



One World. One Internet. Everyone Connected. ♦ Ulimwengu mmoja, wavuti mmoja, kila mmoja aunganishwe ♦ Un monde. Un Internet. Tous connectés. ♦
،قدحاو قلود، تنرتنالا ولع قدحاو، الصنتم عيمجالا، Hal wadan,hal intarnet,meel kasta ku xariira ♦ Ensi emu, omukutu gumu, buli omu kwali

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ICANN CEO Urges East African Leaders to Make the Affordable Internet Access Available to All Their Citizens

Nairobi, Kenya... March 8, 2010... The Chief Executive Officer of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has urged African countries to expand the reach and affordability of the Internet in their respective countries to help improve the economic future of their citizens.

Rod Beckstrom opened ICANN's 37th International Meeting here by calling on African leaders, including those scheduled to attend a Tuesday (March 9) meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) at Nairobi's Kenyatta International Conference Center, where the ICANN conference is also being hosted.

"I would like to throw down the gauntlet to invite IGAD heads to join us here tomorrow and to use the Internet to help all their people," said Beckstrom. "It's a small steps for them and yet it would be a huge leap forward for the future of Africa."

IGAD is made up of six countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. It was created in 1986 to combat the devastating effects of a severe East African drought. But, Beckstrom said, "a new drought has emerged in much of the same region, an Internet access drought, compared to other parts of the world."

Beckstrom pointed to Kenya as a prime example of an African state that has embraced the emerging online world, with its growing fibre optic system and its potential for expansion across the continent.

“Africa’s young generation is already embracing the Internet, any way it can, And they want more” said Beckstrom. “77 percent of Kenyans want to spend more time online; 63 percent want more and better access to the Internet.”

He said it was time for other African nations to end telecommunications monopolies which he said “increase the price of Internet services and trap the poor in a technological drought.”

Almost one billion people, 15 percent of the world’s population, live on the African continent, yet they make up less than 7 percent of all Internet users.

“We would like to encourage, and help where we can, African leaders to make the Internet more accessible and more affordable and in doing so encourage economic growth in a world where online commerce is increasingly important,” said Beckstrom.

The ICANN CEO asked African leaders to join ICANN’s Governmental Advisory Committee so it can help bring them to an Internet that he said could be the “flowing river of Africa’s future.” He asked that the leaders appoint representatives to the committee by June 20, when ICANN’s next international meeting is scheduled to begin in Brussels, Belgium.

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All interested journalists are encouraged to attend the ICANN meeting in Nairobi at the Kenyatta International Conference Center (KICC), March 8-12. All meetings are open to the public. Registration is free and reporters will have access the Internet via ICANN’s free Wifi system. Media kits will be available at the “Media Desk” near the main registration area and/or information desk within the KICC.

To review a video recording of Rod Beckstrom’s opening speech go here: <http://www.icann.org>.

To review an audio recording of today’s opening news conference of the Nairobi meeting go here: <http://www.icann.org/press>.

To review the schedule of the Nairobi meeting go here: <http://nbo.icann.org/full-sched>.

Transcripts and Board reports may be viewed here: [http://nbo.icann.org/nbo/documents?tid\[\]=172&tid\[\]=354](http://nbo.icann.org/nbo/documents?tid[]=172&tid[]=354)

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.