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(ICANN)

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, our hosts, and honoured guests.

Before I start, I'd like to say how pleased I am to be in Beijing. I would also like to express my great pleasure at being invited to talk to you about the importance of the domain name system to the information society and the value of top-level domain managers — especially ccTLD managers.

This tenth anniversary of the CN NIC is truly an auspicious occasion. The domain name space has grown at a rate almost beyond imagining over the past ten years. Let me mention just a few of the milestones we can celebrate today:

- The number of registered domain names topped 128 million earlier this year
- Of these, 80 million are gTLDs. The most common gTLD is “.com”, with 62 million domains

- In 2006, country code top level domain names increased by 31 percent, with more than 4 million registrations in total during the year and a total of 45.7 million altogether
- China alone added more than 500,000 domains in the fourth quarter of 2006, a 43 percent increase over the third quarter of 2005
- Since ICANN introduced competition into the domain name space, the number of registrars has grown to nearly 900
- The price of a domain name has dropped from an average of 50 US dollars in 1998 to about 10 dollars today

Internet users around the world have come to rely increasingly on the global domain name space to communicate, transact business, transfer and store data, and gather together in virtual communities. We also demand greater functionality and more multilingual content and access. And we want wireless connectivity, satellite delivery, and access via mobile devices wherever we are. All this means that the Internet's infrastructure must grow at least ten-fold by 2010 — that's just three short years — to keep up with demand.

This growth will become even more dynamic with the deployment of internationalised domain names and the transition from IPv4 to IPv6. These and other initiatives intended to improve openness, accessibility, diversity, and security demonstrate that our community is working hard to make the Internet truly global.

A global approach — based on the 35 years of values and a regime that created the Internet of today so as to ensure redundancy and resiliency

— would, in my opinion, deliver the most satisfactory results for all ccTLD operators.

While we're on the subject of global approaches, I'd like to mention two other issues of pressing interest to the ccTLD community. Both are far from being resolved. However, in both cases our stakeholders are contributing productively to achieving that resolution. The first is a global policy for introducing IDN ccTLDs. Its corollary is the selection of TLDs associated with the ISO 3166-1 two-letter codes. ICANN's ccNSO and Governmental Advisory Committee have drafted an issues paper to be presented for consideration at ICANN's San Juan meeting in June. This is an issues paper only, and we are looking to the ICANN Board for a path forward.

ICANN's ccNSO is also preparing a report on recommendations for alignment of ccTLDs with their assigned geographical regions. Recommendations from ccNSO members are welcome. This report is also scheduled for discussion at the San Juan meeting.

Since the domain name system's beginnings in the early 1980s, cooperation and consensus building through a multi-stakeholder model have successfully guided the security and stability of the Internet. The model breathes redundancy, flexibility, continuous innovation to adjust and respond to users and user behaviours. In other words, building on the values that created the resiliency of that model is becoming more and more critical as our dependence on this unique technology increases.

In conclusion, the Internet is the most powerful and pervasive means of empowering individuals in human history. It is becoming part of the glue that ensures a rapid unleashing of humanity's knowledge and possibilities for all persons no matter their age, sex, creed, class, ethnicity and — at least

in some degree — wealth. And it is radically reducing transaction costs and barriers to markets across a globalised economy, and breaking down the obstacles to a global community.

It requires the continuing efforts of all stakeholders, from governments, the business and private sectors, academia, and civil society to preserve and strengthen this model. By doing so, we can ensure the resiliency and utility of the Internet — and guarantee the rapid and successful development of a secure, stable, and globally interoperable Internet.