Africa's map in the digital inclusion!

July 18, 2012

The Chief Executive Officer
Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN)
4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292-6601
United States of America

Copy to: Dr. Steven Crocker, Chairman of the ICANN Board of Directors

Dear Sirs,

Subject: *An Official Note to Express Our Deep Concerns regarding the Recent Unofficial Meeting between AU Delegates and an ICANN official at Prague*

As an applicant for the DotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD, we hereby write to express our deep concerns regarding a recent unofficial (or secret) meeting that took place between delegates from the African Union Commission (AUC) to the recent ICANN international gathering and an ICANN official at Prague. **It would appear that the AU delegates to the ICANN meeting had simply convened the informal/secret parley and surreptitiously inveigled the ICANN official (who was probably caught unawares) to attend.**   Whatever was the case, any stakeholder such as DCA that was not invited to the meeting nor made privy to the discussions that took place would feel completely left out, and what actually transpired could therefore be left to the imagination.

Kindly note that our intention is not to impugn the integrity of any ICANN official, but we really cannot over-stress the fact that such meetings would always create room for suspicion in the present climate against the backdrop that ICANN shall be presiding over the process of evaluating and delegating new gTLDs such as DotAfrica (.AFRICA).

Therefore, we believe that such meetings are inappropriate against the backdrop that the AU has presently mainstreamed itself in the .AFRICA application submitted by UniForum ZA Central Registry trading as Registry.Africa under the auspices of the Africa In One Space initiative (http://www.africainonespace.org), and the AU will therefore use any opportunity (such as this unofficial meeting that we are presently concerned about) to lobby on behalf of this group in order to unduly influence the outcome of the .AFRICA new gTLD application in its favour by ensuring a positive result for UniForum and the various groups represented by the Africa In One Space initiative. **DCA is indeed troubled that such secret (or unofficial) meetings without a published agenda could also be used to either influence ICANN officials, thus compromising their integrity, or used to impose an extra-ordinary agenda on ICANN**.   At this point in time, we are already fixed in our belief and understanding that by mainstreaming itself in the UniForum application for DotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD, the AU's objectives at ICANN can no longer be separated from the objectives of the Africa In One Space, since the AU is already part and parcel of the **Structure** of Africa In One Space.

To prevent any future occurrence, we would like to suggest that any matters to be discussed by the AU at ICANN should be based on an open, published agenda under a formal meeting arrangement or a multi-stakeholder forum convened in the interest of ethical transparency so that any pertinent issues raised by the AU or Africa In One Space can be openly commented upon. Such an open dialogue will ensure that no extraordinary agenda would be introduced and imposed on ICANN, since any stakeholder would also have an opportunity to present its point of view like what happened at Dakar, Senegal.

Thanking you in anticipation as we hope that our deep concerns as communicated in this correspondence shall be taken into proper consideration with a view to allaying our fears and suspicions as articulated.

We remain reassured of ICANN's commitment to openness and transparency in the conduct of its business.

Yours sincerely,

Sbekele

Ms. Sophia Bekele, B.S., M.B.A., C.I.S.A, C.C.S, CGEIT
Executive Director/CEO
For and on behalf of:
DotConnectAfrica Trust & DCA Registry Services (Kenya) Limited