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INTERNET CORPORATION FOR
ASSIGNED NAMES AND NUMBERS

10 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
11 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
12 WESTERN DIVISION

14 DOTCONNECTAFRICA TRUST,
15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17 INTERNET CORPORATION FOR
18 ASSIGNED NAMES AND
NUMBERS,
19 Defendant.

Case No. CV 16-00862-RGK

Assigned for all purposes to the
Honorable R. Gary Klausner

**DECLARATION OF MOCTAR
YEDALY IN SUPPORT OF
ICANN'S OPPOSITION TO
PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

Hearing Date: April 4, 2016
Hearing Time: 9:00 a.m.
Hearing Location: Courtroom 850



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I, Moctar Yedaly, declare the following:

1. I am the Head of Information Society Division, within the Infrastructure and Energy Department at the African Union Commission (“AUC”), a position I have held since 2007. The AUC has authorized me to submit this declaration in support of ICANN’s Opposition to DotConnectAfrica Trust’s (“Plaintiff’s” or “DCA’s”) Application for Preliminary Injunction. I have personal and first-hand knowledge of the matters set forth herein and I am competent to testify as to those matters if called as a witness.

2. The AUC is the secretariat of the African Union (“AU”), entrusted with the union’s executive functions. As noted on the AU’s website—<http://www.au.int/en/about/nutshell>—the vision of the AU is: “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in [the] global arena.” The objectives of the AU include the promotion of sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies, and the advancement of the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology.

3. The AU has 54 member states, all from the African continent: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, UR of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The only country in Africa that is not a member

1 of the AU is Morocco. Notwithstanding this, the Government of Morocco provided
2 its letter of support for ZACR's application for the .AFRICA TLD.

3 4. The AUC is the key organ playing a central role in the day-to-day
4 management of the African Union. The AUC represents the Union and defends its
5 interests; elaborates draft common positions of the Union; prepares strategic plans
6 and studies for the consideration of the Executive Council i.e., Council of Ministers
7 of Foreign Affairs of the Union's Member States; elaborates, promotes, coordinates
8 and harmonizes the programs and policies of the Union with those of the Regional
9 Economic Communities; and ensures the mainstreaming of gender in all programs
10 and activities of the Union.

11 5. A primary mission of the AUC is to help drive the African integration
12 and development process in close collaboration with African Union Member States,
13 the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. In my position at the
14 AUC, I am in charge of the development of Policies and Regulations and
15 implementation of projects in the field of information and communication
16 technologies for the entire African Continent.

17 6. I have been integrally involved in the AUC's efforts to support the
18 delegation of a .AFRICA top level domain for the African continent. This initiative
19 is fully endorsed by the African Union and has widespread support across the
20 continent. The launch of the .AFRICA domain is of historic significance to the
21 African continent. With the goal of establishing "Africa in One Space", .AFRICA
22 will provide secure, world-class technical infrastructure to leverage the continent's
23 socio-economic capacity and potential. Built on a consensus-driven framework of
24 best practices and open standards, the .Africa Registry will place special emphasis
25 on securing the rights of intellectual property owners, Internet users and the broader
26 African community. The .AFRICA gTLD will enable governments, business and
27 civil society to build brands, promote development and establish long-term
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1 relationships with this market. The .AFRICA gTLD will also help governments,
2 the private sector, organizations and individuals associate their services, products
3 and information with the continent.

4 7. On August 7, 2010, African ministers in charge of Information and
5 Communication Technologies (“ICT”) for their respective countries signed the
6 “Abuja Declaration.” In that declaration, the ministers requested that the AUC
7 coordinate various projects aimed at promoting ICT projects on the African
8 continent. Among those projects was “set[ting] up the structure and modalities for
9 the [i]mplementation of the DotAfrica Project.” Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a
10 true and correct copy of the Abuja Declaration.

11 8. Pursuant to that mandate, the AUC issued a public request for
12 expressions of interest, followed by a request for proposals, (“RFP Process”)
13 seeking applications from private organizations (including DCA interested in
14 operating the .AFRICA gTLD).

15 9. On April 16, 2010, the AUC sent DCA a letter informing it that
16 “following consultations with relevant stakeholders . . . [it] no longer endorse[d]
17 individual initiatives [for .AFRICA].” Instead, “in coordination with the Member
18 States . . . the [AUC] w[ould] go through [an] open [selection] process.” This letter
19 is attached as Exhibit 7 to the Declaration of Sophia Bekele Eshete (ECF No. 17-7).
20 One of the purposes of this letter was to advise DCA that the AUC was
21 withdrawing any previous support the AUC had announced for DCA now that the
22 AUC was more fully engaged and had determined to conduct an open selection
23 process to identify the registry operator that the AUC would endorse.

24 10. DCA chose not to participate in the RFP Process. ZA Central Registry
25 (“ZACR”) prevailed in the RFP Process, and ZACR submitted an application to
26 ICANN for the .AFRICA gTLD with the full support of the AUC and with more
27 than 60% support from individual African Governments as required by the new
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1 gTLD Applicants' Guidebook. The AUC did not support DCA's application
2 for .AFRICA at the time DCA submitted it to ICANN in 2012, and it does not
3 support DCA's application now. In addition, 17 (seventeen) GAC Early Warning
4 Notices and Consensus advice was issued against DCA's application for .Africa.
5 Attached hereto as Exhibit B and C are true and correct copies of the
6 aforementioned documents.

