



Africa's map in the digital inclusion!

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18th January 2011

To: Ms. Fiona M. Alexander  
Associate Administrator  
Office of International Affairs  
National Information Telecommunications and Administration  
US Department of Commerce  
Washington DC, USA

cc: Peter Dengate-Thrush,  
Chairman  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN)

Rod Beckstrom,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN)

Dear Ms. Alexander:

**Re: Open Letter for NITA - A preliminary case for an urgent need for .africa gTLD**

Please find below is the transcript of the DotConnectAfrica (DCA) oral statement presented to the ICANN's public forum, recently held in Cartagena, Colombia. The case for branding Africa, and the resulting consumer benefits and jobs creation is highlighted. In addition, DCA wants to appraise NTIA of our view that the current process developed by ICANN for new gTLDs is fair and transparent and that due consideration has been given for the protection of trademark interests. We believe further delay of the new gTLD process will directly /or indirectly have a damaging effect on the benefits from Internet-based business and economic activities in the continent and the communities involved.

I hope that NTIA will take DCA's views into account in its further interactions with ICANN regarding the progress and final rules for the new gTLD program. I would be happy to discuss this matter with you further at your convenience.

Sincerely,  
*Sbekele*

Ms. Sophia Bekele, B.S., M.B.A., C.I.S.A, C.C.S, CGEIT  
Executive Director (.Africa)  
Ex. gTLD Policy Advisor to ICANN (2005-07)  
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**Greeting Mr. Chair, Distinguished Board and Participants. A great thank you, also to the local hosts and organizers of this meeting. It has gone all well.**

My name is Sophia Bekele and I represent DotConnectAfrica (DCA), an organization that is applying for the .africa gTLD in the next round of application, also we have been championing the .africa TLD all over Africa.

Most of you here have recognized our activities through our regular press releases and distributions on facebook and twitter. (Not to advertise here of course) but those who want to know us, can find us there.

While I stand here in front of you, ladies & gentleman to express like most, not to delay the application process, (also being careful not to ask for an exception for Africa), I want to say why the Africa continent needs it most!

DCA has championed .africa for Africa anchored on 3 key principles.

- 1- **To brand the Continent's product and services** so people will know what Africa does and the positives that Africa has to offer. While Africa's image has suffered thru war, famine and governance issues, there is also another image that the world does not know about Africa, and that can be told through its people when they engage in promoting their products & services for trade and investment in the new gTLD. This is also quite in line with the current US administration's policy on "focus on Africa", to assist in increasing trade and investment. While, we all acknowledge ICANN is an international organization, it is also based in the US. Therefore, the dotafrica TLD fulfills this US agenda and support for Africa's speedy entry in the global village.
- 2- **DotConnectAfrica has created "generation.africa", a theme**, to empower the youth to adapt to the powers of the internet and its use, thus enjoying a great following thus far. ITU, a good-will partner to ICANN, and also its secretary general, Dr. Hamadoun Toure, an African as well; under his administration has championed Broadband for Africa in 2007, and since, the penetration rate has been amazing supported by African leadership. We want the same from ICANN for our generation.africa, a potential of 900million people.
- 3- **A shift in industry from US market of .com and .org to Africa empowered by the dotafrica registry to Africa**, which is to be housed locally in the continent. This will mean development of new industry and market for Africa empowering African jobs and wealth creation. So that Africa does not have to come to ICANN for financial support, like the community gtlds. Dotafrica registry can instead fulfill that need, and this DCA has announced at the Brussels meeting.

So these are very powerful and compelling reasons for Africa to need this gtld. In fact, this is our economic study for ICANN that can be used as input, we shall need no more. So ICANN should continue with its commitment with new gtlds, as soon as possible.

Finally, DCA has promised generation.africa to take them to this Promised Land, but Africa cannot get there, without ICANN first taking ALL OF US to that Promised Land. Africa has already missed the boat in the last many rounds; but have seen the successes of .eu and then .asia, and now it is time for .africa

**Associated press release:**

<http://www.prlog.org/11150099-dotconnectafrica-statement-to-icann-public-forum-cartegena-colombia.html>

**About DotConnectAfrica:** DotConnectAfrica (DCA) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization incorporated in Mauritius Africa, with Reg ID. CT8710DCA90, and will sponsor, establish and operate a TLD registry with global recognition and regional significance dedicated to the needs of the Pan-African and African community inspired to come to fruition to coordinate the implementation of the .Africa initiative. At the same time, to address the lack of adequate internet policy in Africa and and acknowledgment of the impact of the policy in widening the gaps of the digital divide. DCA seeks to assist in the strategic coordination of government internet policies, establish policy priorities, offer new policy choices, and ensure that the implications of internet policy options are fully considered. DCA profile: <http://biz.prlog.org/dotconnectafrica/>