

Greeting Mr. Chair, Distinguished Board and participants,

also a great thank you to the local hosts and organizers of this meetings. It has gone all well.

My name is Sophia Bekele and I represent DotConnectAfrica, an organization that is applying for the .africa gTLD in the next round of application, also we have been championing the .africa TLD all over Africa.

Most of you here have recognized our activities through our regular press releases and distributions on facebook and twitter. (Not to advertise here of course) **but those who want to know us**, can find us there.

While I stand here in front of you, ladies & gentleman to express like most, not to delay the application process, **(also being careful not to ask for an expectation for Africa)**, I want to say why the Africa continent needs it most!

We have championed .africa for Africa anchored on **3 key principles**.

- 1- To brand the Continent's product and services so people will know what Africa does and the positives that Africa has to offer. While Africa's image has suffered thru war, famine and governance issues, there is also another image that the world does not know about Africa, and that can be told through its people when they engage in promoting their products & services for trade and investment in the new gTLD. This is also quite in line with the current US administration's policy on "focus on Africa", to assist in increasing trade and investment. While, we all acknowledge ICANN is an international organization, it is also based in the US. **Therefore, the dotafrica TLD fulfills this US agenda and support for Africa's speedy entry in the global village.**
- 2- DotConnectAfrica has created "**generation.africa**", a theme, to empower the youth to adapt to the powers of the internet and its use, thus enjoying a great following thus far. ITU, a good-will partner to ICANN, and also its secretary general, Dr. Hamadoun Toure, an African as well; under his administration has championed Broadband for Africa in 2007, and since, the penetration rate has been amazing supported by African leadership. We want the same from ICANN for our generation.africa, a potential of 900billion people.
- 3- A shift in industry from US market of .com and .org to Africa empowered by the dotafrica registry to Africa, which is to be housed locally in the continent. This will mean development of new industry and market for Africa empowering African jobs and wealth creation. So that Africa does not have come to ICANN for financial support, like the community gTLDs. Dotafrica registry can instead fulfill that need, and this DCA has announced at the Brussels meeting.

So these are very powerful and compelling reasons for Africa to need this gTLD. In fact, this is our economic study for ICANN that can be used as input, we shall need no more. So ICANN should continue with its commitment with new gTLDs.

Finally, DCA has promised generation.africa to take them to this promised land, **but Africa cannot get there, without ICANN---- first taking, ALL OF US to that promised land**. Africa has already missed the boat in the last many rounds, but have seen the successes of .eu and then .asia. and now it is time for .africa. Thank you for listening!