, remote. Ali, if you're there, you have the floor for a brief remark.

ALI ALMESHAL: Thank you, Seun, for giving me the floor. I hope that everybody's having a great ICANN 75 as the person who came before, I would like to thank you, thank AFRALO for inviting all of the players in the African

community. It's always a great moment. I also thank you for the homage and the tribute and appreciation. Also, I must say that the declaration in favor of universal acceptance was also a great thing. And so we at the ccNSO are working on it, and we hope that we will be able to make inroads.

As you know, that universal acceptance is important for ccTLDs. And so I would like to take this opportunity to thank ask all AFRALO members at the national level to strive towards achieving this and endeavoring to do that.

And so I also would like to talk about the coalition for digital Africa that the CEO of ICANN is committed to that. He said there are a lot of Africans that have been chosen to benefit from that first edition where we've had some surveys that are being passed around with different ccTLDs because it's key to the success of this project. In order for it to be a true success, all stakeholders need to be involved. I also would like to talk about the observatory, and we are currently preparing a platform that hopefully will meet the need of the African community and the desire that was expressed and help the African community. So I invite all of you to participate in the DNS Forum, which will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 4th to 6th. So this will come after national DNS forums. There will be one. There's the Kenya DNS forum, but also the Benin which will be held in November. So I invite all of you to participate in these key events in the African schedule.

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SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you, Ali, and of course, happy to hear from you. We have few minutes left and we need to just move quite faster now. And I would ask Hadia—or is it Raymond who is doing it? Just want to give a very brief remark on the statements and we hand it to Abdeldjalil.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Thank you. I will briefly say a couple of points and then Raymond also might also say a couple of points. So, we start the statement with the importance of universal acceptance to achieve a multilingual Internet. And then we talk about—first we start with the importance of a diverse multilingual Internet and then the importance of universal acceptance to achieve a multilingual Internet and then the relationship between IDNs market and universal acceptance. And then based on those three items, we put forward some recommendations.

The first recommendation is in relation to the supply side. And this is to trigger the supply side. So we talk about market intervention from governments to trigger the universal acceptance supply. The second bullet talks about the demand side. So we talk about online content and services in local languages. The third bullet is about triggering innovation and creation in areas related to universal acceptance. So we talk about schools, universities and curriculum. And then we start talking about the how, and how we talk about coordination between stakeholders. We talk about SIGs and we talk about local initiatives. Thank you.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much for that very brief remark, and now take it to Abdeldjalil who is going to do a quick read of the statement, and then we'll see if there's any further modification to the draft and then we'll move on from there. Abdeldjalil, you have the floor.

ABDELDJALIL BACHAR BONG: Thank you very much, Seun. We the African ICANN community members participating in the ICANN 75 on Wednesday 21st of September. The topic is universal acceptance [inaudible] accessing the Internet in local languages.

We the African ICANN community members participating in ICANN 75 and attending the joint AFRALO-AfrICANN meeting on September 21 2022 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, have discussed universal acceptance as a means of accessing the Internet in local languages as an important topic for AFRALO.

We acknowledge that ICANN has been at the forefront to ensure universal acceptance. More so, UA is a priority for ICANN organization, and as a strategic goal outlined in the ICANN strategic plan for the fiscal year 2021 to 2025. We recognize the work of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, which was tasked with undertaking activities that effectively promote universal acceptance through its multiple working groups, local initiatives and UA ambassadors.

In this statement, we present an overview of the topic and consequently give suggested recommendations for the community to accelerate the adoption of universal acceptance. The importance of a diverse multilingual Internet. At the global level according to Statista,

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

as of January 22, the share of English language on the Internet by the share of Internet users is less than 26%.

As a result, universal access to online content and digital inclusion requires multilingual Internet that can address people in their own languages. Ecommerce sales are estimated to reach 24.5% of retail sales worldwide in 2025, which is a 10.7% growth since 2019. This is according to insider data.

For businesses thinking of tailored services, product suggestions or advertising, it is important to address people in their own language. For personalized domain names, language is very important. Multilingual Internet with a good user experience is necessary for thriving ecommerce era.

The importance of UA to achieve a multilingual Internet. Technically, in order to achieve UA, Internet applications and systems must recognize, accept, validate, store, process and display all domain names. UA requires all domain names and all email addresses to work in any software application of the end user's choice.

As such, UA is necessary for the online community to take a great leap forward to include people of different languages, cultures and communities, thus creating new opportunities for local, regional and international societies and economies.

Internationalized domain names market and UA. In order to address the issue of UA, it is necessary to take a look at the IDNs market. IDN registries and registrars that attempt to sell multilingual domain names must contend with the fact that operating systems, applications and

services further down the supply chain do not support multilingual domain names.

