

Statement of the Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group on

[ICANN Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#)

The Non-Commercial Stakeholders Group (NCSG) highly appreciates the opportunity to comment on the ICANN Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 published in 2020 in an effort to align the regional strategy with the [ICANN Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025](#). This Public Comment proceeding seeks input on the ICANN Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025.

About Us

The NCSG represents the interests of non-commercial domain name registrants and end-users in the formulation of Domain Name System policy within the Generic Names Supporting Organisation. We are proud to have individual and organizational members in over 160 countries, and as a network of academics, Internet end-users, and civil society actors, we represent a broad cross-section of the global Internet community. Since our predecessor - the Non-Commercial Domain Name Holders Constituency (NCDNHC) - inception in 1999, we have facilitated global academic and civil society engagement in support of ICANN's mission, stimulating an informed citizenry and building their understanding of relevant DNS policy issues.

NCSG will structure its comment around the five strategic objectives listed in the ICANN Africa Regional Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025.

General Comments

The members of the Africa Strategy Working Group (ASWG) did a good job in putting together this document, particularly in deciding to align their key strategy points to each of ICANN's own five strategic objectives as listed in the ICANN Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021 - 2025.

A general observation which we made across the entire Africa Regional Strategic Plan was although action steps for achieving the five strategic objectives were included, there were no Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to indicate how the progress made achieving these would be assessed. We also noted that KPIs had been included in the Africa Regional Strategic Plan for FY 2016 - 2020.

At the ICANN67 meeting, it had been mentioned by the ASWG that the Africa Regional Strategic Plan doesn't include any KPIs because this is a strategy document and not an implementation document. If this response still holds then, we suggest moving the action steps, KPIs and timelines for achieving each objective to a separate implementation document. This would be instrumental in helping to evaluate all progress made and also indicate where progress has not been made, which is valuable for ongoing and future planning.

If the ASWG decides to keep the action items as part of this strategy document, we suggest including indicators of assessment, as well as referencing any resource constraints such as the amount of funds and personnel available.

For example:

- When indicating, as an action step, for achieving Goal 1 of “Strengthen the security of the DNS and the Root Server System”, perhaps state how many training workshops are needed to achieve the goal.
- When indicating, as an action step, for achieving Goal 3 of “Evolve the unique identifiers system in coordination and collaboration with relevant parties to continue serving the needs of the global Internet users”, state how many ICANN-managed root servers are being targeted to be deployed in Africa within the 5-year period.

Across the strategy document, we suggest including the development of e-learning materials tailored to the African context and best practices documents. We also suggest identifying the major stakeholders who will work with ICANN on achieving the strategic objectives.

The Africa Regional Strategic Plan tends to identify and list a lot of issues and action items that it will address and implement. We question whether this is feasible in the 5-year window. Therefore, we suggest utilising the S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound) approach and focusing on achievable and measurable goals for this time frame.

Where capacity-building is referenced in the strategic plan, we suggest including the engagement of qualified and available African professionals (both resident in Africa and outside) in achieving the objectives listed. Africa has a rich pool of talented and skilled professionals, both resident on the continent and outside it, who can collaborate to achieve the stated objectives.

Another observation was that the links embedded in the document don't work. These should be resolved before final publication of the report.

Comments Specific to Each Strategic Objective

1. Strengthen the Security of the Domain Name System and the DNS Root Server System.

The following listed targeted outcomes do not appear to be related to security goals:

- Increased IPv6 adoption in Africa
- Better promotion for a systemic approach to interconnection in Africa to help lower the connection costs for the end users.

We suggest moving the IPv6 adoption outcome to the Unique identifiers objective.

2. Improve the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance.

In section 3.2.2 on Regional Goals, we suggest including:

- Improving the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model of governance building on the mechanisms put in place for the IGFs (African IGF, West African IGF, national IGFs)
- Raising awareness and informing the African community of the critical importance of its presence and participation in discussions within the ICANN community mainly governments, the private sector and end-users (notably under-represented groups such as women and youth).
- Having the regional office identify major stakeholders and initiate an outreach program to especially governments and academic institutions. Also embark on constant engagement with these identified stakeholders not necessarily in-person, but also through webinars, email updates and other digital communication channels.

3. Evolve the Unique identifier Systems in coordination and collaboration with relevant parties to continue to serve the needs of the global Internet user base.

Include in the 3.3.2 Regional Goals section the following:

- Produce templates and best practice guides for nations, ISPs, Universities and companies in the adoption of IPv6
- Identify and reach out to these groups on implementation plans

4. Address geopolitical issues impacting ICANN's mission to ensure a single and globally interoperable Internet.

In the 3.4.2 Regional Goals section, we suggest including the following:

- Institute or encourage a program for business development in domain names on the continent to avoid dependencies on using registries outside the continent.
- Some of the identified goals could be better defined e.g. Build a more engaged ICANN in Africa; and Promote a single global Internet.

5. Ensure ICANN's long-term financial sustainability.

In Section 3.5 on Introduction, we suggest including some numbers to make better sense of the statement that the revenue contributions by African registrars and ccTLDs have barely changed since the publication of the last regional plan in 2015. These could be USD revenue, percentage contribution or other appropriate metric (kindly note that the link to the Africa DNS Market Study 2016 is not working so the reader is unable to refer to this).

The FY 2015 - 2020 regional plan included key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the rate of increase of domain name penetration on the continent. These included Number of domain names registered, DNS availability / failure, Domain name pricing, Complaints /

UDRP, among others. We suggest that for consistency and the ease to evaluate the results, this should be adopted in this report as well.

We suggest that Section 3.5.3 includes a benchmark target for the number of domain registrations within the FY 2021 - 2025 period.

Section 3.5.4 bullet 1 can include ICANN working with African registries as well as ICANN members based in Africa to educate businesses on the benefits of having an online presence. Some members of the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group based in Africa are already involved in education activities and may be able to provide valuable insight in methods to create more awareness and willingness for African businesses to purchase domain names.

Within the ICANN Strategic Plan FY 2021 - 2025, one of the ways that ICANN intends to ensure long-term sustainability is by: Managing operations and their costs to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of ICANN's activities. So a suggestion is for the Africa regional plan to address how it intends to implement this for the African region.

Conclusion

Once again, we would like to thank you for inviting us to provide our input on this matter. The NCSG hopes that the collected contributions would help to make the ICANN Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2021-2025 more efficient in serving the needs of the ICANN community and organisation.