

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT
(CSTD)**

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**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on
their efforts in 2014 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on "Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels" (to the 18th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi
Secretary General of UNCTAD

23rd December 2014

ICANN CONTRIBUTION - WSIS OUTCOMES

I refer to your letter of 1 October 2014 to Mr. Esmat, inviting input with regard to initiatives and activities undertaken by ICANN towards implementing the WSIS outcomes. It is a privilege to be asked to contribute again to this important exercise.

I apologise for the lateness of the attached contribution.

Yours Sincerely

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ICANN CONTRIBUTION TO SECRETARY GENERAL REPORT ON WSIS; DECEMBER; 2014

Executive Summary

2014 has been an extremely busy year for ICANN, and has witnessed a number of developments relevant to the WSIS Outcomes and the Action Lines. These are dealt with in more detail below but include, inter-alia, the considerable expansion of the domain name space in terms of new generic top-level domains (in both Latin and non-Latin script) entering the root of the Internet, the initiation of a process whereby the NTIA responsibilities in the IANA process are transitioned to the multistakeholder Internet Community and contributions to WSIS Review processes such as the CSTD Review of the WSIS Outcomes and the ITU hosed High Level Event.

Generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) and International Domain Names

With respect to Action Line C3 “Access to information and knowledge”, ICANN has, as noted above been working on expanding the top-level domain (TLD) space of the DNS, to allow for the introduction of new TLDs, using not only the basic set of Latin characters, but also any set of characters in languages and scripts. The latter case refers to what is called Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), which also fall under Action Line C8 “Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content”, as it entails a linguistic element. This effort required the involvement of all stakeholders in the policy development process, including governments, business, civil society, and technical and academic community.

(1) International Domain Names

In November 2009, ICANN launched the IDN ccTLD Fast Track Process as a quick solution to respond to demands of countries and territories that use languages based on non-Latin scripts to have their country and territory names or acronyms as IDN ccTLDs.

By late 2014, there were 78 IDN TLDs delegated, these including 38 IDN ccTLDs representing 28 countries from the fast track process and 40 IDN gTLDs from the new gTLD Programme enumerated below (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/about/idns>)

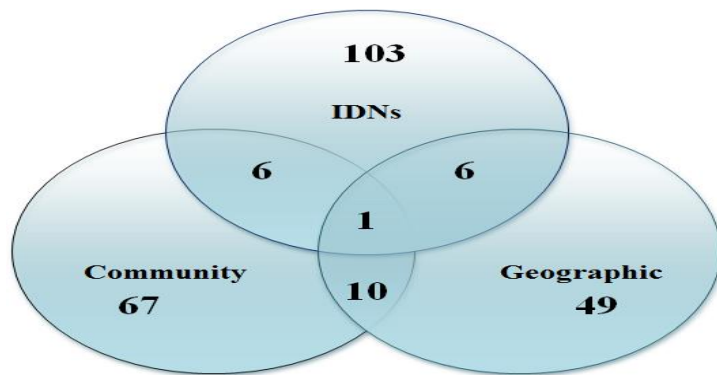
Approximately four million international domain names, of various kinds, had been registered by December 2014. The importance of multilinguism is reflected in the trends in overall Internet usage. For while the proportion of English speakers online in 1996 was as high as 80%; and even in early 2014 it was still estimated that 56% of the top 10 million websites had some English content; the proportion of English-speaking users of the Internet has fallen from around 35% in 2004 to 27% in 2011,

while the proportion of Chinese-speaking users is estimated to have risen from around 14% to 24%.

(11) New gTLD Program

The Program was launched on 12 January 2012 and at the close of the application window (on 13th June) ICANN had received 1932 applications, of which 116 were for IDN strings in scripts such as Arabic, Chinese, and Cyrillic. Applications were received from 60 countries, with 911 from North America; 675 from Europe; 303 from Asia Pacific; 24 from Latin America and the Caribbean; and 17 from Africa.