7
8 11. On June 2, 2014—almost two years ago—the AUC sent a letter to
9 ICANN explaining “DotAfrica is an extremely important initiative for Africa’s
10 participation and contribution to the Internet economy and to the broader Internet
11 governance ecosystem,” and that it was “with great concern that we are faced with []
12 delay in delegating this important regional TLD.” Our letter continued: “[I]t is
13 becoming increasingly difficult for the AUC to explain to not only its member
14 states but also other African stakeholders, why the African geographic TLD
15 application has become so challenging for ICANN to expedite despite the various
16 statements made towards the need to support developing regions.” A true and
17 correct copy of this letter is attached to this declaration as Exhibit D.

18 12. ZACR has signed a registry agreement with ICANN and is fully
19 prepared to proceed once ICANN is able to complete the delegation. I am aware
20 that ZACR has incurred considerable expenses, and will continue to incur such
21 expenses, without being able to proceed with the delegation of .AFRICA. Further
22 delays will increase this prejudice.

23 13. In addition, all surplus funds generated through the administration of
24 the .AFRICA TLD will be channeled into a Development Fund, which will be
25 applied towards African developmental projects and initiatives. The Development
26 Fund will be administered by the dotAfrica Foundation, which will ensure that
27 dotAfrica's core developmental objectives are addressed. The continued delay in
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the delegation of the .AFRICA gTLD to ZACR has impeded this goal and prejudices the AUC's member states and the African community.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct. This declaration was signed on 10 March 2016 at Marrakech, Morocco.





Moctar Yedaly

EXHIBIT A

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 5517 700

Fax: 5517844

Website: www.africa-union.org

**THIRD CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS
IN CHARGE OF COMMUNICATION AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES**

03 - 07 August 2010

Abuja, Nigeria

AU/CITMC-3/MIN/Decl.(III)

2010 ABUJA DECLARATION

2010 ABUJA DECLARATION

PREAMBLE

WE, African Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies meeting at the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communication and Information Technologies in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 6 – 7 August 2010;

Guided by the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Vision of the African Union (AU);

Recalling the Executive Council Decision (EX.CL/Dec./238. (VII)) on establishment of the Communication and Information Technologies Ministerial Conference (CITMC);

Bearing in mind the 14th Assembly of Heads of State and Government Declaration on Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Challenges and Prospects for Development, Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XIV), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 1 to 2 February 2010;

Re-affirming that Information and Communication Technologies are key to Africa's development and economic competitiveness in the attainment of the African Union Vision and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

Taking into account the African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE) adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union Decision EX.CL/Dec./261 (IX) in Khartoum, The Sudan in 2006;

Considering the African Heads of State and Government Declaration Assembly/AU/9(XII), on supporting the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2009;

Considering also the Oliver Tambo Declaration adopted in Johannesburg in November 2009;

Recalling the Decision EX.CL/Dec./434(XIII) of the 13th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in July 2008;

Welcoming the various initiatives on the development of the Information and Communication Technologies sector in Africa, including:

- The Reference Framework for Harmonization of Telecom/ICT Policy and Regulations In Africa;
- African Regional Action Plan for the Knowledge Economy;
- Action Plan for the Development of Postal Sector in Africa;
- EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure (ICT component);
- EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space;
- NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) ICT programmes.
- Connect Africa Summit, and
- The Pan-African e-Network for Tele-Medicine and Tele-Education.

Taking note of the Report of the Experts Meeting held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 3 to 5 of August 2010.

HEREBY COMMIT OURSELVES TO:

1. **INTEGRATE** Information and Communication Technologies into our respective National Indicative Programmes;
2. **PROMOTE** the mainstreaming of ICT policies in other sectors at national, regional and continental levels;
3. **WORK TOGETHER** to contribute to the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), notably its ICT component;
4. **PROMOTE** the transition from Analog to Digital terrestrial Broadcasting and to set up National Multi-Disciplinary Committee (Telecoms/ICT experts and regulators, broadcasting experts and regulators and policy makers) on the Analog Switch-Off with the mission, among others, to oversee the national strategy and to coordinate with similar committees at regional and continental levels;
5. **ENCOURAGE** the African private sector to invest in ICT networks projects;
6. **SET UP** national structure to promote the use of ICT in education to enable the rollout and scaling up of the NEPAD e-School initiative;
7. **PROMOTE** the implementation of the e-Post programme as part of the National e-strategies taking into account coordination at the regional level;

8. **SECURE** the orbital/spectrum resources required to accommodate continental satellites including applying as a block to secure allocation of unused ITSO orbital resources to Africa as priority;
9. **SUPPORT** the implementation of the 'Connect Africa' commitment to promote human and institutional capacity building through interconnected network of ICT Centres of Excellence;
10. **SUPPORT** the creation of an African Centre of Excellence with continental coverage, in the field of ICT;
11. **SUPPORT** the decision to integrate the Ministerial Conference and the Executive Committee of the NEPAD e-Africa Commission into the African Union CIT Ministerial Conference (CITMC);
12. **ENCOURAGE** the RECs to strengthen their capacity through the provision of Postal Experts for an optimum implementation of the Action Plan for the Development of the Postal Sector in Africa;
13. **INCLUDE** postal entities in our strategies and programmes for the development of the ICT universal access in accordance with the Declaration of the 14th Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2010.