However, there is the belief that there was insufficient demand from the supply side necessary to trigger the investments required to update applications and services. While this claim may have been true decades ago, today, the system has changed, with the increase in Internet accessibility and affordability, and because nations are increasingly moving towards digital transformation, and more so, as ecommerce strengthens, a multilingual Internet is a necessity. Digital transformation includes systems upgrades, ensuring that people use the software and tools to enable a good online experience.

For this purpose, achieving UA now from both supply and demand perspectives is more possible and achievable. Recommended actions: number one, the need for some kind of market intervention from governments to trigger the UA supply side. As governments move towards digital transformation, achieving UA is in their best interest.

Number two, increase in online content and services in local languages. [inaudible] technical requirements are driven by the needs. Thus, as more online content and services in local languages become available, UA tools and software become necessary triggering the UA demand side.

Three, adopting Internet related curriculum in schools and universities, with the aim of enabling innovation and creation in areas related to UA and not only with the aim of raising UA awareness and knowledge.

Four, coordinating various local stakeholder training and educational activities through local and regional hubs.

Five, addressing UAE through SIGs as an enabler to online inclusion.

And finally, supporting local initiatives toward the celebration of the planned annual global UA Days. Thank you very much.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Right on time, we have the CEO.

GÖRAN MARBY: Could you give me one second?

SEUN OJEDEJI: I'm just recognizing your presence.

GÖRAN MARBY: Which day is it today? It's Wednesday, isn't it?

SEUN OJEDEJI: All right. Okay, so thanks a lot, Abdeldjalil, for the statement. And of course, the link to the statement has also been shared in the chat. We would take comments or suggestions for edits after we hear a brief remark from the CEO, President, Göran Marby. I hope one minute is okay. All right. You have the floor.

GÖRAN MARBY:	Thank you. Thank you very much. Good to see you guys. How are you doing? So I've been now giving the sort of same speech for about six days. And I spoke a lot about what we're doing in Africa, haven't I? And I've been in rooms here and I said the importance of Africa. And we're doing investments in Africa, the importance of universal acceptance. And now I feel like I should have put some makeup on because people are taking photos of me. Thank you. It's Wednesday on an ICANN meeting. Be nice to me.
	So I have my dear friend Eddy over here as well. So, you know all this. Do you have questions for me? Let's have a conversation if you want to. Would that be okay? And I know some of you like to ask questions. And I enjoy that. Would you mind? So you know, we are going to launch what we call the Coalition for Digital Africa, which we talked about, that we started investing in, we're building the IMRS root servers in one country, we're going to do it in two countries, we together with ITU-D, we're doing a capacity building program for about 10 countries and their CCs. Together with ISOC, we are now investing in exchange points in Africa, we're working very hard with the different IDN tables, etc. You know all that. So, open the floor for questions, if you have any. And I'm spending most of the rest of the year in Africa, by the way.
SEUN OJEDEJI:	Any quick question for Göran? There was a question that bringing to this since you want questions. So I'll just ask for Olivier. Olivier was the one that was asking that question. He was wondering why the name of the second hosts of the DNS installation, why it has not been declared. So he needs a feedback on that.

GÖRAN MARBY:
Thank you. Very good question. And the answer is, we're not finished out which country it is going to be. And the reason for that, when we build those root server clusters, we need a lot of capacity. We also make sure that there's no interference in the actual process of what we do because the root server is a very sacred place. And that means that when we do it, we do it together in partnership with governments. So they have legislation and stuff in place that doesn't prevent us to do what we're supposed to do.

So we started the process very early on with Kenya, because we have an office there. So it was easier to start somewhere. And we also are talking to another country, but it's just the that sometimes governments don't think that this is the most important thing in the world. And so we haven't finished off those discussions yet. The sooner we do that, we will tell which country it is. So it's nothing secret, anything. It's also an attitude from ICANN. We talk about things when they're done.

SEUN OJEDEJI:
Thank you, Göran. Sébastien, you have the floor.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET:
Mr. Chair, you might take this opportunity to ask the President and CEO about the question we discussed at the beginning of the meeting. But it may be better that you ask it, not me. Even if I support you and I support

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

SEUN OJEDEJI: Suggestion taken.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: If I may, I was also thinking of that question. But however, I was thinking, how does this relate to ICANN org? And if it does at all. Because it's mainly community. But I encourage that we discuss it for sure. I was also thinking about it and thinking how does it relate really to ICANN org? And maybe Göran could like tell us.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Okay, so there was a concern that was raised before you came, which had to do with hosting ICANN meeting in Africa. For the past four years—the last was Marrakech, right? So since that time, up to now and probably up to 2025, there seems to be no ICANN meeting coming to Africa. And this is actually a concern for the African community. And I mean, from the information we also got, it is not that countries are not expressing interest to post. It's just that perhaps ICANN is just not approving the expression of interest for Africa to host. I mean, I'm just putting it literally. So it's good to know what is your view about this and when should we be expecting ICANN meeting to be hosted in Africa.

