## ICANN in Africa - FAQ

**What is ICANN?**
ICANN is the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. It is a global, non-profit, public-benefit corporation with offices in Brussels, Istanbul, Los Angeles, Montevideo, and Singapore; and engagement centers in Beijing, Geneva, Nairobi, and Washington.

**What does ICANN do?**
ICANN was established in 1998 to act in the global public interest as the trusted steward of the Internet's unique identifier systems. ICANN's mission is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet.

ICANN is one of the most unique organizations in the world – it coordinates access to the global resource we know as the Internet by coordinating the Internet's naming system through the assignment of unique identifiers, IP addresses and domain names that enable computers and other devices to find each other. As part of this work, the ICANN community, made up of stakeholders from around the world, collaborates on mechanisms to bolster the health and resiliency of the Domain Name System (DNS). It also develops policies and procedures related to the coordination and administration of the unique identifiers that make it possible for the Internet to connect.

**How does ICANN operate?**
ICANN follows a multistakeholder model, in which individuals, non-commercial stakeholder groups, industry, and governments all play important roles in its bottom-up, consensus-led process. ICANN's multistakeholder, bottom-up approach to policy development and strategic planning remains rooted in the continued belief that global representation, transparency, and accountability are critical to fulfilling the shared goal of a single, globally interoperable Internet supported by stable, secure, and resilient unique identifier systems. Through its multistakeholder model, ICANN develops technical policies that are globally adopted and contribute to the Internet's security, resiliency, and interoperability. The ICANN organization implements the community's recommendations at the direction of the Board, under the supervision of the ICANN President and CEO.

**What is ICANN's role in enabling inclusive and sustainable growth of the Internet?**
The mission of ICANN is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifier systems. This is a critical aspect of enabling sustainable development because the Internet is critical infrastructure upon which important applications are delivered. ICANN supports the expansion of the Internet by providing increased security of the root zone through efforts such as the Domain Name Security Extensions (DNSSEC), and increased inclusivity through Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs), which enable diversity on the Internet.

**How long has ICANN been active in Africa?**
ICANN has benefited from the participation of individuals from Africa since its inception. ICANN has had dedicated staff in Africa since 2006 and began conducting capacity-building activities before that date. ICANN meetings have been held in Africa since the early days of the organization.

**When was ICANN's first Africa strategy developed?**

The late Dr. Tarek Kamel, who was ICANN's Advisor to the President and Senior Vice President of Government and Intergovernmental Organization Engagement, spearheaded the development of an Africa strategy in a meeting with the ICANN community in Prague in 2012. That meeting resulted in the drafting of the first strategy by the Africa Strategy Working Group, and its subsequent adoption by the community in 2013, during the "Multistakeholder Internet Governance and the Domain Name System Industry in Africa (MIGWORKS)" event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over the past 10 years, guided by the ICANN Africa Strategic Plan FY16-20, tremendous progress has been made through initiatives focused on reviving the regional DNS industry, capacity-building, and activating participation in Internet governance.

**What does ICANN's Africa Strategy call for?**
The overall goal of the strategy is the transformation of Africa into an emerging market for the domain name industry and an active contributor to the Internet. Specifically, the Africa strategy calls for

○ Better participation of Africa in policy development at ICANN and an effective presence of ICANN in Africa.
○ Capacity-building as a key factor in transforming the African ecosystem into a thriving DNS that supports the Internet economy and uptake throughout the continent.

**What are ICANN's achievements in Africa to date?**
- In 2000, ICANN5 was held in Cairo.
- In 2002, ICANN12 was held in Accra.
- In 2005, ICANN recognized AFRINIC in Mauritius as the regional internet registry for Africa.
- In 2006, ICANN hired its first staff members in Africa.
- In 2012, ICANN's first Domain Name System Forum was launched in Africa (the Africa DNS Forum). The Forum is now co-organised with the Africa Top Level Domains Organization (AFTLD) and Afriregistrar.
- In 2015, ICANN, together with the Egypt National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA), launched a first-of-its-kind regional DNS Entrepreneurship Center (DNS-EC), charged with encouraging the evolution of the Internet ecosystem in Africa and the Middle East.
- In 2016, ICANN opened its first African regional engagement office, in Nairobi. The announcement was made at a press briefing during bilateral engagement with the ICT Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Joe Mucheru, and the late Dr. Tarek Kamel.
- In 2017, ICANN released the final report on the Africa Domain Name System (DNS) Market Study.