



AFTLD ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

I am pleased to present to you the annual report and AfTLD highlights for the year 2007 – 2008. In an effort to actualize its objectives, the Excom has continued to hold teleconferences, mailing-list discussions and face-to-face meetings over the past year and as a result several achievements have been realized since the last AGM.

1. ACHIEVEMENTS

1.1 AfTLD Cairo 2007

AfTLD held its first ccTLD event in May 2007, Cairo, Egypt. The event was attended by 34 delegates majority of who were from 13 African ccTLDs. The event also received international participants from APTLDs General Manager Mr. Don Hollander, .CZ registry's Pavel Tuma, AfriNICs CEO Adiel Akplogan, ICANNs African and Middle East liaisons Anne Rachel Inne and Baher Esmat respectively.

The Egyptian Government's National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) generously hosted the event. Additional support was received from ICANN, AfriNIC and ISOC and utilized to provide fellowship to the Excom and the ccTLD representatives. On behalf of the Excom, I wish to take this opportunity to thank them for their support in holding what was considered a very successful event.

1.2 Participation & visibility in other events

To promote African representation and participation at the global policy formulation arena, the Excom has ensured that AfTLD is visible and plays meaningful roles during various events. The events covered since AfTLD Cairo include:

- ICANN meetings
- AfriNIC meetings
- Rio de Janeiro 2007 IGF meeting
- AfrISPA 2008 AGM in South Africa

At these forums, the Excom members have utilized the opportunities to represent the African region. For instance, CENTR in cooperation with RTLDOs organised a Workshop and a Best Practices forum at the IGF in Rio de Janeiro. The Workshop sought to demystify the functioning to the Domain Name System and focussed on the relationship of ccTLD managers with IANA. The Best Practices Forum titled “One Size Doesn’t Fit All”, showcased different successful management models for running a ccTLD registry and demonstrated the need for home-grown solutions in registry models. The AfTLD Excom was represented by its President, Michuki Mwangi and the Secretary and Treasurer, Vika Mpisane.

1.3 Establishing a common African ccTLD position

The Excom took measures over the past year to galvanize the African ccTLD community to come to common positions on some of the topical issues. To this end, the Excom proposed common positions on the ICANN Regions Re-demarcation discussion and the Fast-track approach towards the implementation of Internationalised Domains (IDNs). On both discussions we received inputs which were useful in enabling us to submit unified positions.

I would like to acknowledge the forward-thinking innovation showed by APTLD in proposing the IDNs fast-track approach, and the eagerness with which CENTR engaged its members to table its position. These efforts have gone a long way to prove that the organisation of ccTLDs at a regional level is an import aspect in the bottom-up policy development processes of ICANN and the IGF.

1.4 Collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration and partnership have proven over the past years of the emergence of the global village phenomenon to be strong cornerstones of accelerating development and empowerment using ICTs. To this end, the AfTLD Excom has continued to explore strategic partnership opportunities.

We continue our partnership and collaboration efforts with CENTR, APTLD and LACTLD. Recently, the Excom renewed its observer role at the European ccTLD Association CENTR for the period 2008 – 2009. Further, the ongoing collaboration amongst the regional TLD associations continues to grow with meetings being held at ICANN meetings and participating at each other’s regional TLD meetings.

At the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meeting held on Nov 2007, Brazil, the Regional Top Level Domains Organizations (RTLDOs) that include CENTR, AfTLD, APTLD and LACTLD shared a booth at the exhibition area to showcase their activities in the respective regions. The booth was generously sponsored by CENTR, and wish to thank them for their continued visionary role in IGF meetings.

Efforts are underway to explore various partnership opportunities with relevant regional organisations such as AfNOG, AfrISPA and ISOC. These will add to the already strengthened and mature partnership that exists with AfriNIC.

1.5 Formalizing AfTLD membership

The AfTLD membership recruitment program aimed at formalizing its relationships with the ccTLD managers in the region commenced in earnest in December 2007. To date, the Excom has received over 12 formal membership applications. In the process, we are cautious to check applications against the IANA ccTLD database to ensure that we receive applications from the delegated authority. There have been instances where applications have failed the verification process as a result of ongoing re-delegation procedures. In such cases, the applicants have been advised to consult the IANA regarding the published Whois information. The aim is not to make the membership application process onerous; rather our aim is to make sure that the information we have use is consistent.

