PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ROD BECKSTROM
President and Chief Executive Officer
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
42nd ICANN International Meeting
24 October 2011
As prepared for delivery

Bienvenue á la réunion de l'ICANN dans un Dakar ensoleille.

Welcome to ICANN 42, and to sunny Dakar. As you will have discovered, the Senegalese are known for their hospitality – a hospitality so warm that it rivals the sun that shines on the beaches and the city. There is a Wolof word for it, *teranga*.

We are deeply grateful to the Government of Senegal's Ministry of Communication and Telecommunications and ICT and to the Regulatory Agency for Telecommunications and Posts for their generosity and hospitality in hosting this meeting. They have shown us the true meaning of *teranga*.

We welcome our special guests who honor us with their presence today: His Excellency President Wade of Senegal, and Minister Guirassy.

We thank Madame Diop, Director of ICT at the Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies.

We also thank the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, and in particular Francopol and Frédérick Gaudreau of the Sûreté du Québec, for organizing an outreach and awareness session for Senegalese law enforcement on dealing with cyber-crime.

And I would like to recognize Africa's Internet leaders, including Adiel Akplogan, CEO of AfriNIC, for joining us today.

I am glad to see so many of you here today, and equally glad that so many more are participating remotely.

There is another West African tradition for which Senegal is well known. And that is storytelling. Storytelling is done by *griots*, who have kept West African history alive for thousands of years through words and music. The *griot* profession is passed down generation to generation and requires years of training and

1

apprenticeship in genealogy, history and music. *Griots* literally give voice to generations of West African society.

Having a voice – and being heard – is a fundamental human right. *Griots* are important members of West African society because they are living history books. They hold the stories of a society in their hearts and heads. But each of us holds our own stories, opinions and ideas. And we share them - in discussions with others, through articles and white papers, through lectures, through music and art, videos, through social media and through meetings like this one today.

A few days ago, I had the opportunity to visit the Ile de Goree. It is a picturesque island, but one with a tragic history as a slave trading station. Today, it is a museum and a UNESCO World Heritage site, reminding us of those terrible events and the millions who crossed the threshold of the "door of no return" and who lost their freedom.

It struck me that the Internet represents exactly the opposite – it brings freedom and connection to everyone, from any place, anywhere, at any time. It allows us to connect to anyone, opening up new worlds and building a better, stronger society and helping to unite the world. The Internet is another door, and now that we have passed through it, the world will never be the same. Not for us. Not for governments.

Senegal, like most other nations, is experiencing the rapid growth of information and communication technologies. That growth brings the potential for innovation, increased productivity, education and greater competitiveness. It connects people in new and exciting ways. It brings more voices into the chorus. More voices enrich our discussions. More voices foster innovation.

Africa and the Internet
The Internet advances economies through innovation. It provides a global launch pad for the ideas that will generate tomorrow's great economic opportunities. It empowers creative thought and risk-taking. And never has innovation had a more fertile field to grow in.

Here in Africa, there has been tremendous progress toward greater connectivity. In ten years, the number of Internet users has grown 25-fold. That is rapid growth, yet it still represents only 11.5 percent of the African population. The stage is set for greater growth thanks to AfriNIC's distribution of IPv6 addresses. According to AfriNIC, more than half of the continent has received blocks of IPv6 addresses. Sonatel, Senegal's telecommunications provider, will speak about IPv6 at a roundtable session on Thursday, as they are one of the leaders in this area.

African ccTLDs, including Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda, are adding to the security of the domain name system by taking steps to

deploy DNSSEC. So are many others who are taking advantage of the three-day DNS security training this week, offered by the Network Startup Resources Center, NIC Senegal, and ICANN.

I also hope that many of you will participate in SSAC's meeting on DNSSEC on Wednesday.

Your voices are stronger than ever. And the Internet's potential for greater growth and influence makes ICANN's role even more relevant than ever.

Yesterday, I had the honor of addressing the opening session of a capacity-building workshop attended by representatives from nearly every African At-Large Structure. AFRALO Vice Chair Tijani Ben Jemaa and Chair Fatimata Seye Sylla have built a five-day training program to give African civil society the tools and knowledge to participate effectively in the ICANN policy development process.