HEREBY REQUEST THE AU COMMISSION TO:

- 1) **Work with** the ITU and with all the development partners to continue activities on harmonisation of policy and regulations in Africa based on the platform created by HIPSSA project in order to implement the remaining components of the Reference Framework adopted by the CITMC-2;
- 2) **Jointly finalize with** the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, within the framework of the African Information Society Initiative (AISII), the Draft Convention on Cyber Legislation and support its implementation in Member States by 2012;
- 3) **Set up** the structure and modalities for the Implementation of the DotAfrica project;
- 4) **Conduct** a feasibility study for the establishment of the African Space Agency taking into account existing initiatives, and develop an African Space Policy in cooperation with the RECs, UNECA and ITU;

- 5) **Implement** the integration of the NEPAD e-Africa Commission governance into the governance of the CITMC;
 - 6) **Provide** support to Member States in implementing the e-Post programme in cooperation with the stakeholders;
 - 7) **Enhance** organizational and institutional capacity building for better programmes and initiatives coordination, and for an appropriate and consolidated mechanism for reporting to the CITMC.
 - 8) **Develop** an action plan and a monitoring mechanism for implementation of CITMC decisions
 - 9) **Strengthen** the capacity of the Departments in charge of Communications and Information Technologies within the African Union Commission as to allow an optimum implementation of this Declaration
14. **APPRECIATE** the role of African institutions, UN Agencies, African and international development partners and the private sector in supporting the AU efforts to develop the ICT sector in the continent;
 15. **EXPRESS** our gratitude to His Excellency President **Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan**, the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this conference.

Abuja, Nigeria, 7 August 2010

EXHIBIT B

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-AUC-42560

Application ID:	1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	Dot Connect Africa
String:	dotAfrica
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

The African Union Commission wishes to express its objection to the application submitted by Dot Connect Africa (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) has the mandate of African governments to ‘establish dotAfrica as a continental (geographic) To-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies’ and ‘to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of dotAfrica project’ as provided for in the Abuja Declaration. In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed as the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community for the benefit of the African region.

The application fails to meet the minimum requirements prescribed by ICANN in the gTLD Applicant Guidebook concerning geographic names.

- It is a geographic string application that does not have the requisite minimum support from African governments.
- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Its application does not adequately and substantively differentiate itself from the AUC's officially endorsed application for the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic string and as such will likely result in public confusion with ensuing adverse affects on the goodwill and effectiveness of the African TLD space.
- Post-amendment, DCA's applied for string is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments that have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (Ref # 1-1234-89583).

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-AUC-42560

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

- **DCA’s Application lacks the requisite Government Support**
 - Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 (section 2-16) of the Applicants’ Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as “Geographic Names” and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
 - Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO “Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings” list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The AUC is confident that the “geographic evaluation process” that this application is subject to provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
 - The issue as to whether DCA’s application for the .dotAfrica string (1-1165-42560) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant’s Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a “geographic name”.
 - According to the Applicant’s Guidebook (section 2-17) *“Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process.”*
 - DCA’s amended application is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. It must consequently be subjected to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
 - In particular we contend that the DCA’s amended .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate it from the AUC’s endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic string application and will therefore confuse the public.
 - Being a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and specifically being mandated by these states to *“Set up the structure and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project”* the AUC is in an authoritative position to declare African government support or opposition to any “Africa” geographic string application.
 - In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC’s officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (1-1234-89583) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.
- **Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion**
 - DCA’s application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA’s persistent interference in this process is likely

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-AUC-42560

to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA’s applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA’s application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which we clearly do not.
- In particular, we contend that the amended DCA’s .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate it from the AUC’s endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-AUC-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

The GAC Early Warning is a notice only. It is not a formal objection, nor does it directly lead to a process that can result in rejection of the application. However, a GAC Early Warning should be taken seriously as it raises the likelihood that the application could be the subject of GAC Advice on New gTLDs or of a formal objection at a later stage in the process. Refer to section 1.1.2.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb>) for more information on GAC Early Warning.

Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-AUC-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BF-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of **BURKINA FASO** wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BF-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Egypt therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BF-42560

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BF-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BF-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BJ-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Bénin wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BJ-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Bénin therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BJ-42560

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BJ-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

The GAC Early Warning is a notice only. It is not a formal objection, nor does it directly lead to a process that can result in rejection of the application. However, a GAC Early Warning should be taken seriously as it raises the likelihood that the application could be the subject of GAC Advice on New gTLDs or of a formal objection at a later stage in the process. Refer to section 1.1.2.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb>) for more information on GAC Early Warning.

Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-BJ-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CD-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of DR of CONGO wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and

Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (Ref # 1-1243-89583).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CD-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of DR of CONGO therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number – of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CD-42560

Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.

