

Country Code Names Supporting Organization

Comments on the Interim Report of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group

30 January 2011

The ccNSO Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Interim Report of the Geographic Regions Review Working Group (the Working Group).

The ccNSO Council applauds the thorough and exhaustive efforts the Working Group has made to identify, catalogue and analyse the origins of the concept of “geographic regions” within the ICANN environment, and the many uses of this concept over the last decade.

This analysis has appropriately highlighted:

- the narrow range of purposes for which ICANN intended to use geographic regions (most notably, Board representation and diversity);
- how the use of regions has grown to permeate the work of every Supporting Organisation, Advisory Committee and Working Group; and
- the lack of a coherent, consistent, regularly-reviewed strategy to guide this expansive use of the concept of geographic regions.

The ccNSO Council believes that the Working Group’s interim report establishes a clear baseline understanding of how and why ICANN has used geographic regions since 2000. This will aid greatly in developing a strategy for future use. However, the ccNSO Council also believes that, in developing its conclusions and Final Report, the Working Group should not feel beholden to the legacy intentions or purposes that drove ICANN to adopt geographic regions. The Council believes the Working Group’s conclusions should not focus on whether the adoption of five regions was “reasonable and defensible” in 2000, but rather upon the current needs of ICANN, its SO’s and AC’s and all stakeholders.

Similarly, while adherence to “international norms” or “best practices” is an admirable goal, there appears to be little consensus between inter-governmental initiatives regarding regions, and ICANN should aim to adopt mechanisms that best suit the organisation and those that participate in it.

The ccNSO Council would also like to restate an issue raised in the 2007 Final Report of the ccNSO Regions Working Group. That is, ICANN’s arrangements for the allocation of countries and distinct economies to regions must recognise the sovereignty and right to self-determination of states. ICANN cannot issue prescriptive guidelines or become involved in interrelationships between countries and their outlying territories. ICANN should retain a degree of flexibility and recognise both the established preferences of sovereign states and the preferences of their territories, if supported by the sovereign.

Above all, the ccNSO Council supports the development of structures and policies relating to ICANN's use of geographic regions that are consistent, reviewed regularly, and facilitate balanced participation and representation from all countries, irrespective of location or economic status.

Chris Disspain

Chair – ccNSO Council