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Former Vice President Al Gore and Internet “Father” Vint Cerf Praise the ICANN Model

Comments Precede Hill Hearings on Ties to U.S. Government

Washington, D.C. ... June 3, 2009.... Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore has joined a leading Internet founder in acknowledging the success of the multi-stakeholder, bottom up governance of the Internet’s name and address system that the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) embodies.

“Twelve Years ago as Vice President, I led an interagency group charged with coordinating the U.S. government’s electronic commerce strategy. The formation of ICANN was very much a part of that strategy,” Gore said.

The former Vice President’s comments come on the eve of Congressional hearings on ICANN’s relationship with the U.S. government and on the non-profit corporation’s proposed expansion of top-level domains.

“The Internet’s unique nature requires a unique multi-stakeholder private entity to coordinate the global Internet addressing system without being controlled by any one government or special interest. What we have all those years later is an organization that works,” said Gore. “It has security as its core mission, is responsive to all global stakeholders and is independent and democratic. We should make permanent those foundations for success.”

Gore's praise parallels the comments of Vint Cerf, a man considered by many to be the one of the fathers of the Internet. Cerf said the past decade has shown that the ICANN model clearly works.

"The ICANN of today is larger, more capable, more international, and better positioned to fulfill its mandate. Its major objective is to maintain one global interoperable Internet," said Cerf. "It is my belief that ICANN has benefited from the stability that the MOU/JPA relationship has provided, but that the time has now come to conclude it," said Cerf.

Cerf's comments are contained in written testimony, which ICANN will ask the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology and the Internet to accept for the record. The Congressional panel is holding hearings on June 4, 2009, to examine ICANN's proposed expansion of generic top-level domains and on the expiration (on September 30, 2009) of the Joint Project Agreement (JPA), between the U.S. Commerce Department and ICANN. The agreement was originally intended to pave the way to the private sector taking over the coordination of the Internet addressing system.

"I am confident that conclusion of the JPA is not only possible but that it is now also necessary," said Cerf. "With all this change and challenge, it is a time for certainty, not the forestalling of a decision about whether this model is the right one for another one, two or three years."

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About ICANN:

To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. **For more information please visit: www.icann.org.**