In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant for the string tries to address the concerns raised by the Early Warning
- The applicant should withdraw their application based on the information provided above

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CD-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

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Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CD-42560

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CM-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Cameroon wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CM-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Egypt therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CM-42560

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CM-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

The GAC Early Warning is a notice only. It is not a formal objection, nor does it directly lead to a process that can result in rejection of the application. However, a GAC Early Warning should be taken seriously as it raises the likelihood that the application could be the subject of GAC Advice on New gTLDs or of a formal objection at a later stage in the process. Refer to section 1.1.2.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb>) for more information on GAC Early Warning.

Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-CM-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal – Africa-EG-1-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Egypt wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal – Africa-EG-1-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Egypt therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate

GAC Early Warning – Submittal – Africa-EG-1-42560

given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-GA-42560

Application ID:	(Ref# 1-1165-42560) 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	Dot Connect Africa (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description - This will be posted publicly:

The Government of the Republic of Gabon wishes to express its objection to the application submitted by Dot Connect Africa (DCA) for the gTLD .Africa.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised, does not meet the requirements for support from African governments as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook.

This domain should be managed by the African Union Commission (AUC) as a geographic gTLD for the benefit of the Africa region as the administrative organ of the African Union, a union of all but one African government. The African Union Commission (AUC) has the mandate of African governments to ‘establish dotAfrica as a continental To-Level Domain for use by African stakeholders including organisations, businesses, individuals and others with guidance from African Internet Agencies’ and ‘to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of dotAfrica project’ as provided for in the 2010 Abuja Declaration.

The DotConnectAfrica .Africa application (1-1165-42560) fails to meet the minimum requirements prescribed by ICANN in the gTLD Applicant Guidebook concerning geographic names. It is a geographic string application that does not have the requisite minimum support from African governments.

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-GA-42560

Reason/Rationale for the Warning - This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

1. DCA’s Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- a. Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 (section 2-16) of the Applicants’ Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as “Geographic Names” and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- b. Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO “Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings” list.
- c. Being a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and specifically being mandated by these states to “Set up the structure and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project” the AUC is in an authoritative position to declare African government support or opposition to any “Africa” geographic string application.

Supporting GAC Members (Optional):

I agree to include the supporting GAC members in the publication of this Early Warning

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant - This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant for the string tries to address the concerns raised by the Early Warning
- The applicant should withdraw their application based on the information provided above
- The applicant should apply for another string.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how her experience in the Internet field can be utilised to benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-GA-42560

- The applicant should withdraw their application based on the information provided above.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) - This will be posted publicly:

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

The GAC Early Warning is a notice only. It is not a formal objection, nor does it directly lead to a process that can result in rejection of the application. However, a GAC Early Warning should be taken seriously as it raises the likelihood that the application could be the subject of GAC Advice on New gTLDs or of a formal objection at a later stage in the process. Refer to section 1.1.2.4 of the Applicant Guidebook (<http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/agb>) for more information on GAC Early Warning.

Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-GA-42560

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

Applicant Response:

*In case of reply the **number** and **date** of this letter should be **quoted***



#:2267

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
P. O. BOX M.38
ACCRA

Tel No: +233-(0)30-266-6465

Fax No: +233-(0)30-266-7114

Republic of Ghana

14 November 2012

My Ref. No:

Your Ref. No:

EARLY WARNING AGAINST DOTCONNECTAFRICA'S (DCA)
APPLICATION FOR (.AFRICA)

The Ministry of Communications presents its compliments to the Commissioner, Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission and conveys support for the AUC's mandate to apply for the DOTAFRICA (.AFRICA) generic top-level domain, and also the appointment of UniForum SA trading as the ZA Central Registry to manage the dot AFRICA domain registry.

In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Ghana wishes to express its objection to the application submitted by Dot Connect Africa (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The enclosed GAC Early Warning Submittal is therefore being submitted outlining the basis of objection.

The Ministry of Communications avails itself of the opportunity to renew to the Commissioner, Infrastructure and Energy of AUC the assurance of its highest consideration.



HARUNA IDDRISU (MP)
MINISTER

DR. ELHAM M.A. IBRAHIM (Mrs)
COMMISSIONER
INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY
AFRICAN UNION
P. O. BOX 3243
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Cc: Issah Yahaya, GAC Representative

GAC Early Warning #2268 Submittal

Application ID:	1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	Dot Connect Africa
String:	dotAfrica
Early Warning Issue Date:	(this box to be filled in by GAC Secretariat only)

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

The Government of the **Republic of GHANA** wishes to express its objection to the application submitted by Dot Connect Africa (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) has the mandate of African governments to “*establish dotAfrica as a continental (geographic) To-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies*” and “*to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of dotAfrica project*” as provided for in the Abuja Declaration. In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed as the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community for the benefit of the African region.

The Dot Connect Africa (DCA) application fails to meet the minimum requirements prescribed by ICANN in the gTLD Applicant Guidebook concerning geographic names.