The multistakeholder model works
As we move steadily closer to truly connecting every person in the world, our collective economic future will depend on maintaining a stable domain name system. A stable, unified DNS provides the foundation for continued innovation. ICANN must ensure that this role is understood, and advance our common goal of a secure, stable and unified global Internet. That is job number one for ICANN.

I mentioned a few moments ago that everyone has a voice, and a right to be heard. At ICANN, those concepts are part of our DNA. The Internet is a global resource that belongs to everyone. We believe that everyone with an interest in the Internet has an equal right to be heard in its governance.

ICANN is built on openness, inclusion, trust and collaboration. These principles are woven into multistakeholder processes demonstrated here this week.

The entire ecosystem collaborates: Internet service providers, domain name businesses, local Internet communities, governments, Internet standards organizations, Regional Internet Registries, individual Internet users, non-profits and businesses around the world.

Engagement with governments is also fundamental to ICANN's role, and to the very future of the Internet. In representing governments at ICANN, the Governmental Advisory Committee, or GAC, makes its voice heard in all of our work. The GAC's significant role in ICANN, of course, complements many other groups.

This constructive international engagement, including the series of intensive Board-GAC consultations, was well demonstrated through the development of

the New gTLD Program. It demonstrates once again that the multistakeholder model is alive and working.

New Generic Top-Level Domains
Operating a new gTLD, as many of you know, is a complex undertaking, and applicants from developing countries may need technical or financial information or assistance to facilitate the establishment of a new registry.

ICANN's global community is already taking steps to help needy applicants apply for new gTLDs. A joint working group has spent many hours working on a proposal that the Board will consider this week on how best to provide that support.

Details may still need to be ironed out before the application window opens in January, but the voice of the global community is clear on the issue. Support for needy applicants will help ensure that we receive a diversity of new gTLD applications and that these are not just domains for big organizations and the developed world.

ICANN's global community is rich with talented and experienced people who may be interested in helping as well. Part of the support available includes an online gathering space to facilitate cooperation among those interested in establishing a public interest gTLD registry and entities willing and able to provide *pro bono* assistance. This part of the microsite is up now.

I encourage each of you to think about how you can help. Could you offer *pro bono* services, in-kind support or grants? Assist with application writing, technical requirements, registry back-end services or DNSSEC consulting? Whatever means you choose, you will be helping to bring more voices and more people to the Internet.

New gTLDs are an important initiative, and communicating about the program has kept me and many other ICANN staff members very busy. In early September several of us hit the road, and scattered around the globe to spread the word.

When the Board approved the new gTLD program in Singapore in June, it charged us with informing and educating the world about new gTLDs. That plan includes an ambitious series of organized visits and events in many countries. This is the first key deliverable of the new gTLD program. It represents phase one of operations.

In recent weeks ICANN representatives have explained, discussed and debated the new gTLD program in Ankara, Beirut, Berlin, Buenos Aires, Capetown, Delhi, Doha, Dubai, Helsinki, Istanbul, London, Munich, Nairobi, Oslo, Paris, Sao Paolo and Warsaw. And we are planning to take part in events in Beijing, Jakarta,

Moscow, Sofia, Tokyo and beyond.

In every case we have met members of this community, government officials, business leaders, academics and students, the media, innovators and entrepreneurs.

We're not done yet but I wanted to take this opportunity to provide an update on our progress and to acknowledge some of those involved. First, let me thank the many staff, board and community members who have spoken at and taken part in events in numerous countries as part of our outreach efforts. There are far too many of you to name here, but please know that your contributions to this awareness-raising effort are both noted and appreciated.

The message we've been delivering is that the new gTLD program offers unique opportunities but that applying for and running a registry isn't for everyone. Anyone who might be interested needs to do their own homework, develop a solid understanding of the program and then determine if a new gTLD is right for them. The clock is ticking.

Judging from the media coverage we've generated, the roadshow has been a success. We've been interviewed numerous times, on television, radio, online and in newspapers, allowing our message to spread far beyond the auditoriums and conference halls across six continents to reach potential applicants.

International news outlets such as Al-Jazeera, BBC and CNN have carried stories, as have major newspapers in every country we have visited. In India alone, no fewer than 15 English language newspapers and many more in other languages carried stories on new gTLDs based on our visit.

