

Comments of DotConnectAfrica to the draft Strategic Plan of ICANN of FY16 - FY20

ICANN is a global and unique organization that is tasked with managing and coordinates the Internet's global domain name system. The DNS is a global resource that must be managed in the most intricate manner to ensure that the global public is able to continuously enjoy and utilize the internet in a free, secure, resilient and stable manner.

Over the years ICANN has grown and its core mandate though unchanged must also evolve and strategize in a way shall preserve the stability of the root as well as expand to suit the globalization concept.

Focus areas for ICANN's strategic positioning

1. Evolve and further **internationalize and regionalize** ICANN's implementation of the **multistakeholder approach**.

It's true that by the time ICANN's Five-Year Strategic Plan is complete, it is estimated that 63 percent of the world's population will be online (five billion users), many of who won't use Latin keyboards. This growth and development brings more users, expectations and dependency – from a more international and diverse community of stakeholders.

This increasing user population requires that ICANN will be forced to continue to evolve its multistakeholder processes and structures both face to face and online. This will enable ICANN to better serve the broadened, multilingual audiences, in this engagement ICANN must find new forms of participatory mechanisms that will encourage a thriving consensus-based decision making; and internationalized, institutional frameworks to support such enhanced functions.

The multistakeholder model has been forwarded and practiced by ICANN as a traditional mechanism of formulating solutions that involve the wider scope however this model must also be revolutionized to enable faster, flawless mechanism that will generate workable tangible solutions that are not only good on ink but also on implementation.

Points to consider:

- Create proper awareness for ICANN to be understood by all users
- Involve more young people in the decision making regimes to mentor them into the internet governance circle.
- Create proper institutional human resource mechanism to identify individuals with true passion for the advancement of the internet development especially from the developing regions of the world.
- Create proper internal and oversight mechanisms to enable ICANN's activities receive critical audit at all times.
- Strengthen the Supporting organization and advisory committees
- Develop structures that give a workable review of the triple ICANN annual meetings so that ICANN can actually benefit from the feedback and tighten up the areas that are still weak.

- Continuously analyze the policy development processes to ensure they meet the challenges of the ever changing internet platform.

2. Developing a world-class public responsibility framework

ICANN's unique positioning as the DNS manager also puts it in global focus as an organization that must continually strive to ensure that its internal structures, accountability mechanisms are up to speed and relevant.

ICANN's must ensure that its own ecosystem is enriched with transparent mechanisms so that it can be trusted and accountable. It is true that ICANN in the recent days has been faced with numerous calls for its own internal accountability.

ICANN's leaders have outlined the need to be a transparent organization that is open and not a fortress and these promises can be followed with proper and structured well documented mechanisms, ICANN's policy development processes can include these strategies as part of an evolving practice.

Suggestions:

- Continuous and Progressive analysis into ICANN's processes and decision making mechanisms so that they are consistent with acceptable standards.
- Review the staffing and board composition to ensure that the ICAN Board is not affected by conflict of interest issues that would compromise the decisions made.
- Create ways to audit and ensure that public comments have been factored into actual policy documents.

3. Supporting a healthy unique identifier ecosystem.

ICANN's major role is in ensuring that the root is , secure and stable performance of DNS functions, this responsibility must be continuously protected.

There can only be one single functional DNS root in the world, if this is not protected it will make disintegration of the internet a possible but unfortunate reality, ICANN should therefore protect its own role by ensuring that its activities and decision making mechanisms are beyond public questions and doubt.

Suggestions: Ensure that there is a structured separation of roles, the technical, and administrative and the multistakeholder arms must each have distinct yet complimentary roles.