- It is a geographic string application that does not have the requisite minimum support from African governments.
 - DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
 - Its application does not adequately and substantively differentiate itself from the AUC's officially endorsed application for the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic string and as such will likely result in public confusion with ensuing adverse affects on the goodwill and effectiveness of the African TLD space.
 - Post-amendment, DCA's applied for string is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments that have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (Ref # 1-1234-89583).
-

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

- **DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support**
 - Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 (section 2-16) of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
 - Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The AUC is confident that the "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
 - The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (1-1165-42560) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
 - According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-17) "Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process."
 - DCA's amended application is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. It must consequently be subjected to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
 - In particular we contend that the DCA's amended .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate it from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic string application and will therefore confuse the public.
 - Being a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and specifically being mandated by these states to "*Set up the structure and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project*" the AUC is in an authoritative position to declare African government support or opposition to any "Africa" geographic string application.
 - In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (1-1234-89583) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.
- **Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion**
 - DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely

to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which we clearly do not.
- In particular, we contend that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate it from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KE-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of The Republic of Kenya wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KE-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Kenya therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KE-42560

given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KE-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

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Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

If you have questions or need clarification about your GAC Early Warning, please contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. As highlighted above, ICANN strongly encourages you to contact gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org as soon as practicable regarding the issues identified in the Early Warning.

Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KE-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KM-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Comoros wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KM-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Comoros therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KM-42560

given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KM-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

About GAC Early Warning

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Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

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In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-KM-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-MA-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

The Government of Kingdom of Morocco wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project". In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-MA-42560

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Kingdom of Morocco therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals

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with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-MA-42560

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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Instructions if you receive the Early Warning

ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

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Continuing with your application

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In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-MA-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal_ Africa-ML-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Mali wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (Ref # 1-1243-89583).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal_ Africa-ML-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (Ref # 1-1243-89583), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Mali therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (1-1165-42560) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (1-1243-89583) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal_ Africa-ML-42560

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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ICANN strongly encourages you work with relevant parties as soon as possible to address the concerns voiced in the GAC Early Warning.

Asking questions about your GAC Early Warning

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Continuing with your application

If you choose to continue with the application, then the “Applicant’s Response” section below should be completed. In this section, you should notify the GAC of intended actions, including the expected completion date. This completed form should then be sent to gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org. If your remediation steps involve submitting requests for changes to your application, see the change request process at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/change-requests>.

In the absence of a response, ICANN will continue to process the application as submitted.

Withdrawing your application

If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning-Submittal

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-NG-2-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of The Federal Republic of Nigeria wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-NG-2-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Kenya therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-NG-2-42560

given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-SN-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of the republic of Senegal wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the Implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (Ref # 1-1243-89583).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal _____

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Senegal therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal _____

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

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If you choose to withdraw your application within the 21-day window to be eligible for a refund of 80% of the evaluation fee (USD 148,000), please follow the withdrawal process published at <http://newgtlds.icann.org/en/applicants/customer-service/withdrawal-refund>. Note that an application can still be withdrawn after the 21-day time period; however, the available refund amount is reduced. See section 1.5 of the Applicant Guidebook.

For questions please contact: gacearlywarning@gac.icann.org

GAC Early Warning-Submittal

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-TZ-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Tanzania wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-TZ-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Tanzania therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-TZ-42560

Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

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- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
- The applicant should engage in a discussion with the AUC to agree on how the applicant's experience in the Internet field can be utilized to further benefit the African continent in ways that will not conflict with positions taken by the African Governments.

Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

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GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-TZ-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-UG-42560

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1165-42560
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of Uganda wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

The African Union Commission (AUC) is a Union of 54 (fifty four) African states and [has the mandate](#) of African governments for "establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies" and "set up the structure and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica project" as provided for in the [2010 Abuja Declaration](#). In keeping with this mandate and following an open and transparent Request for Proposal process, UniForum SA, trading as the ZA Central Registry, was appointed the registry operator to manage and administer the dotAfrica gTLD on behalf of the African Community and for the benefit of the African region.

The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-UG-42560

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of Uganda ,therefore, hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
- Africa is a clearly designated geographic region as defined in the UNESCO "Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings" list. In this regard the designation of the official AUC endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) TLD string application as a geographic name is therefore technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to, provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.
- The issue as to whether DCA's application for the .dotAfrica string (**1-1165-42560**) will constitute a geographic name as outlined in the Applicant's Guidebook is uncertain, notwithstanding the fact that the applicant itself has designated the application as a "geographic name".
- According to the Applicant's Guidebook (section 2-18) "*Strings that include but do not match a Geographic Name will not be considered geographic names as defined in section 2.2.1.4.2 and therefore will not require documentation of government support in the evaluation process*", which used to be the case of DCA's application before being amended. Now, after amendment, it is identical to the AUC-endorsed application and must be regarded as a geographic name for purposes of evaluation. Consequently, it must be subject to the criteria and rules applicable to the evaluation of geographic names, including government support.
- In contrast to the DCA application, the AUC's officially endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application (**1-1243-89583**) has the support of over 39 (thirty nine) individual national governments in Africa, which exceeds the minimum governmental support prescribed by ICANN for new geographic strings.