The people we've met and talked with have many questions. And they have come away with a better understanding of what new gTLDs are all about. And more importantly, they will have a better understanding of what ICANN is all about, and a deeper appreciation for all the work that we collectively do.

Representatives of more than 100 countries are here in Dakar today. I ask each of you to help us carry this message to your communities – whether that means distributing materials, organizing events, sending a web link or speaking about the program publicly - and please do so soon. The new gTLD application window opens in 79 days. That's just over two months away, before we meet again at the next ICANN meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica.

We can also bring more voices and more people to the Internet through Internationalized Domain Names. IDNs make it possible to access the Internet in scripts other than Latin-based characters, and their adoption has been one of the community's great collaborative efforts.

Maybe you speak only Arabic or Chinese or Hindi. IDNs will make it easier to join the conversation and to tell your story.

I've spent much of this speech on the value of hearing from the widest possible range of voices on Internet governance, and that is true no matter what your view. In a multistakeholder model, it is important that everyone be heard.

Transparency and Accountability
Since we met in Singapore, ICANN has opened more than 20 public comment periods on topics such as policies for expired domain names and how to expand participation from developing countries in the New gTLD Program.

But I had to smile when I saw the title of a public comment period that opened at the end of August. The announcement said that we were seeking public comment...on our public comment process.

If that doesn't sum up ICANN, I don't know what does. We have to be one of the most open governance structures in the world.

When your organization is built on a foundation of accountability and transparency as ours is, you wind up seeking public input on how you seek public input. And that is a good thing.

How we receive public comments matters because it is a bedrock concept in a bottom-up model like ours.

Ongoing community review cycles are built into ICANN's foundation through the Affirmation of Commitments. As we implement the ATRT recommendations, the Whois, and Security, Stability and Resiliency review teams are developing additional recommendations to improve ICANN.

Right now, there are multiple organizational reviews simultaneously underway. Having trouble keeping up with them? So am I. We've built a website that includes a simple visual graphic depicting the status of each review, with links for more information to help all of us follow these important initiatives.

IANA
I also want to give you an update on where we are with the IANA functions contract. Those who have followed its evolution will recall that back in the late 1990s the U.S. government laid out a vision for ICANN's rapid transition to a fully independent international organization. This was clearly stated in the White Paper approved by the U.S. government as official Department of Commerce policy.

We're not there yet. Instead we have seen a series of short-term contracts overseen by the U.S. Government. In response to Commerce's requests for

comment on the IANA functions contract, many have argued that this structure is no longer appropriate for the organization responsible for a key function of the global Internet.

Nor has that process achieved the level of transparency that we feel the global community has a right to expect. We are pleased that the department shares our concern as evidenced by their commitment to include greater transparency requirements in the next contract. We hope that the department will permit us to publish data related to root zone change requests so that every major step of the process will be open to public examination. The spirit of the ATRT and the Affirmation of Commitments demands no less.

We also hope that Commerce will support publication of the detailed user documentation that ICANN has developed over the past two years, which will increase the confidence of other nations and stakeholders that the process of root updates is fair and predictable.

Many submissions to Commerce specifically requested that ICANN's structure be more international. The feedback from many community participants globally was that the current unilateral structure of the IANA functions contract should evolve to meet the needs of the global community. We hope that progress toward the vision articulated by the U.S. Government's White Paper will be made in the next agreement, and we hope – and we expect – to see a road map for the realization of this vision in the future.

Preparing ICANN for the future
As I work through the remaining year of my term, we have many challenges and opportunities ahead of us. We need to negotiate a successful evolution to the IANA functions contract that expires at the end of March. We need to successfully launch the New gTLD Program – the largest program in ICANN's history. We need to continue to implement the ATRT recommendations and support its community reviews.

We are a complex organization and our complexity increases with every new review, working group or policy initiative that adds more requirements and processes to what we already do.

Pressures on ICANN are growing: political, ethical, financial, geopolitical and operational. The complexity of the geopolitical landscape; the risks and unpredictability of the New gTLD Program; the mounting concerns over cyber-security; the need to coordinate so many diverse institutional and organizational tasks – present an enormous challenge to an organization of just 150 staff members covering activities on six continents.

