COMMENTS FROM A SEMINAR IN CHINA ON IANA TRANSITION

Issue: Draft Proposal, Based on Initial Community Feedback, of the Principles and Mechanisms and the Process to Develop a Proposal to Transition NTIA's Stewardship of the IANA Functions.

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In response to the ICANN’s call for the Public Comment on Transition of Stewardship of IANA, Internet Domain Name System Beijing Engineering Research Center (ZDNS), Beijing Internet Institution (BII) and Beijing Normal University Institute for Internet Policy & Law (IIPL) hosted a Chinese Internet Community multi-stakeholder meeting on May 5th, where technical community, TLD registries, civil society, academic, private sector, and government and other stakeholders came together to discuss the views of Chinese community on the principles, mechanisms and processes of the transition as well as the ICANN recently published proposal on IANA Transition.

First of all, all the participants appreciate the efforts made by ICANN to collect and incorporate input and feedback from the global stakeholder community. Based on the inputs and opinions from experts, scholars and representatives from relevant parties and organizations at the meeting, our comments may be summarized as follows:

1. Comments on the Scope of the Transition
   We recommend limiting the discussion to the stewardship of IANA functions transition and not extending the scope. However, we do think that the process of the transition of IANA functions is a good opportunity to fulfill and improve the multi-stakeholder model. More parties, entities and individuals should be involved in the decision making process. We hereby suggest the formation of the steering group should be carefully reconsidered and decided.

2. Comments on the Proposed Multi-stakeholder Model of Transition
   We strongly agree to the proposed multi-stakeholder model of transition, which shall optimize the Internet governance. However, we do think the model should be more specific, including who exactly the stakeholders are; the whole structure of
the multi-stakeholder; if government is eligible to participate, to what extent can it be involved, for example, the balanced and diversified representations of the steering group should be taken into account, especially the role of GAC should be emphasized according to the geographic and economic development diversities; if Internet companies are eligible to participate and have the right to input; how many members will the multi-stakeholders include; if they can represent the interest of majority of Internet community; what the decision-making process will be, by voting or any other way. The outline of the multi-stakeholder model is expected to be published soon.

3. Comments on the Involvement of Global Communities
Under current governance model of ICANN, representatives from developed countries are the majority, which is theoretically against the openness and inclusiveness of the Internet. We strongly suggest that regional balance and diversity should be enhanced by creating new processes and mechanisms to involve more relevant governors, representatives from different communities. Besides, customized communication channels should also be provided for experts, scholars and representatives to deliver their opinions to the new takeover party of current IANA functions, so that relevant parties can participate in the whole process of decision making. What’s more, the members of IANA function transition steering group should include more representatives from Asia-Pacific region. With respect to Chinese Internet community, we do call ICANN’s special attention that more and more direct customers and partners of IANA function (e.g. hundreds of new gTLD registries) are emerging and are worthy ICANN of more effective engagement, efforts and participation opportunities.

4. Comments on Mechanisms to Ensure Accountability
If the key Internet domain name functions are going to be transferred to ICANN, the transition should begin with clarification of the NTIA’s oversight role that it’s been playing. Corresponding accountability mechanisms should be established profoundly so that ICANN is able to function properly and serve the whole Internet community. Concerning the unpredictable issues that may arise, an accountability mechanism is imperative to supervise ICANN and urge ICANN to make amendments and adjustments. Therefore, a sound and responsible accountability mechanism should be put in place during the process of transition to prevent any disorder of key Internet domain name functions. Instead of conducting the badly needed reform and improvement of accountability system in a parallel and separate process, we do call ICANN to effectively integrate the accountability mechanism with the transition of stewardship of IANA function within a reasonable timeline.

As an important and indivisible part of the global customers and partners of IANA services, as well as the affected parties by IANA functions transition process, we sincerely hope that our comments above derived from Chinese
Community are considered by ICANN seriously.

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