



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Assistant Secretary for Communications**  
**and Information**

Washington, D.C. 20230

JUN 13 2014

Dr. Stephen D. Crocker  
Chairman of the Board  
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers  
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

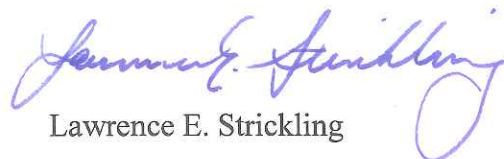
Dear Dr. Crocker:

I am writing regarding the recent action taken by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) regarding the application of the ZA Central Registry (ZACR) for the .africa top level domain (TLD), which has been endorsed by the African Union Commission. While the United States recognizes the rationale for placing the application on hold as the Independent Review Process (IRP) mandated by the ICANN Bylaws proceeds, we encourage you to keep in mind the clear advice from the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) on this issue.

Consistent with Module 3 of the new Generic Top Level Domain Name (new gTLD) Applicant Guidebook, the GAC considered and deliberated on the more than 1,900 applications submitted. As articulated on April 11, 2013, in the Beijing Communiqué, GAC consensus advice was that the DotConnectAfrica application, number 1-1165-42560, for the .africa TLD should not proceed. As a GAC member, the United States is committed to the GAC consensus advice and we welcomed the June 4, 2013 decision of the New gTLD Program Committee to accept GAC advice on this application. Once the IRP Panel renders its recommendation, we urge you move quickly to bring this matter to closure and delegate the .africa TLD pursuant to the registry agreement signed between ZACR and ICANN.

As a related matter, we examined the facts of this situation and found no indication that ICANN ever established an omnibus standing IRP Panel as articulated in the April 2013 amendment to Article IV, Section 3 of ICANN's Bylaws. As the bylaws include a provision for action in the absence of this standing panel, we acknowledge that this particular case was handled appropriately. The genesis for this particular bylaw change was input from a committee of independent experts on the restructuring of the three review mechanisms (i.e., the Independent Review Panel (IRP), the Reconsideration Process and the Office of the Ombudsman), conducted to implement Recommendation 23 of ICANN's First Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT1). As ATRT2 concluded that implementation of Recommendation 23 was incomplete, we recommend you address this specific item in the ATRT2 work plan.

Sincerely,



Lawrence E. Strickling