



20 March 2009

Sha Zukang
Under-Secretary General
United Nations
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Dear Under Secretary General Sha,

Thank you for your letter of 23 December 2008, providing ICANN with the opportunity to provide recommendations on how the process towards enhanced cooperation should be pursued.

As reflected in our submission to you of 6 August 2008, ICANN is undertaking several initiatives in relation to enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet. These initiatives have all evolved through the unique cross-constituency way in which ICANN approaches policy development. Such key projects as the introduction of Internationalized Domain Name country code Top Level Domains (IDN ccTLDs, using scripts other than Latin) and the introduction of new generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs), are good examples of this cooperative/consultative approach. It is of course not quick, but we believe this policy development process, followed by equally consultative work on detailed implementation plans, has shown that cooperation among the various members of the ICANN community is key in driving the work forward and meeting the needs and expectations of the global Internet community.

In addition to what ICANN is doing within its mandate, it has also undertaken some initiatives that involve a number of international, regional and academic organizations with which ICANN has entered into Memoranda of Understanding and various other partnership agreements.

With regard to the question on how the process towards enhanced cooperation should be pursued in the future, we believe that the continued evolution of current mechanisms is crucial. The continued collaboration and cooperation among respective entities and organizations on issues within their own mandates serves to encourage effective multi-stakeholder solutions to topics affecting the Internet. It is vitally important to encourage open consultation, and the evolution of new methodologies, while avoiding futile competition among agencies established to perform other tasks.

Some areas where we have seen encouraging developments recently include:

1) Internet Governance. The Internet Governance Forum (IGF), an output of the WSIS process, has in three years already provided a platform for discussion on a wide range of Internet related issues, reinforcing existing, and providing new cooperation among organizations. With open participation in the IGF, all stakeholders interested in attending and engaging have the opportunity to do so. Hence, areas of cooperation can evolve based on the needs and interests of the respective issues and areas of expertise. We think it particularly encouraging to see the way in which national and regional versions of the IGF have developed. It is important for all stakeholders to continue to engage in the various Internet Governance fora, and to participate actively in each other's processes. At ICANN we have been welcoming new participants to our processes representing different stakeholders, particularly governments and civil society, who have been involved in the IGF and started to get involved in ICANN as well. Likewise, members of the ICANN family, especially the technical and the At-Large communities, have become engaged in the IGF process. Partnerships and cooperation among respective organizations have also arisen, such as for example, with UNESCO on awareness regarding the IDN ccTLD process or Fast Track. The IGF has allowed for the creation of "bridges" across organizations and foras despite the dissimilarity in their roles they share the same vision of openness and inclusiveness.



2) The evolution of domain names is another example of the ongoing process of cooperation among respective stakeholders to reach a common perspective. Whether in relation to new Top Level Domains (TLDs) or the introduction of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), all stakeholders, including those represented in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) ICANN's Country Code Names Supporting Organization (ccNSO), or the Generic Names Supporting Organization (GNSO) have cooperated to address wide range of issues relevant to the evolution of domain names. On the topic of Internationalized Domain names in the Arabic script, an example of current work underway is a voluntary effort by members of the Arabic script community who have come together to develop some rules and guidelines in the use of the Arabic script in Internet domain names. The Arabic Script IDN Working Group (ASIWG) is an informal, open-participatory group of experts who come from governments, inter-governmental organizations, ccTLD managers, private sector, academia, and the technical community, and act in their individual capacity to lead in some work that serves the need of millions of users who use the Internet in their native languages that are Arabic-script based. The group has been actively engaged in ICANN and presented on its progress in a couple of ICANN meetings. ICANN staff also takes part in ASIWG meetings. Some members of ASIWG are heavily involved with the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) in the revision of the IDN protocols, which makes a perfect link between the two entities. Similar coordination is taking place also among other script communities and will facilitate fast deployment of IDN TLDs.

3) Other Organisations are also taking steps to review their processes and practices and new relationships are developing as a result. One such example is the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and its engagement with the technical community, as seen at the OECD Ministerial on the Future of the Internet. That Ministerial provided the opportunity for the technical community, business and civil society to meet prior to the Ministerial and provide input into the discussions. Subsequent to the Ministerial, the OECD invited a proposal for an "Internet Technical Advisory Committee" to participate in OECD's Information Computer and Communications Policy (ICCP), with Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and Trade Union Advisory Committee. This participation is lead by the Internet Society (ISOC), and includes the participation of many other organizations.

ICANN is committed to work closely with many organizations, in partnership and in cooperation. We strongly believe that the process that is already underway works. The evolution of cooperation has been an important attribute for the Internet, and its continued success. The few examples presented in this submission and our prior letter on activities undertaken in relation to enhanced cooperation show examples of how the current arrangements have evolved and demonstrate how the wide variety of fora can all work to the global benefit in the unique field of the Internet. ICANN believes that progress made since WSIS amply demonstrates the advantages of not trying to impose the constraints of a single controlling mechanism. Rather we should all continue to encourage the evolution of existing organizations which is already under way. Building on existing developments will facilitate an enhanced cooperation unlike any seen before, as parties are encouraged to establish ways to work together to achieve joint, and often new and exciting objectives. Barriers to this healthy and vigorous process do still exist among some organizations. I believe your efforts to publicise the progress made to date while encouraging the open participation of all stakeholders will prove to be an important contribution towards building upon what we have already achieved in pursuit of enhanced cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D Twomey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Twomey
President and CEO