2022 Annual Report to UNCTAD

ICANN Contribution

Progress made in 2022 in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels

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Executive Summary

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is privileged and honored to be invited to contribute to the annual United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Report. We value our involvement with, and contribution to, the overall multistakeholder World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) process and to our relationship with the U.N. Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) and with the UNCTAD.

ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. Much of the work ICANN does is an important contribution for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit. Through its innovative programs such as Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names, **ICANN supports several of the Action Lines including C2, C3, and C4.**

ICANN is committed to bringing the next billion users online. Through its outreach and engagement initiatives, ICANN has provided capacity development workshops all over the world. In 2022, ICANN collaborated with several organizations pledging to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s Partner2Connect Digital Coalition to drive digital transformation in hard-to-connect communities throughout Africa by providing capacity development workshops for ten African country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries addressing issues identified as priorities by the participants. The goal of the workshops is to assist the ccTLDS to support their national digital strategies and sustain their national digital economies.

In addition to capacity development initiatives, ICANN also worked to convey the importance of preserving the multistakeholder model (MSM) of governance of the global Internet. From March through July, ICANN met with dozens of members of European institutions and governments to reinforce the significance of supporting ICANN's mission and to build confidence in the MSM. **This effort from ICANN supports Action Line C1 in the promotion of ICTs for development among governments.**

ICANN continues to support the implementation of the WSIS outcomes, by preparing to participate at the upcoming 17th annual Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During IGF 2022, ICANN will officially launch the Coalition for Digital Africa, an ICANN facilitated initiative designed to bring together organizations that can directly impact the expansion of the Internet in Africa. ICANN has been a strong supporter of the IGF since its founding, and a continuous contributor to the IGF Trust Fund, the Multistakeholder Advisory Group, and many of the IGF Regional and National Initiatives (RNI).

[End of executive summary]

1 ICANN Work in Capacity Development, Outreach, and Internet Governance

Over the past year, ICANN has been hard at work on various projects, outreach and engagement activities that contribute to the implementation of the Summit Outcomes. In 2022, ICANN facilitated or participated in several regional Internet Governance events, such as the South School on Internet Governance webinars, and regional IGF events in Africa, Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Middle East, North America, and the Asia-Pacific regions. ICANN's regional outreach and engagement focuses on capacity-development topics such as Universal Acceptance (UA), ICANN's Domain Name System security threat mitigation program, Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), and technical Internet governance, among other topics. These activities support **Action Line C5: Building confidence and security in the use of ICTs, which includes sharing "good practices in the field of information security and network security."**

Another initiative that continued to support **Action Line C5** throughout 2022, is ICANN's Domain Abuse Activity Reporting (DAAR) project–a system for studying and reporting on domain name registration and security threats (domain abuse) across top-level domain (TLD) registries. The monthly DAAR reports can be used to develop a robust, reliable, and reproducible methodology for analyzing security threat activity, which the ICANN community may use to make informed policy decisions.

In June, ICANN announced its commitment to training best practices for African Internet Registries, providing hands-on training and tools to prepare ten African country code top-level domain (ccTLD) registries to effectively participate in the domain industry. For this initiative, ICANN joined in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union-Development sector (ITU-D), Africa Top Level Domains Organization (AfTLD), the Network Startup Resource Center (NSRC), and the Association française pour le nommage Internet en coopération (AFNIC). The ten ccTLD registries are receiving specialized training led by industry experts, through a combination of online courses, hands-on workshops, and webinars. The content of the training addresses issues identified as priorities by the ccTLDs. The training covers topics ranging from best practices in domain name system security and registry governance, to business plan writing and marketing, to Internationalized Domain Names and Universal Acceptance. **This initiative supports C3: Access to information and knowledge, Action Line 10, ensuring that "organizations and communities should benefit from access to knowledge and information," and it supports C4: Capacity Building, Action line 11, in which "everyone should have the necessary skills to benefit fully from the Information Society."**

ICANN is preparing to participate in the 17th annual IGF 2022 which will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. ICANN plans to participate in the IGF in several capacities; it will be holding an Open Forum with the following title: "ICANN And Ensuring the Continuity of the Unique Identifiers," and ICANN will also host a Town Hall session which will serve as the official launch for the "Coalition for Digital Africa". The Coalition for Digital Africa (CDA) is an ICANN-facilitated initiative designed to bring together organizations that can directly impact the expansion of the Internet in Africa. Its mission is to bring more Africans online by supporting the development of a robust and secure Internet infrastructure, including the unique identifier systems, in Africa.

The overarching goal of the initiative is to support the development of the Internet infrastructure necessary to foster the growth and sustainability of Africa's digital economy, by ensuring a stable, resilient, interoperable and secure Internet, through partnerships with governments, regional and international organizations, and the local internet community. The Coalition will do this by promoting innovation and advancing Africa's digital transformation through the support of national digital strategies, universal access and capacity development to support the creation and expansion of local content and encouraging entrepreneurial efforts. This will be done by collaborating on projects that will directly benefit the African continent, and in which values and unique missions of the organizations in the Coalition are aligned. The Town Hall session will officially launch the Coalition and allow partners of the projects rolled out this year to discuss their collaboration. Activities under the initiative range from ccTLD capacity development workshops in support of the role of ccTLDs in national digital strategies, to investment in Internet infrastructure and facilitating participation in the multistakeholder policy-making processes across the continent.

2 Universal Acceptance and Internationalized Domain Names

Many of ICANN's initiatives support C2, Action Line 9 and the goal of "digital inclusion, enabling universal, sustainable, ubiquitous and affordable access to ICTs by all." Universal Acceptance (UA) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), are two programs crucial for increasing access online by ensuring all domain names and email addresses, regardless of language, script, or length (e.g., .рф, .PHOTOGRAPHY, @ای-میل موقع.مثال) are accepted equally and can be used by all Internet users on all Internet-enabled applications, devices, and systems.

In 2022, ICANN continued to help enable the secure use of top-level domains (TLDs) in local languages and scripts. On 20 June 2022, ICANN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Registry for Internet Domains vzw (EURid), the registry that manages the .eu top-level domain (TLD). The MoU is an effort between the two organizations to strengthen their collaboration in supporting Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) and promoting the Universal Acceptance (UA) of all domain names and email addresses.

To promote Universal Acceptance, ICANN continued to conduct regional training programs throughout the year, such as workshops and hosting discussions on UA. UA Local Initiatives conducted outreach and training to local communities in China, India, Thailand, and the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe. [1]

Ensuring that all software applications support all valid domain names and email addresses requires testing. The UA Roadmap for Domain Name Registry and Registrar Systems proposes how to test these systems for UA-readiness. ICANN recently published a study for technical review, and the UA roadmap will be finalized based on the input received and published for reference of domain name registries and registrars. The roadmap will be shared with relevant stakeholders to encourage them to become UA-ready.

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[1] ICANN is also providing support for the Universal Acceptance working group - a community led initiative - so that they can attend IGF 2022 and present a panel with updates on their recent activity.

UA readiness requires a considerable amount of effort by everyone. It cannot be done in isolation; it requires the support of all stakeholders. There are many challenges to overcome for UA readiness. It requires engaging with big technology organizations and open-source communities, as well as conducting training. It requires government policymakers to push top-down UA adoption by requiring UA support in their procurement contracts. It requires academic institutions to support bottom-up UA adoption by including UA training in their curriculum. ICANN will continue to work toward achieving Universal Acceptance as it is a fundamental requirement for a truly multilingual and digitally inclusive Internet.