



AFTLD 2ND CCTLD EVENT REPORT

AFTLD CONFERENCE 7-11 APRIL 2008 HELD AT BALALAIKA, SANDTON

Introduction

The Domain Name System (DNS) and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses will continue to serve as the core Internet resources for the foreseeable future. These resources have supported the provision of Internet services to the current over 1 billion users. It's envisaged that the next billion users will be largely netted from the developing regions following their aggressive Internet adoption strategies. The resulting increase in the number of Internet users is expected to impact on these core resources from both the technical and governance perspectives.

The last 2 years has seen a deliberate and concerted effort by the AfTLD executive committee (Excom) aimed at revamping the organizations activity both locally and globally. The Excom consists of eight (8) volunteers from African ccTLDs who been instrumental in steering the organizations activities during this period. Consequently, as the region braces for a perceived Internet revolution, strong national and regional institutions will play a vital role in addressing the policy, outreach, capacity and governance issues related to the core Internet resources. For this reason, AfTLD with the generous support of the South African Department of Communication (DOC) held the 2nd African ccTLD event in Johannesburg, South Africa from 7th – 11th April 2008 under the theme “Strengthening our Internet Institutions”.

Executive Summary

The Hon. Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri, the South African Minister of Communication, opened the event at the Balaika Hotel, South Africa. The speech highlighted the challenges facing African ccTLDs and the importance for cooperation at all levels to achieve ICT growth and development. She reiterated that Africa's time has come to have its impact on the global ICT arena and the need to start by recognizing the key institutions such as AfTLD, AfriNIC, AfNOG at the African Union (AU) and the Pan African Parliament in order to sensitize the policy makers.

The event was hosted with the support of the South African Department of Communication, AfriNIC, ISOC, ICANN, NSRC, OIF, Internet Solutions and Kheweul.com. Through the support received from ICANN and ISOC, AfTLD was able to provide fellowship support to 14 ccTLD registry managers from the region. The event was attended by 57 participants drawn from African Governments, African ccTLD managers, TLD Registrars, representatives from APTLD, CENTR, Nominet UK, AFNIC,



OIF, CZNIC, ccNSO Secretariat, GAC, ICANN/IANA, ITU, AfNOG and AfriNIC. The attendee registrar is annexed.

The AfTLD members and general assembly unanimously voted to extend the Excom's tenure for an additional one-year term in a transitional capacity. The assembly further voted for the two new women members to the Excom to fill up vacancies resulting from voluntary resignations. The assembly also assigned targets to the office bearers to be delivered or completed by the next annual meeting.

Tentatively, the Tanzanian Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) representatives at the meeting informally offered to host the next meeting in Tanzania.

Presentation Highlights :

Day one

The day was characterized by presentations on the current ccTLD and DNS trends including an overview of these critical resource from an ICANN/IANA perspective. Leslie Cowlie of Nominet presented on the growth statistics of domain names.

Dr. Paulos Nyirenda presented an excellent overview of the Governance and technical composition of the ccTLDs in Africa. The presentation observed that more Governments were seemingly getting involved in the management of the national ccTLD over the past 10 years compared to the private or academic sector in the region.

Day two

The day started with a well ccTLD best practice presentation from the ITU. In the presentation, the ITU has initiated a study in Jan 2008 on ccTLD best practices titled "*Policy, Business, Technical, and Operational Considerations for the Operation of a ccTLD*" as a result of their ongoing technical assistance on the re-delegation of the Somali (.so) registry.

This was followed by the Registry Software applications session which focused on the various different registry Software's available and demonstrations. The .CZ system FRED and Codev-NIC in use by some of the Western African ccTLDs were presented to the participants. It was evident that more and more registries were moving towards having Registry/Registrar models and the registry software systems tend to support that as well. During this session, interest in Registry Billing solutions was aired by the participants in addition to more hands-on training on registry applications like Fred.



Day Three

Ondrej Sury gave a presentation on the status of DNSSEC at the .CZ registry. In his presentation, .CZ registry had developed a white paper and published for public comments. The final white paper incorporating the public comments would form the basis for development of the .CZ DNSSEC implementation which was set for September 2008.