ICANN|75
KUALA LUMPUR

GÖRAN MARBY: You do actually ask the question to the right person, because I'm the one who decides ultimately where to go. But we do that within a framework that is set by rules that are set by the community many years ago, which I have to say was the best framework ever. I'm looking at Sébastien right now because he was head of that one.

So we do a rotation. I joined ICANN 2016. And I had three meetings in Africa, two in Marrakech and one in Johannesburg. But then —and one of the things, of course, is that we had this perfect plan, and then COVID came around. And we made this arrangement, we made this promise to go to a country. So, for instance, we're here one year later, we should have been here before.

So we did The Hague meeting virtually. But we moved it a year in real life. So that has created a problem. We're still within the confines of the rules. But we are now fulfilling the promises of two years, we didn't do meetings. So we are behind in that. It would have been looking better if we didn't have this hole for two years. So that is the honest explanations why we are where we are. So when it comes to— so three meetings in six years, that's not bad. But we have all intents to come back to Africa for continuous meetings as well. We've done three meetings in six years in Africa.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Okay, all right. Thank you. Hadia. Your hand is up. 10 seconds.

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Yes. And this was related to the added part of the discussion that we actually had over here. And this is the part that I was talking about that maybe does not relate to Göran, which is the—Oh, slower? Yeah. Okay. I'm sorry.

SEUN OJEDEJI: You have a question?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Yeah, I would just raise the topic that we discussed previously before G0ran stepped in so that he is just aware of it. And it is about the participation of the African community and that it is lower maybe than the participation of other regions, and especially when it comes to the Board. Now, we have only one African member on the board. Thank you.

GÖRAN MARBY: So yes, this is not my thing. It's community. But I do agree with you. It is very important. Diversity is a part of our DNA. And diversity is something not only—but it's also a hard thing, how do you calculate diversity in a way? Gender diversity, country diversity, it's very hard to calculate. But I do agree with you that the [inaudible] communities and the NomCom has a very important job to do to pick the right candidates, but also make the best team because that's what we're talking about.

In my organization, what we do is that we actually measure diversity. And in the CEO report, I don't know if I mentioned to anyone that I have a CEO report that comes out three times a year, really good and

substantial report in that, among other things, we talk about diversity internally. So gender is one important that we measure, we are actually more women than men in the organization. And the executive team is actually gender neutral. If you take me out. Yeah, then otherwise, we're more men than women, but very small.

We also today speak about 55 languages within ICANN Org. We are in I think 34 countries, and 17 states or something in the US. And it's my purpose to make sure that we have people with different backgrounds, because you have different backgrounds.

But I want to say something more generic about Africa. Is that okay? It's so important. So we're doing these projects in Africa now. And believe me, I've worked for the government. I'm fully well aware of what governments sometimes do, helping other countries, going down and say this is the way to do it, because it worked very well in my country.

And in my interactions with communities in Africa and how we do it, I'm so afraid of being seen that ICANN is coming down to solve anything. Well, we want to try to do is to come down and actually be an enabler for solution but it has to come from your region, your country, from you.

We can tell you about the mistakes we did. But not even those mistakes might be applicable for you. Because let's face it, I come from a country with 99.9% connection to all telephones. And I come from a country that today 85% of everybody can afford to have a fiber connection. So it's important that we be engaged [inaudible] and other ones that we are there to help. We're not there to take credit.

But if I simplify, it's the way we call it internally is that the African Internet are for Africans by Africans, which is a really strange thing to say, because you have 52 countries and a very large region, and I tried to tell my American friends, you can take the US and just plant it somewhere in Africa and US will disappear.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you very much for those remarks. Of course, this will probably be an ongoing discussion, which we'll still be getting back to—

GÖRAN MARBY: When you've solved it, let me know.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Okay. All right. Thank you very much. And our time is up. And we got some suggestion for something that will—probably a bullet point we probably had on the statement with regards to technical side. If there is any further comments on the statement, it is still open. Normally, we open it for a couple of weeks before we actually finalize, so please send your comments to the mailing list and we'll be happy to incorporate. On behalf of myself, and of course, the leadership, we thank you for attending this session and I look forward to joining you and engage with you online. Thank you.

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