2. Unwarranted Interference and Intrusion

- DCA's application constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference with the mandate

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-UG-42560

given to the AUC by African Head of States and African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. In this regard the AUC has been mandated to establish dotAfrica (.Africa) as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organisations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet Agencies; and in doing so to set up the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project. DCA's persistent interference in this process is likely to have substantive political, economic and social repercussions in Africa.

3. Confusing Similarity

- DCA's applied for string (.Africa) is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application as officially endorsed by the AUC. Should DCA's application be allowed to proceed, it is likely to deceive and/or confuse the public into believing that the AUC is associated with, or endorses their application, which is clearly not the case.
- In particular, it is contended that the amended DCA's .Africa application does not sufficiently differentiate itself from the AUC's endorsed dotAfrica (.Africa) geographic application and will therefore confuse and deceive the public.

Possible Remediation steps for Applicant – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to identify possible remediation steps to be taken by the applicant

- The applicant should withdraw the application based on the information provided above.
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Further Notes from GAC Member(s) (Optional) – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-UG-42560

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GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-UG-42560

Applicant Response:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-ZA-89583

Application ID:	Ref# 1-1243-89583
Entity/Applicant Name:	DotConnectAfrica (DCA)
String:	.Africa
Early Warning Issue Date:	20 November 2012

Early Warning Description – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Member(s) to indicate a description of the Early Warning being filed

The Government of South Africa wishes to express objection to the application submitted by DotConnectAfrica (DCA) for the .Africa geographic Top Level Domain.

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The DotConnectAfrica application as revised,

- Does not meet the requirements concerning geographic names as described in the new gTLD Applicant Guidebook, since it does not satisfy the required minimum support of concerned (African) governments;
- Constitutes an unwarranted intrusion and interference on the African Union Commission's (AUC) mandate from African governments to establish the structures and modalities for the implementation of the dotAfrica (.Africa) project; and
- Is identical to the dotAfrica (.Africa) application officially endorsed by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the 39 individual African governments who have submitted letters of support per the Applicants' Guide Book (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**).

Reason/Rationale for the Warning – This will be posted publicly:

GAC Early Warning – Submittal Africa-ZA-89583

GAC Member(s) to indicate the reason and rationale for the Early Warning being filed.

The African Union (AU) and several African countries have supported and endorsed the application by UniForum (**Ref # 1-1243-89583**), which was selected through a transparent process conducted by the African Union Commission, as directed by the AU CITMC (Communications and Information Technology Ministerial Conference). The African Union has taken steps to ensure that UniForum will operate .Africa for the public good of the people of Africa, and will put in place sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the pan-African community.

The Government of South Africa therefore hereby records its objection to the DotConnectAfrica application which is competing with the UniForum application that has the support and endorsement of the African Union and an overwhelming number of African governments.

1. DCA's Application lacks the requisite Government Support

- Paragraph 2.2.1.4.2 of the Applicants' Guidebook prescribes that certain applied-for-strings may qualify as "Geographic Names" and must therefore be accompanied by documentation of support or non-objection from the relevant governments or public authorities. In particular, the guidebook requires at least 60% of the relevant national governments in a region to provide documentation in support of new applications for geographic strings and there must be no more than one written statement of objection.
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Applicant Response:

EXHIBIT C



Governmental Advisory Committee

Beijing, People's Republic of China – 11 April 2013

GAC Communiqué – Beijing, People's Republic of China¹

I. Introduction

The Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) met in Beijing during the week of 4 April 2013. Sixty-one (61) GAC Members participated in the meetings and eight (8) Observers. The GAC expresses warm thanks to the local hosts China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), China Organizational Name Administration Center (CONAC), and Internet Society of China for their support.

II. Internal Matters

1. New Members and Observers

The GAC welcomes Belarus, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Lebanon, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the Committee as members, and The World Meteorological Organisation as an Observer.

2. GAC Secretariat

Following a request for proposals, the GAC received presentations from two organizations and agreed that one such candidate should be providing secretariat services to the GAC, with the aim of becoming operational as soon as possible. Negotiations with such organization will start immediately after the Beijing meeting.

¹ To access previous GAC advice, whether on the same or other topics, past GAC communiqués are available at: <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Recent+Meetings> and older GAC communiqués are available at: <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Meetings+Archive>.

3. GAC Leadership

The GAC warmly thanks the outgoing Vice-Chairs, Kenya, Singapore, and Sweden and welcomes the incoming Vice-Chairs, Australia, Switzerland and Trinidad & Tobago.

III. Inter-constituencies Activities

1. Meeting with the Accountability and Transparency Review Team 2 (ATRT 2)

The GAC met with the ATRT 2 and received an update on the current activities of the ATRT 2. The exchange served as an information gathering session for the ATRT 2 in order to hear GAC member views on the Review Team processes and areas of interest for governments. The GAC provided input on governmental processes and the challenges and successes that arose during the first round of reviews, and implementation of the GAC related recommendations of the first Accountability and Transparency Review Team.

