



November 9, 2015

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICANN new gTLD Program
12025 Waterfront Drive, Suite 300
Los Angeles CA 90094-2536
USA

Dear Sirs,

Subject: DotConnectAfrica Trust's Response to the Letter from Ghana RE: CONFIRMATION OF GHANA'S POSITION ON THE MATTER CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF THE DOTAFRICA (.AFRICA) TOP LEVEL DOMAIN

The attention of DotConnectAfrica Trust has been drawn to a letter dated 16th October 2015 that was sent to the ICANN new gTLD Program purportedly by the Government of Ghana and signed by Issah Yahaya, Chief Director of the Ministry of Communications, Accra, Ghana¹.

The letter is inappropriate and an unnecessary and uninvited intervention that has been deliberately instigated to unduly influence the ICANN new gTLD Program in order to prejudice the decision process of the .Africa new gTLD following the conclusion of the DCA Trust vs. ICANN Independent Review Panel (IRP) Process.

The letter is inappropriate on three grounds:

- a) It is doubtful whether this particular letter was authorized and officially approved by the Ghanaian Authorities before it was sent out.
- b) The new gTLD Program only allows for parties interested in a specific new gTLD to utilize either the public comments period; or, if regular and legal standing is established, to utilize any of the relevant objection procedures enshrined in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook. Therefore, as far as the new gTLD Program is concerned, there is no place in it for the type of letter that the Ghanaian Chief Director has sent to the ICANN new gTLD Program.
- c) Furthermore, African Governments cannot make suggestions, recommendations, caution or proffer advice directly to ICANN regarding whether or not the delegation of the .Africa new gTLD should be determined by the AUC, against the stipulations of an existing global policy that is already codified in the Applicant Guidebook. Therefore, we think that this letter by the Ghanaian Chief Director is a clear violation of the multi-stakeholder model.

¹ 16 Oct. 2015 Letter by Issah Yahaya, Chief Director of the Ministry of Communications, Ghana to ICANN
<https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/yahaya-to-icann-16oct15-en.pdf>

Accordingly this type of unwarranted intervention that Ghana has made on this occasion; and also in the past, as the letter stated, at the urging of Dr. Nii Quaynor, a Ghanaian national – who is also a member of different ICANN committees, and active in the AfriCANN community with a vested interest in .Africa, as a member of the AUC Task Force on .Africa and a registrant of domain dotafrica.org, which is currently fronting the ZACR registry – have only helped to create additional complications regarding .Africa, including his past position conveyed to ICANN as well as the Ghanaian Secretary of the Commission for that the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), asserting that ECA is not an African institution, just to support a similar outcome.

As a matter of fact, cautioning ICANN not to delegate .Africa without the AUC's determination (as stated in the Ghana letter) creates gratuitous bias against DCA Trust's .Africa application and also prejudices the entire .Africa new gTLD process. This situation is quite regrettable.

Before closing, we would also like to remind that DCA Trust is a **bona fide** applicant for the .Africa new gTLD name string, and this letter from the Ghanaian Chief Director which claims not to provide support for DCA Trust's .Africa application has also not given any valid reason or reasons why such support has been withheld; or which application should be supported. The letter instead mentions support for the AUC to determine the delegation of .Africa which, as we have pointed out on many occasions, is not compatible with the ICANN new gTLD Program.

Finally, such unwarranted interventions should not be countenanced by ICANN, since these types of letters are being written simply at the instigation of our opponents to damage the chances of DCA Trust's .Africa application that is presently under "resumed evaluation/extended evaluation", by ICANN.

We hope the ICANN new gTLD Program will take our concerns into consideration going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Sbekele

Sophia Bekele
Executive Director/CEO
DotConnectAfrica Trust
Applicant for the .Africa new gTLD

Cc. Dr. Elham M.A. Ibrahim,
Commissioner of Infrastructure and Energy, African Union Commission
Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Cc. Hon. Minister,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
Accra, Ghana

Cc. Head of Mission,
Embassy of Ghana
Addis Ababa Ethiopia