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Ten Years Out…Celebrating Accomplishments and Preparing for New Challenges

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(As prepared)

Introduction

I am very pleased to join all of you during ICANN's 33rd meeting at this auspicious time of hope. I would like to thank our host, the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, as well as the ICANN staff for their efforts to organize the meeting. After five years of working on this portfolio at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), I appreciate this opportunity to engage with all of you one last time – at least in my current capacity.

Given this is ICANN's ten year anniversary, I thought it fitting to briefly step back and reflect on ICANN's progress, as well as offer my thoughts on some of the many challenges we will collectively face as ICANN moves forward.

Celebrating Accomplishments

When NTIA issued the Green Paper and White Paper so many years ago, the world and the Internet were a very different place. It is a testament to the ICANN community that you have all worked so hard to evolve the "DNS Project" as it was then called, which truly has been an experiment in private sector leadership and bottom-up policy development. The fact that my own experience with ICANN represents half its entire lifespan underscores how relatively young this institution is given the enormously important work it is called upon to perform.

While there have been the inevitable growing pains, there has also been great progress in building ICANN as an institution. That progress should be acknowledged. A few highlights over the last ten years from my perspective include:

- Refining ICANN's mission and restructuring its supporting organizations and advisory committees to meet it core technical purpose;

- Securing an agreement with the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) to facilitate the development of global addressing policy;

- Developing accountability framework agreements with many country code top level domain operators and establishing the Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO);

- Enhancing participation in ICANN processes by the global community through improved outreach, regional liaisons, and multilingual communications.

Preparing for New Challenges

While these and other achievements are significant, the experiment that ICANN represents has in its immediate future a series of very daunting tasks. I say this in the context of ICANN's initiative to *Improve Institutional Confidence.*

I have long thought that a stable and independent ICANN could only emerge and succeed if ICANN enjoys the confidence of the community it serves. Whether ICANN enjoys such confidence has yet to be proven. Looking forward, the documents prepared by the President's Strategy Committee have raised important issues for the community to consider. Many of the recent submissions suggest changes that reflect key elements of basic good governance. I think it is critical for ICANN to adopt and implement these elements to earn the confidence of the community as the Joint Project Agreement potentially expires. What replaces it needs to include:

- performance metrics;

- results-based budgeting processes;

- fact-based policy development;

- improved cross-community deliberations; and

- more responsive consultation procedures that provide detailed explanations of the basis for decisions, including why certain contributions have not been accepted.

As important as this confidence-building initiative is, it is only one of several challenges facing the ICANN community today. In your meetings this week, you have been considering detailed plans that, once implemented, will represent a significant change to the domain name space. This will not only increase the number of domain names, but also likely increase the complexity of coordinating the domain name and addressing system (DNS).

To make the Internet truly global, the incorporation of non-Latin scripts in the DNS is clearly important. While considerable work has already been accomplished, such as the Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) Guidelines and the introduction of IDNs at the second level within many existing top level domain names (TLDs), implementation of IDNs at the top level is the obvious next step. I am encouraged by the efforts currently underway to develop procedures to facilitate the introduction of IDN ccTLDs. I believe that the cross-constituency policy approach that has characterized this particular project should be enhanced and serve as a model for future work in ICANN.

In addition to IDNs, there are issues associated with the introduction of new generic top level domain names (gTLDs), in both ASCII and non-Latin scripts which are challenging and

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complex. ICANN's publication last week of a series of very detailed documents including a draft applicant guidebook provides useful information to inform this debate. While I am still digesting the extensive material released, an initial review of the applicant guidebook reveals several issues that I believe need careful and thoughtful consideration and resolution prior to moving forward. For example:

- The impact of potential changes to the registrar/registry marketplace to allow for vertical integration;

- Expanding the marketplace before having effective and meaningful tools to protect consumers and brand owners;

- Demonstrating ICANN has sufficient capacity to enforce contract compliance with an as yet unknown number of new contracts;

- The fee structure, the possible use of auctions, and with the disposition of excess revenues given ICANN's status as a non-profit; and,

- Appropriate mechanisms to address dispute resolution including the delicate issues of morality and public order.

Conclusion

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention to the current NTIA Notice of Inquiry (NOI) on Domain Name and Addressing System Security Extensions (DNSSEC). As you are well aware, the development and discussion of DNSSEC has been underway for at least a decade. However, full DNSSEC deployment is no simple task and requires action by a broad range of actors in the DNS hierarchy. Currently, DNSSEC deployment is not widespread and some point to the authoritative root zone as the lynch-pin. In light of this, NTIA needs your help in exploring the implementation of DNSSEC. We invite and encourage all of you to share your perspectives on this important issue through the NOI process.

The past ten years have seen tremendous changes in Internet applications, capacity and development. With these changes ICANN's narrow role as the technical coordinator for the Internet's unique identifier system has remained unchanged. However, the processes involved in performing this role have and will continue to evolve. As you are aware the agreements between ICANN and NTIA are expiring next year. In the coming months we will off course seek your input on appropriate next steps. It is unclear what the next decade holds for the Internet DNS, but a constant will be the need for the community served by ICANN to have confidence in the decisions made and for the community itself to be pro-active in contributing to the evolution and next phase of ICANN. You all have important roles to play.

I want to thank all of you for your attention this morning, and to ICANN for facilitating our interaction today. I wish you, actually I wish us all, the best for the future as we work together on this unique DNS Project.