January 4, 2012

TO: Dr. Steve Crocker, Chair, ICANN Board

Mr. Rod Beckstrom, CEO/President, ICANN

The Business Constituency [BC] is one the constituencies of the Generic Names Supporting Organization. The BC has been actively engaged in ICANN, with many of our members involved at ICANN’s inception, working within ICANN’s multi stakeholder processes and externally, to support its institutional capacity and acceptance.

The BC understands the critical importance of a responsible, accountable expansion of new top-level domains, especially non ASCII scripts and community serving TLDs. Within ICANN’s multistakeholder processes, the BC reiterated numerous times that the gTLD expansion must include strong safeguards to limit harm to users that may occur from user confusion and trademark challenges, and limit the need for defensive registrations.

This letter calls to the Board’s and senior staff attention the need for improvements in specific areas related to these continuing concerns which should be addressed before strings are added to the root. We further note that the Communications Plan needs significant enhancement. Making a few key improvements to the mechanisms that limit costs and risks to existing registrants and trademark holders will significantly improve the new gTLD program and contribute to its possible success, while limiting some of the risks to ICANN’s sustainability and support from business users. Key issues like accurate and accessible WHOIS, limiting the need for defensive registrations; and limiting consumer confusion and potential for fraud and abuse in new gTLDs are key priorities for global business.

The Business Constituency seeks to support ICANN and its core mission. Our broad goals as a Constituency include broadening and deepening the involvement of business users in ICANN. We look forward to continuing our active engagement with ICANN at all levels to support the multistakeholder nature, with a responsible approach to policy development and implementation.

The proposed improvements in the new gTLD program, and enhancements to the Communications Plan are achievable within the necessary time frames before new gTLDs are entered into the root. They will also address many of the valid concerns that are still arising from many business users.

The BC stands ready to continue its collaboration and work with the ICANN staff and other stakeholders toward making key improvements to the new gTLD Guidebook, before gTLDs go live in the root.

Marilyn Cade, Chair, Business Constituency

CC: ICANN Board

BC Membership