2. Board/GAC Recommendation Implementation Working Group (BGRI-WG)

The Board–GAC Recommendation Implementation Working Group (BGRI–WG) met to discuss further developments on ATRT1 recommendations relating to the GAC, namely recommendations 11 and 12. In the context of Recommendation 11, the GAC and the Board have concluded the discussion and agreed on the details of the consultation process mandated per ICANN Bylaws, should the Board decide not to follow a GAC advice. With respect to Recommendation 12, on GAC Early Engagement, the BGRI-WG had a good exchange with the GNSO on mechanisms for the GAC to be early informed and provide early input to the GNSO PDP. The BGRI–WG intends to continue this discussion intersessionally and at its next meeting in Durban.

3. Brand Registry Group

The GAC met with the Brand Registry Group and received information on its origins, values and missions.

4. Law Enforcement

The GAC met with law enforcement representatives and received an update from Europol on the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA).

The GAC warmly thanks the Accountability and Transparency Review Team 2, the Brand Registry Group, Law Enforcement, and the ICANN Board who jointly met with the GAC as well

as all those among the ICANN community who have contributed to the dialogue with the GAC in Beijing.

IV. GAC Advice to the ICANN Board²

1. New gTLDs

a. GAC Objections to Specific Applications

i. The GAC Advises the ICANN Board that:

i. The GAC has reached consensus on GAC Objection Advice according to Module 3.1 part I of the Applicant Guidebook on the following applications:³

1. The application for .africa (Application number 1-1165-42560)
2. The application for .gcc (application number: 1-1936-2101)

ii. With regard to Module 3.1 part II of the Applicant Guidebook⁴:

1. The GAC recognizes that Religious terms are sensitive issues. Some GAC members have raised sensitivities on the applications that relate to Islamic terms, specifically .islam and .halal. The GAC members concerned have noted that the applications for .islam and .halal lack community involvement and support. It is the view of these GAC members that these applications should not proceed.

b. Safeguard Advice for New gTLDs

To reinforce existing processes for raising and addressing concerns the GAC is providing safeguard advice to apply to broad categories of strings (see Annex I).

c. Strings for Further GAC Consideration

In addition to this safeguard advice, that GAC has identified certain gTLD strings where further GAC consideration may be warranted, including at the GAC meetings to be held in Durban.

- i. Consequently, **the GAC advises the ICANN Board** to: not proceed beyond Initial Evaluation with the following strings : .shenzhen (IDN in Chinese), .persiangulf, .guangzhou (IDN in Chinese), .amazon (and IDNs in Japanese and Chinese), .patagonia, .date, .spa, .yun, .thai, .zulu, .wine, .vin

² To track the history and progress of GAC Advice to the Board, please visit the GAC Advice Online Register available at: <https://gacweb.icann.org/display/gacweb/GAC+Recent+Meetings>

³ Module 3.1: "The GAC advises ICANN that it is the consensus of the GAC that a particular application should not proceed. This will create a strong presumption for the ICANN Board that the application should not be approved.

⁴ Module 3.1: "The GAC advises ICANN that there are concerns about a particular application "dot-example." The ICANN Board is expected to enter into dialogue with the GAC to understand the scope of concerns. The ICANN Board is also expected to provide a rationale for its decision.

d. The GAC requests:

- i. a written briefing about the ability of an applicant to change the string applied for in order to address concerns raised by a GAC Member and to identify a mutually acceptable solution.

e. Community Support for Applications

The GAC advises the Board:

- i. that in those cases where a community, which is clearly impacted by a set of new gTLD applications in contention, has expressed a collective and clear opinion on those applications, such opinion should be duly taken into account, together with all other relevant information.

f. Singular and plural versions of the same string as a TLD

The GAC believes that singular and plural versions of the string as a TLD could lead to potential consumer confusion.

Therefore **the GAC advises the ICANN Board to:**

- i. Reconsider its decision to allow singular and plural versions of the same strings.

g. Protections for Intergovernmental Organisations

The GAC stresses that the IGOs perform an important global public mission with public funds, they are the creations of government under international law, and their names and acronyms warrant special protection in an expanded DNS. Such protection, which the GAC has previously advised, should be a priority.

This recognizes that IGOs are in an objectively different category to other rights holders, warranting special protection by ICANN in the DNS, while also preserving sufficient flexibility for workable implementation.

The GAC is mindful of outstanding implementation issues and commits to actively working with IGOs, the Board, and ICANN Staff to find a workable and timely way forward.

Pending the resolution of these implementation issues, the **GAC reiterates its advice to the ICANN Board that:**

- i. appropriate preventative initial protection for the IGO names and acronyms on the provided list be in place before any new gTLDs would launch.

2. Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA)

Consistent with previous communications to the ICANN Board

a. the GAC advises the ICANN Board that:

- i. the 2013 Registrar Accreditation Agreement should be finalized before any new gTLD contracts are approved.

The GAC also strongly supports the amendment to the new gTLD registry agreement that would require new gTLD registry operators to use only those registrars that have signed the 2013 RAA.

The GAC appreciates the improvements to the RAA that incorporate the 2009 GAC-Law Enforcement Recommendations.

The GAC is also pleased with the progress on providing verification and improving accuracy of registrant data and supports continuing efforts to identify preventative mechanisms that help deter criminal or other illegal activity. Furthermore the GAC urges all stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of accreditation programs for privacy and proxy services for WHOIS.

