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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

REFERENCE:

XX June 2016

Excellency,

The Secretary-General would be grateful if you could kindly forward the enclosed letter to His/Her Excellency (NAME and TITLE).

A copy of the letter is attached for your information.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jan Eliasson".

Jan Eliasson
Deputy Secretary-General

His/Her Excellency
Mr./Ms. XXX
Permanent Representative of COUNTRY
to the United Nations
New York



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

XX June 2016

Excellency,

In coordination with the executive heads of international governmental organizations (“IGOs”, listed in the enclosed Annex), I seek your help, along with that of all Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the United Nations, with respect to the unauthorized use of IGO names and acronyms on the Internet.

Specifically, I seek the assistance of your Government in obtaining protection for the names and acronyms of IGOs from being registered as Internet Domain Names by third parties who misrepresent themselves as the IGOs in question. Protection of IGO acronyms is especially important, since acronyms (e.g., UNICEF, OECD, UNHCR) are how our organizations are widely known and, therefore, present the greatest risk of abuse.

For IGOs, the internet is a double-edged sword. Just as it allows us to serve and to educate billions of people worldwide, it also provides opportunities for malicious actors to seek material gain at public expense. Such actors have posed as IGOs in order to disseminate misinformation or to illegitimately profit from the public missions and goodwill of IGOs by collecting fraudulent “donations”. Practices observed around last year’s Ebola epidemic demonstrate how damaging this can be. A number of websites and e-mails posing as IGOs, such as the World Health Organization, purported to offer advice in the face of a global public health crisis, while their true aim was installing malware to control users’ computers and to steal passwords.

There is a sure way to address this issue: preliminarily blocking the illicit registration of domain names corresponding to IGO names and acronyms. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a non-profit corporation, administers the internet Domain Name System (DNS). IGOs have repeatedly appealed to ICANN to protect their names and acronyms in the DNS. Over the last four years, a coalition of IGOs has sought from the ICANN Board safeguards that reflect the protection that IGO names and acronyms enjoy under domestic and international laws. At the same time, IGOs made it clear that they would not take issue with legitimately sought third-party domain name registrations which would not pose risks to IGO missions.

His/Her Excellency

Mr./Ms....

Minister for Foreign Affairs of ... [Name of country]

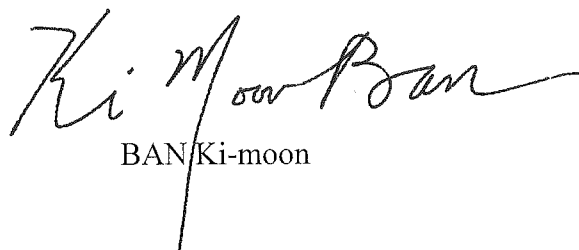
[Capital]

Regrettably, even as ICANN is facilitating an expanding DNS, no permanent solution has been reached to date. This difficulty in reaching such a solution is surprising to the IGOs, given that ICANN had long ago agreed to analogous protections in the DNS for “Red Cross” and “Olympic”, which the public commonly uses to refer to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Olympic Committee, respectively.

I therefore call upon your support in obtaining permanent protection of the names and acronyms of IGOs. You could provide such support by communicating the importance of this issue to the competent Ministry in your Government, in particular in order to ensure that the representative of your Government to the Governmental Advisory Committee of ICANN sends a strong message to the ICANN Board in favour of protecting IGO names and acronyms in the DNS. You could also convey this message directly to Mr. Göran Marby, who recently became the Chief Executive Officer of ICANN. Failure to protect the names and acronyms of the IGOs, whose operations are publicly funded by their members, could pose a considerable financial burden to those members, including your Government. Without such protection, the IGOs would be forced to consider diverting funds earmarked for their public missions in order to protect themselves, and those they serve around the world, against the preventable misuse of their names and acronyms.

I am grateful for the assistance and support of your Government to this important cause.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BAN/Ki-moon

Annex 1

List of Inter-Governmental Organizations

1. Asian Development Bank (ADB)
2. BENELUX
3. International Bureau of Weights and Measurements (BIPM)
4. Council of Europe (COE)
5. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
6. European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL)
7. European Patent Office (EPO)
8. European Space Agency (ESA)
9. European Southern Observatory (ESO)
10. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
11. International Atomic Energy Commission (IAEA)
12. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
13. Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
14. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
15. Inter-American Investment Corporation (IIC)
16. International Labor Organization (ILO)
17. International Monetary Fund (IMF)
18. INTERPOL
19. International Organization for Migration (IOM)
20. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
21. Nordic Investment Bank (NIB)
22. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
23. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
24. Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
25. UNAIDS
26. UNESCO
27. International Computing Centre (UNICC)
28. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
29. International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)
30. Universal Postal Union (UPU)
31. World Health Organization (WHO)
32. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
33. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
34. World Bank
35. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)