Here to, on behalf of the Excom, I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to other ccTLD managers to give due consideration to formalizing their relationship with AfTLD. This will contribute to the strengthening of the association as it seeks to represent the regions interest on the global arena.

2. AFTLD OPERATIONS

AfTLD operations have continued to be run primarily by the Excom members, particularly those members who were given specific responsibilities. To this end, mention should be made of the contribution by Mr. Mohamed EL Bashir in our communications and outreach efforts, in his capacity as Vice-President for Communications and Outreach. Mr. Souleymane Oumtanaga has labored diligently in his efforts to set up an AfTLD capacity building program and we hope the next Excom will take this further and institutionalize the capacity building program.

Mr. Vika Mpisane has also been instrumental in his role as Secretary & Treasurer. As Secretary, he has ensured that the meetings of the Excom are always successful and that records are appropriately maintained. As a Treasurer, he has kept a close relationship with AfriNIC, which generously manage our funds to date.

Mention should also be made of the rest of the Excom members who have made themselves available for AfTLD's call of duty when needed. I mention in particular Dr. Paulos Nyirenda, Mr. Badiel Ali Drissa, Mr. Victor Ciza and Mr. Haja Ramboasalama.

3. FINANCES

Our balance sheet to date shows a positive balance of \$24,000. This money came purely from donations received from ISOC and Neustar in 2007, and is primarily intended for the appointment of a full-time manager to run AfTLD operations. In addition to this balance, we received generous sponsorships of \$10,000 from ISOC and of \$20,000 from ICANN for the AfTLD South Africa event. We have made meaningful efforts in ensuring that the money is used to grant at least travel sponsorships to ccTLD representatives.

Date	Transaction details	Funds in (US\$)	Funds out (US\$)	Balance (US\$)
01-Jan-07	Balance b/f			15,000
17-May-07	Grant from ISOC	10,000		25,000
29-May-07	Grant from AfriNIC Ltd – Cairo meeting	3,406		28,406
29-May-07	Payment Movenpick Hotel - Egypt		(2,695)	25,711
29-May-07	Refund – Air ticket (SA/Cairo) – Vika Mpisane		(711)	25,000
01-Jun-07	Payment workshop - Cairo		(16,000)	9,000
05-Sep-07	Grant from Neustar	15,000		24,000

On behalf of the Excom, I would like to thank AfriNIC for their diligence in assisting us with our financial management and controls.

4. CHALLENGES

There are some planned activities that have not been achieved due to various challenges faced by the Excom during the past year. However, due to the importance placed on these projects, there will be need for the implementation plans to be revised and executed in future. The yet to be resolved challenges include the appointment of a General Manager, and revising and updating the registration of AfTLD in Mauritius. These should be sorted out in the next 2-3 months.

5. TRIBUTES

On behalf of the Excom, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the long-serving Internet pioneer in the African continent, Dr. Nii Quaynor of AfNOG. He was recently awarded the John Postel Award of excellence by ISOC last year in recognition of his contribution towards Internet development in the region. On behalf of the ccTLD community, we congratulate you and are honored and proud to have you amongst us. As some of you may be aware, Doc as most of us call him, is one of the founding members of AfTLD.

We also would like to thank Adiel Akplogan, the CEO and the entire board of AfriNIC lead by their able chairman Pierre Dandjinou for their guidance and continuing support for AfTLD. Its through their support that we have made the significant strides in revamping the organizations activities.

Mention also should be made to all our sponsors: ISOC, who has always been there for us, we acknowledge its efforts in accelerating Internet penetration in Africa. We thank Neustar for its sponsorship in support of hiring a full-time official for AfTLD. We thank NSRC for the much-needed technical training literature, which they shipped for this event. We thank our Internet Connectivity partner, Internet Solutions, for keeping us all connected with the rest of the world for the duration of this event.