The breakdown in terms of IDN, Community and Geographic applications were:



As of **December 2014** the statistics look like this:

gTLD Delegated - introduced into Internet)	469
Application Withdrawn	385
Applications that Will Not Proceed/Not Approved	59
Currently Proceeding through New gTLD Program*	1017

<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/program-status/statistics>

While the take-up of the 400 odd new generic names has differed considerably, the new choices for the public, businesses, charities and organisations offered are already clear. For the first time many have found it relevant, whether through geographical, Community or generic names to book a place on the Internet.

The IANA Stewardship Transition

In March 2014, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) – part of the US Department of Commerce - announced its intent to transition its oversight of the technical functions of the Internet Assigned Number Authority (IANA)¹ to the global multistakeholder community. Envisioned since the early years of the IANA functions contract, the transition announcement marked the final phase of the privatization of the Domain Name System (DNS) as has been the plan since ICANN was created in 1998.

NTIA asked ICANN to facilitate the process for developing a transition proposal that had to meet several specific guidelines. It has to have broad community support and meet the following four principles:

1. Support and enhance the multistakeholder model;
2. Maintain the security, stability and resiliency of the Internet Domain Name System (DNS);
3. Meet the needs and expectations of the global customers and partners of the IANA services; and
4. Maintain the openness of the Internet.

NTIA also specified that it would not accept a proposal that replaced its role with a government-led or intergovernmental organization solution.

At its 49th Public Meeting in Singapore just a few weeks after NTIA's announcement, ICANN brought the community together and launched a multistakeholder process to develop the proposal. Based on input from community discussions, ICANN published a draft process and issued a call for public comment to allow members of the community to discuss the proposed draft principles, mechanisms and the process structure.

The process led to the formation of the IANA Stewardship Transition Coordination Group (ICG)² to coordinate the development of a transition proposal. Made up of 30 members with diverse interests and backgrounds, the group was tasked with

¹ <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/press-release/2014/ntia-announces-intent-transition-key-internet-domain-name-functions>

² <https://www.icann.org/stewardship/coordination-group>

soliciting transition proposals, including from the three communities with direct operational or service relationships with IANA – the names, the numbers and the protocol parameters communities – and assembling a consensus transition proposal to submit to NTIA. ICANN’s current contract with NTIA expires in September 2015 (though it can be extended) and the goal is have a transition proposal in place and ready to go by then.

ICANN launched, a second process on Accountability that is interrelated with the IANA Stewardship Transition process. Its purpose is to examine, from an organizational perspective, if and how ICANN’s accountability mechanisms should be strengthened to address the absence of US Government oversight³.

The process established a cross-community working group to identify the accountability mechanisms that must be in place, or at least committed to, before the IANA Stewardship Transition can take place. NTIA has said it wants the accountability proposals to accompany delivery of the transition proposal.

An up to date narrative on the overall process can be found at <https://www.icann.org/stewardship>

WSIS Review Process

ICANN was represented and involved in both phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2003 and 2005 and has since contributed to the annual WSIS Forum events hosted by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

We are committed to the WSIS process, albeit our role is limited in scope, and thus have taken an active role in the Review of it (pursuant to paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda). Our CEO Fadi Chehade attended and contributed both to the UNESCO hosted Review Conference in March 2013 and to the High Level Event organized by the ITU (along with many other players) in June this year⁴. We also contributed to the 10-year review of WSIS outcomes undertaken by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD). We are currently in the process of commenting on this important Report⁵, which was discussed at the CSTD Inter-session meeting in November.

³ <https://www.icann.org/news/announcement-2014-12-02-en>

⁴ <http://www.itu.int/wsisis/implementation/2014/forum/>

⁵ <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/CSTD/WSIS-10yearReview.aspx>

Looking forward to 2015 we look forward to fully contributing to the UNGA WSIS+10 Review meeting in December in New York and the preparations thereof. We are convinced that the preparatory phase – and the meeting itself - will be greatly enhanced through the participation of all relevant stakeholders; this witnessed by the two successful preparatory meetings noted above. It is only through such a process that the outcome will be recognised and endorsed by the broader Internet Community.

ICANN; December, 2014