



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
2 March 2011

ICANN and Qatar Celebrate Launch of Arabic Top-Level Domain

Use of Non-Latin Domain Names Continues to Grow

Doha, Qatar... Dignitaries in the Arabian Gulf state of Qatar today joined leaders of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in celebrating the launch of the Internet's latest Arabic script top-level domain (TLD) name.

"Approval of Qatar's internationalized domain name is an acknowledgment of the country's vision and leadership," said Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's President and Chief Executive Officer. "In pursuing the IDN on behalf of its people, Qatar has recognized that the Internet is the way of the future."

Beckstrom made the comments during a ceremony commemorating the latest addition to the group of countries and territories with country code top-level domain (ccTLD) names in non-Latin characters, as part of ICANN's Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) Fast-Track program.

"The launch of Qatar's Arabic top-level domain names is a major milestone as we work to build a more digitally inclusive society," said Dr. Hessa Al Jaber, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology, which will manage Qatar's Internet domain names through the Qatar Domains Registry. "As more organizations and individuals begin adopting Arabic domain names, the Internet will literally be opened up to broad new audiences. The Arab world represents a region with enormous potential for growth both in terms of usage and the creation of new digital content, especially Arabic content,"

To date, 17 countries and territories have had country code top-level domains in non-Latin scripts approved for entry into the Internet's root. Thirty-four nations and territories so far have applied for IDN ccTLDs, representing 22 languages.

Non-Latin top-level domains are gradually being introduced into the Internet's root zone. Currently, they are only allowed as country code top level domains (ccTLDs). Eventually, the use of Internationalized Domain Names will be expanded to include generic top-level domains, such as .com, .net and .biz.

####

To read more about the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process go here: <http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/fag-en.htm>

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brad White
ICANN Director of Global Media Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Tel. +1 (202) 570 7118
brad.white@icann.org

Andrew Robertson
Edelman Public Relations
London, U.K.
Tel. + 44 (7811) 341 945
andrew.Robertson@edelman.com

About ICANN: *ICANN's mission is to ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. For more information please visit: www.icann.org.*