Thereafter, IDN sessions commenced with an introduction by Mohammed El Bashir followed by the ICANN IDN update and the IDNs ccTLD fast-track report which discussed the ccNSO and APTLD proposed approaches on the IDN ccTLD issue.

This was followed by institutional updates from AfNOG, College International Guinea, OIF, ISOC & IETF and an IGF report. At the end of the day, the IGF access panel highlighted various approaches to enabling access including the consideration of multi-stakeholder approach towards infrastructure development. In addition the inclusion or building of Internet infrastructure alongside critical and basic infrastructures like roads, rail, pipelines and electrical grid systems were pointed as strategic initiatives in developing a national access infrastructure.

Day Four

The morning session was aimed at demystifying ICANN and its functions.

The day was a highlight of the AfTLD annual general meeting that saw the nomination of the current excom and addition of two new members onboard replacing Mr. Ali Drissa Badiel and Haja Rambaosalama who voluntarily stepped down. Ms. Malebogo Lekoape of .BW and Dr. Nashwa Abdelbaki of .EG filled the vacancies. In addition to the envisaged contribution to the excom as new members with new ideas, their entry as the first two women to serve on the AfTLD-Excom was a significant milestone for the organization.

The General assembly further set the following targets for delivery the Excom by the next meeting as follows;

- a) Amendment of the AfTLD constitution
- b) Appointment of a General Manager
- c) Development of a sustainable funding model



d) Increase membership by at least 10.

The minutes of the annual general meeting is available on the AfTLD website.

Day five

From the presentations given on IPv6 deployment in Africa, its evident that there's more to be done. However, it was encouraging to note that some countries namely South Africa, Egypt and Kenya were making significant steps in creating awareness and adoption.

Adiel Akplogan, the CEO of AfriNIC presented on the status of IP resources in the region, its role, planned activities and events. Capacity building is top on top of AfriNICs agenda has an elaborate plan of activities and events in the region across through to 2009.

The closed-door meeting held at the end of the annual general meeting where the members of the Excom are expected to meet and discuss on the way forward. The new office bearers and their roles were presented as follows.

- Mr. Michuki Mwangi – President
- Mr. Vika Mpisane – Treasurer
- Ms. Malebogo Lekoape - Secretary
- Mr. Mohamed El Bashir – Director Communications and Outreach
- Mr. Souleymane – Director Capacity Building
- Dr. Paulos Nyirenda – Director Special Projects
- Dr. Nashwa Abdelbaki – Assistant Director Communications
- Mr. Victor Ciza – Assistant Director Communications

Further five (5) Working groups were created to fast-track and complement the excom activities in helping AfTLD achieve its objectives.

The Working groups are;

IDNs Working Group – Proposed members include;

- Mohamed El Bashir - Chair
- Nashwa Abdelbaki
- Mouhamet Diop

Research Working Group – Proposed members include;

- Paulos Nyirenda - Chair
- Christian Roland



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- Nthabiseng Pule
 - Nashwa Abdelbaki
 - Mouhamet Diop

AfTLD Constitution Working Group – Proposed members include;

- Michuki Mwangi
- Ndukwe Kalu
- Paulos Nyirenda
- Mohamed El Bashir

Technical Working Group – Proposed members include;

- Alain Aina
- Hari Kurup
- Issa Nkusi
- Vincent Ngundi
- Hisham Mohamed
- Souleymane Oumtanaga

The working groups were given the mandate to develop their own terms of reference and nominate their working group chairs where not provided. They would also be provided with online working tools to facilitate their work.

Conclusion

The participants considered the 2nd African ccTLD event to be a success with high quality deliberations, speakers and presentations. At the end of the meeting issues on Registry Billing solutions and technical hands on training on registry systems we identified as areas of focus at future meetings. Notably, the meeting attracted a number of representatives from ccTLDs undergoing re-delegation. Consequently, there was a request for AfTLD to facilitate and assist in the re-delegation process in addition to providing information on the re-delegation process on its website.

Further, it was evident that African ccTLD registry's face significant challenges in the bootstrapping and operational aspects. There was need to promote the establishment of self-sustainable registry models. In addition, collaboration with the local Internet community was identified as an important component that catalyzes ccTLD development in a country. Its through such partnerships where issues of governance and access can be adequately addressed.



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