

## Meeting with Africa Engagement office VP during ICANN64 (sent 19 March)

Hi all

This email serves as a report from a 45-minute meeting that was held with ICANN VP of Stakeholder Engagement for Africa, Pierre Dandjinou during ICANN64 on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2019.

Participants who attended this meeting were Thato Mfikwe (South Africa) and Joan Katambi (Uganda), who are both NCUC members.

The meeting started with introductions by everyone and before and question and answer portion, I also explained the evolution of the LACNIC region in order to clearly articulate areas of improvement in ICANN and community regional efforts in contributing more effectively in delivery of ICANN remit and community activities.

### **1. Improving regional participation within ICANN and the region**

Pierre mentioned that it was important for members to get involved in community activities within ICANN and anyone interested in participating must be able to submit a 1-page document on how they have impacted or cultivated the ICANN community at regional and national level and how they would like to further contribute.

Proposed way forward for improved participation

- There is a need for an ICANN/AFRICA environment. During ICANN65, there will be a slot to discuss the Africa strategy, also noting that previously Africa never had an engagement platform within ICANN.
- Fadi, the previous CEO of ICANN, strongly felt that Africa is not well represented and treated within ICANN, for instance less than 1% of gTLDs were allocated to the region out of 100 applications and most of the allocated were in South Africa. The main problem in this regard is that Africa did not know about the gTLD program, it is therefore paramount that Africa outlines their expectations from ICANN.
- The current Africa strategy plan has 2 proposed pillars:
  - o Participation in ICANN's work
  - o Capacity building in the Domain Name industry, a proposed campaign is "DNSSEC roadshows" as few ccTLD managers were assisted to sign the zone file thus far.
- DNS forums originated in Africa, with the first one taking place in Durban, South Africa and now these forums span across different regions. The advantage of these forums is that they create a platform for registrars and registries in Africa to collaborate and the next regional DNS forum will be in Botswana.
- Law enforcement agency campaigns. These campaigns involve mitigation of cyber crime through capacity building of law enforcement agencies and for purposes of this, ICANN Africa has empowered 12 registrars within the region.

Lastly, to increase the number of fellowships for F2F meetings, SO's & AC's are always supported to attend and the mechanism has been developed within AC/SO's to receive fellowships. Members must take leadership positions, actively participate and contribute based on the focus of different AC's and SO's.

30% of ICANN F2F meeting attendees come to ICANN through fellowships and the rest of the participants come by themselves or receive support elsewhere. In order to improve regional participation outside ICANN's support, there needs to be awareness campaigns targeting regulators to support participation of local or regional community members. Pierre also recognised that the current capacity of the Africa engagement office is limited and he mentioned that currently, plans are under way to double capacity to 6, as this will help in ensuring ICANN is able to service the entire region to a certain extent.

## 2. LACNIC Region background

According to Pierre, LANCIC has its own hub, whereas Africa's hub is in Istanbul with its engagement centre in Kenya. Another advantage the LACNIC region has, is that they also have internet houses with RIRs, RALOS and so on, making it simple for them to collaborate and work together to effectively contribute in activities of ICANN, while influencing policy direction and position, especially at community level. LACNIC also participates within working groups which offer fellowship opportunities.

## 3. Other opportunities for development in Africa

Fundraising at regional and national level

Africa only has the Africa Internet Summit, which takes place once a year, which is not sufficient, so then, the African community needs to start organising itself. Pierre pointed out a need to tap into local capacity like mobile operators, stakeholders and entities benefitting from the domain name space, so engagement with them is important to supporting local and regional initiatives. Also pointed out that the GNSO brings in a lot of money in ICANN as it encompasses, registries, registrars, the Commercial Stakeholder Group and RIR's for instance.

Capacity building program

ICANN Africa participates in regional events and have ICANN day and specific workshops for registries and registrars, they have also initiated a youth community, NextGen fellowships and law enforcement workshops. The question to be answered when it comes to such initiatives is, "How do we grow them within Africa?"

AFRISIG

In response to continued and possible increased support for the African School on Internet Governance, Pierre mentioned that although they have budget limitations, they will continue to support AFRSIG financially and sending resource people without making promise of increased support.

National and Global IGF

They do support, sponsor and participate at regional and sub-regional IGFs (5 years ago to date), the problem with national IGFs is that Africa with 54 countries will mean ICANN committing funds and people for every request for support which is not viable based on current and experienced budget challenges within ICANN and the region.

Community Support and regional participation

The Africa engagement office currently works with AFRALO when opportunity permits. *Personally, I think we need to learn something from AFRALO in term on how they self-structure, organise and co-ordinate themselves.*

During ICANN meetings, 15-20 years ago, you would find only 2 Africans out of 500 participants, the number grew steadily from to 10 – 15 Africans overtime and today we have 40 – 50 regional participants in ICANN meetings. This is one of the reasons why quality participation has to be always promoted within the region, like working groups, leadership roles and participation in ICANN public forums. The good thing about ICANN, is that it creates opportunity for networking. ICANN localisation with multiple stakeholders is needed to prepare for participation of members, and the regional community need to start initiating their own Readout sessions after every ICANN meeting.

**My recommendation** (Initially, setup an online meeting to discuss this report and obtain other updates and comments. We cannot rely solely on ICANN to resolve regional challenges, we need to be proactive in creating an enabling environment and coming up with ideas and projects to see local ideals come to fruition)

We need to organise ourselves to ensure that we are well represented, treated and our voices are heard within ICANN as outlined in the report. Below are some of the proposed action steps we can consider:

- a. Development of a concept document on how the African strategy can be improved or best executed before ICANN65, to be submitted of the ICANN African engagement office and then presented and discussed at the meeting.
- b. Establishment of a steering committee encompassing community members and/or representatives from NCUC in the meantime and then other ACs and SOs in the medium term, to:
  - i. initiate establishment of WGs (policy development, community engagements, capacity building, fundraising and etc, guided by agreed priorities)
  - ii. develop an action plan and procedural documents defining terms and parameters of participation and engagement amongst other activities.

Thato Mfikwe.

### **Follow up message sent (26/03/2019) to members of NCUC-Africa mailing list**

Hi members,

Thanks for the feedback on the report and per your comments, I would propose that we move forward with the following action/baby steps until ICANN65 before we start running:

Setup an online 1-hour meeting (**3<sup>rd</sup> of 4<sup>th</sup> week of April**) with NCUC Africa members to:

- a. get their further discussion and obtain additional input, comments and suggestions on how to beef up this regional strategy intervention (@Ines, can you please help with setting up this meeting)
- b. obtain volunteers who can help in developing a concept document to be forwarded to the Regional GSE office for feedback by mid May 2019, before presentation and discussion at ICANN65
- c. identify light small initiatives or campaigns we can start working on like (raising awareness in higher education institutions, participation in national IGF's to introduce ICANN and our community work in our regions or countries for instance)

All other activities like establishment of action plans and various working groups can be undertaken after ICANN65, after a presentation has been made. A meeting every month or every 2 months would also help in keeping everyone abreast with development, thanks.

### **Conclusion**

It was an honour and a pleasure to talk to you during ICANN64, I am also looking forward to your comments on the above report and proposed action steps taken and proposed so that I can help the community get moving and active. Thus far the above report has received 12 comments and one share in a public digests from NCUC Africa mailing list. I think this would present a healthy discussion within the Africa strategy round table.

I pray this email finds you well, thanks.

Thato Mfikwe.