Mr Maarten Botterman  
Chair of the Board of Directors of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)  
Meerum Terwogtlaan 269, 3056 PP  
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Ref: CI/DIT/20/11

28 February 2020

Dear Mr Botterman,

I have taken note your submission of questions on 13 February 2020 to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society (ISOC), regarding the proposed sale of the Public Interest Registry (PIR).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which is a member of ICANN’s Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and a registrant of .org, supports a multi-stakeholder and open Internet ecosystem. UNESCO’s position is based upon the Internet Universality principles of human Rights, Openness, Accessibility and Multi-stakeholder governance (R.O.A.M principles), unanimously endorsed by Member States at the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2015.

Freedom of Expression online has benefited from the growth of online platforms coordinated mainly by civil society, and non-governmental organizations, as well as media and journalism non-profit initiatives, which use .org domains. These platforms, projects and initiatives play a central role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and a significant number of them could find difficulties in keeping their online presence if their costs are raised or if the new governance structure of .org domains won’t prioritize taking decisions in accordance to the R.O.A.M principles.

While commercial interests have a valuable place online, UNESCO believes, however, that the .org domain could remain a not-for-profit space dedicated to the non-commercial community of the global Internet, while sustaining through PIR revenue the key work of the internet community in support of an open Internet.

Yours sincerely,

Moez Chakchouk