Given the increased respect and stature for ICANN around the world, we are in an excellent position to recruit a highly talented individual for the CEO position –

a skilled manager, respected by the world and able to lead a complex, international organization in transition. We are currently operating with an annual budget of US $85 million and, with the new gTLD program, this could perhaps double. ICANN's next CEO may be from any country of the world, working in any organization, but must have the courage to manage, and in some cases stand up to, the many pressures and special interests the CEO is subjected to every day.

The person who succeeds me should be a person of integrity, experience, talent, skill, intellect and leadership qualities. Someone with a strong international background and the judgment to make tough choices under enormous pressure.

The Board recently adopted a resolution about the CEO search. It states that no current or incoming member of the Board or liaisons may be considered as a candidate for the role of CEO. It was intended to assure the community that the search process would be fair and impartial and avoid the appearance of a clear conflict of interest. I feel very strongly that Board members interested in the position – whether they have applied in the past, would like to apply now, or may apply in the future – should state their interest publicly.

In addition, the Board Governance Committee identified three of its members to review and guide staff efforts to revise the Conflicts of Interest Policy and Ethics Program.

My decision to leave does not mean that I'm going to take my foot off the gas pedal. I don't know how to. I plan on driving us to accomplish two years of work in the coming eight months. I am more focused than ever on execution of our top priorities.

I will also do my best to ensure an efficient and effective handover at the end of my term to my successor. I hope that person will be of the highest integrity and has no recent or current commercial or career interests in the domain name industry, because ICANN's fairness, objectivity and independence are of paramount importance to the future of the Internet. We are not here in the domain name business. We are here to serve the global public interest.

If we can continue to manage the challenges I've talked about, ICANN is poised for further success. To lay the groundwork, this fiscal year we've put into place a new financial management system. This should give the Board, the community, management and staff greater insight into budget management. That will further enhance our commitment to accountability and transparency.

We have also just received our 12th consecutive "clean" audit. We have a 100 percent track record. Our financial house remains in order. We will continue to exercise the budgetary discipline needed to keep costs low and be good stewards of ICANN's resources.

Working with Verisign and NTIA, we have completed a multi-year automation project that streamlines the management of the root zone.

And this year will see the transfer of our Marina del Rey staff to a new facility that will enhance productivity and better accommodate the technological needs of this organization.

And we'll continue to bring new voices into the ICANN multistakeholder process at every level. Thank you to those who are new to the ICANN family and attending one of our meetings for the first time. We are glad you are here.

This fiscal year was the first in which full remote participation was used at all three international public meetings. With stakeholders in every country in the world, ICANN strives for world-class remote participation services that enable Internet users to add their voices to the discussion from wherever they may be. Remote participation supports ICANN's commitment to maintain and improve robust mechanisms for public input and transparency. This is what bottom-up, consensus-driven policymaking looks like.

Conclusion
Those remote connections are enabling people in Beijing, Johannesburg and Montevideo to participate in this week's meetings in Dakar, without having to be physically here. Technology connects us all in new and complex ways, breaking down geographical boundaries and creating a virtual gathering place for the world to share ideas and tell their stories.

In my recent travels, I have seen people accessing the Internet in tearooms in Delhi and in sheesha bars in Doha. I've heard of Internet buses and vans in Benin and Rwanda that are bringing computers and connectivity to children in rural villages, allowing them to use the Internet for the first time. Technology is woven into the everyday lives of people around the world, and our world is better for it.

There is a wonderful African proverb that I will leave you with this afternoon.

I am because we are; we are because I am.

This beautifully expresses our new life and our new world of connectedness.

Each of us exists in community with others. Like the West African *griots* who trace the lineage of their people, who keep their ancestors alive through storytelling and pass these stories on from generation to generation, we are the keepers of something just as important. Together we maintain a global community built around the operation of the Internet's domain name system.

Each of us is part of that whole. The Internet is a doorway to the future; and now that we've gone through it, there is no going back.

I want to extend thanks to the ICANN staff whose diligence has built a foundation for our good work here in Dakar this week. A special thank you to the Meetings staff for seeing to every technical and logistical detail. And thank you to the global community, those of you here and those participating remotely – and to all those who leverage this technology for the betterment of people everywhere.

Together we are ICANN. We accomplish so much together. We bring new voices to the discussion. We maintain a stable Internet. We are poised to launch the New gTLD Program. What happens next is up to each of us, and all of us.

Thank you.

<div align="center">###</div>