



The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

15 June 2014

Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim
Commissioner, Infrastructure and Energy
African Union
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dear Commissioner Ibrahim:

Thank you for your letter of 2 June 2014 regarding the .AFRICA TLD and for the opportunity to address some of your concerns. We deeply appreciate the African Union Commission's support in ICANN's African Strategy work and look forward to continuing to work together in expanding ICANN's multistakeholder processes into the African region.

We understand the concerns that you've raised in connection to proceeding towards the delegation of the .AFRICA TLD as applied for by the ZA Central Registry and the import of this launch to your constituents. As discussed in your letter, ICANN's evaluation of ZACR's application for the .AFRICA TLD resulted in ICANN and ZACR entering into a registry agreement for ZACR's operation of the .AFRICA TLD.

I sincerely appreciate your acknowledgement of ICANN's Bylaws and the accountability procedures afforded through the Bylaws, including the Independent Review Process (IRP) that has been invoked by the competing applicant for the .AFRICA TLD. Even when challenges are not well taken (such as the way that we view the .AFRICA IRP), it is essential for all stakeholders – including those just joining ICANN from the developing world – to see ICANN's commitment to upholding its accountability processes. Unfortunately, at times this requires delays such as those faced by ZACR and the AUC in seeing the launch of the .AFRICA TLD.

As expressed in your letter, ICANN is also frustrated with the time required for a final determination in the .AFRICA IRP to be issued. The IRP is envisioned as an expedited process, with even the Bylaws suggesting that an IRP reach conclusion within six months of filing. ICANN has, at every opportunity, encouraged the panel overseeing the .AFRICA IRP to proceed with expediency and requested the prompt consideration of matters before the .AFRICA IRP panel when appropriate, and will continue to do so.



Upon the issuance of the Panel's declaration in the .AFRICA IRP, ICANN must complete its obligations under the Bylaws and allow for Board consideration of the declaration. If ICANN were to immediately proceed with delegation of the .AFRICA TLD with ZACR without waiting for Board action, that could result in a violation of the Bylaws that would provide further opportunity for challenge – and further resulting delay. It is only through careful adherence to ICANN's processes that we will mitigate against the opportunities for further challenge that you identify in your letter. I can assure you that ICANN does not wish for any delay with proceeding with the .AFRICA TLD beyond that which is necessitated by the interim stay that ICANN is currently respecting regarding further actions on the ZACR Registry Agreement.

You have my commitment that our Global Domains Division team and all other necessary teams at ICANN will work expeditiously with ZACR to bring the .AFRICA TLD to delegation and launch, just as soon as it is appropriate for that work to proceed. I am excited to see the opportunities that the launch of the .AFRICA TLD will bring to the constituents of AUC, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fadi Chehadé", written over a horizontal blue line.

Fadi Chehadé
President & CEO