ICANN has been an inspirational supporter and friend to the ccTLDs and to African ccTLDs in particular. We acknowledge its generous sponsorship of the event and thank them for ensuring that they have staff representation at all our events. A particular mention should be made of Anne-Rachel Inne, the ICANN official responsible for Africa liaison. She has been instrumental in helping steer AfTLD to success and growing the African ICANN community as a whole. We applaud her commitment to the community and extend our sincere appreciation.

Last and certainly not least, we are generously hosted by the South African Department of Communications. We would like to thank the Minister of Communications, Dr. Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri and her Director-General, Ms. Lyndall Shope-Mafole, for the unwavering support they have shown and committed to making this event a reality. DOC goes down the records of our history as one of early adopters, friends and supporters of African ccTLD development.

5. PLANNED PROJECTS

As we endeavor to strengthen the role of ccTLD and representing their interests at both regional and international levels, the Excom continues to focus on various projects that will

further its mandate. The following represent the core activities that we think should dominate the 2008 – 2009 AfTLD agenda.

5.1 Hosting AfTLD 2009 event

AfTLD will be actively engaging prospective members and countries in a bid to secure a host for the 2009 ccTLD event. The event is set to further the organizations mandate in creating a platform for members to engage in issues relating ccTLD and Internet development in the region. To this end, we wish to take this opportunity to invite members, and Governments to consider hosting future AfTLD events in the region.

5.2 Capacity Building events

The availability of competent technical capacity is a critical element to ensuring the growth and stability of registry operations in the region. AfTLD will continue to initiate and facilitate capacity building opportunities to enhance the technical and administrative competence of its members in the region. The capacity building programs will focus on best practices for ccTLDs and emerging technologies related to Domain Name System (DNS) implementations.

5.3 Communication, outreach and representation

AfTLD will continue to support and facilitate consistency and active participation of its members at ICANN. Currently, the ccNSO has a Working Group to look into the participation issues with regional representatives from the RTLDOs. It's our objective to ensure that the region continues to be represented at various ICANN committees. Further, emerging issues will be communicated through the online discussion tools and forums and its request that members continue to participate in the deliberations. This will ensure that positions developed for the region are representative of the majority. The appointment of a full-time Manager will also enable us to communicate more regularly with our members.

5.4 Membership recruitment & formalization

Efforts of recruiting members to formalize their relationship with AfTLD will continue over the next year. We have deliberately given everyone an option of free membership. We will look at paid membership at the right time, when we can really show measurable value to each ccTLD. In the next year, we will look at various ways of adding value to each ccTLD, and thereby lay a foundation for granting options of paid membership.

5.5 Research and Technical Projects

Enough foundation has been laid for AfTLD to undertake or participate in various research projects, and to have its annual research report. With the appointment of a full-time official being imminent, AfTLD's research agenda should be defined and implemented in the next year. Further, some of the research work is envisaged to transform into technical implementation projects in the Region. Already there are opportunities to engage in the

study and deployment of DNS Root Servers in a number of countries with operational Exchange points. The collection of information using DNS probes is also a valuable research and technical project that will be considered in the future. In addition, the facilitation of secondary DNS server hosting with other ccTLDs registries in the region will be initiated. The importance of the research and technical projects will be to add value to our members growth and development initiatives.

5.6 Funding

It is not desirable for AfTLD to rely on donor funds and sponsorships; rather AfTLD should become self-sustaining as soon as possible through various channels, including memberships fees and contributions. The new Excom will continue exploring various ways of making AfTLD self-sustaining.

6. NEW EXCOM

It's expected that there will be a new look Excom at the end of the AfTLD AGM as some members have already expressed their inability to continue serving due to demanding responsibilities. Consequently, there will be a transition period to upraise and handover to the new officials. The new outlook will inject new and fresh ideas into the organizations operations necessary to actualize its objectives.

CONCLUSION

AfTLD has a role to play in the development of ccTLDs in the region. Its for this reason that the Excom themed the 2008 event "Strengthening our Internet Institutions" to create awareness on the organizations that manage our core Internet resources. In order to succeed collaboration between the stakeholders is necessary, thus the need for partnerships as the way forward.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who have tirelessly given their time and resources towards the success realized so far and humbly request all of you to continue with your unwavering support as we seek to develop and explore the regions Internet potential.

Michuki Mwangi
President, AfTLD ExCom
March 2008.