3. WHOIS

The GAC urges the ICANN Board to:

- a. ensure that the GAC Principles Regarding gTLD WHOIS Services, approved in 2007, are duly taken into account by the recently established Directory Services Expert Working Group.

The GAC stands ready to respond to any questions with regard to the GAC Principles.

The GAC also expects its views to be incorporated into whatever subsequent policy development process might be initiated once the Expert Working Group concludes its efforts.

4. International Olympic Committee and Red Cross /Red Crescent

Consistent with its previous communications, **the GAC advises the ICANN Board to:**

- a. amend the provisions in the new gTLD Registry Agreement pertaining to the IOC/RCRC names to confirm that the protections will be made permanent prior to the delegation of any new gTLDs.

5. Public Interest Commitments Specifications

The GAC requests:

- b. more information on the Public Interest Commitments Specifications on the basis of the questions listed in annex II.

V. Next Meeting

The GAC will meet during the period of the 47th ICANN meeting in Durban, South Africa.

ANNEX I

Safeguards on New gTLDs

The GAC considers that Safeguards should apply to broad categories of strings. For clarity, this means any application for a relevant string in the current or future rounds, in all languages applied for.

The GAC advises the Board that all safeguards highlighted in this document as well as any other safeguard requested by the ICANN Board and/or implemented by the new gTLD registry and registrars should:

- be implemented in a manner that is fully respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in international and, as appropriate, regional declarations, conventions, treaties and other legal instruments – including, but not limited to, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- respect all substantive and procedural laws under the applicable jurisdictions.
- be operated in an open manner consistent with general principles of openness and non-discrimination.

Safeguards Applicable to all New gTLDs

The GAC Advises that the following six safeguards should apply to all new gTLDs and be subject to contractual oversight.

1. **WHOIS verification and checks** —Registry operators will conduct checks on a statistically significant basis to identify registrations in its gTLD with deliberately false, inaccurate or incomplete WHOIS data at least twice a year. Registry operators will weight the sample towards registrars with the highest percentages of deliberately false, inaccurate or incomplete records in the previous checks. Registry operators will notify the relevant registrar of any inaccurate or incomplete records identified during the checks, triggering the registrar’s obligation to solicit accurate and complete information from the registrant.
2. **Mitigating abusive activity**—Registry operators will ensure that terms of use for registrants include prohibitions against the distribution of malware, operation of botnets, phishing, piracy, trademark or copyright infringement, fraudulent or deceptive practices, counterfeiting or otherwise engaging in activity contrary to applicable law.
3. **Security checks**— While respecting privacy and confidentiality, Registry operators will periodically conduct a technical analysis to assess whether domains in its gTLD are being used to perpetrate security threats, such as pharming, phishing, malware, and botnets. If Registry operator identifies security risks that pose an actual risk of harm, Registry operator will notify the relevant registrar and, if the registrar does not take immediate action, suspend the domain name until the matter is resolved.

4. **Documentation**—Registry operators will maintain statistical reports that provide the number of inaccurate WHOIS records or security threats identified and actions taken as a result of its periodic WHOIS and security checks. Registry operators will maintain these reports for the agreed contracted period and provide them to ICANN upon request in connection with contractual obligations.
5. **Making and Handling Complaints** – Registry operators will ensure that there is a mechanism for making complaints to the registry operator that the WHOIS information is inaccurate or that the domain name registration is being used to facilitate or promote malware, operation of botnets, phishing, piracy, trademark or copyright infringement, fraudulent or deceptive practices, counterfeiting or otherwise engaging in activity contrary to applicable law.
6. **Consequences** – Consistent with applicable law and any related procedures, registry operators shall ensure that there are real and immediate consequences for the demonstrated provision of false WHOIS information and violations of the requirement that the domain name should not be used in breach of applicable law; these consequences should include suspension of the domain name.

The following safeguards are intended to apply to particular categories of new gTLDs as detailed below.

Category 1

Consumer Protection, Sensitive Strings, and Regulated Markets:

The GAC Advises the ICANN Board:

- Strings that are linked to regulated or professional sectors should operate in a way that is consistent with applicable laws. These strings are likely to invoke a level of implied trust from consumers, and carry higher levels of risk associated with consumer harm. The following safeguards should apply to strings that are related to these sectors:
 1. Registry operators will include in its acceptable use policy that registrants comply with all applicable laws, including those that relate to privacy, data collection, consumer protection (including in relation to misleading and deceptive conduct), fair lending, debt collection, organic farming, disclosure of data, and financial disclosures.
 2. Registry operators will require registrars at the time of registration to notify registrants of this requirement.
 3. Registry operators will require that registrants who collect and maintain sensitive health and financial data implement reasonable and appropriate security measures commensurate with the offering of those services, as defined by applicable law and recognized industry standards.
 4. Establish a working relationship with the relevant regulatory, or industry self-regulatory, bodies, including developing a strategy to mitigate as much as possible the risks of fraudulent, and other illegal, activities.

5. Registrants must be required by the registry operators to notify to them a single point of contact which must be kept up-to-date, for the notification of complaints or reports of registration abuse, as well as the contact details of the relevant regulatory, or industry self-regulatory, bodies in their main place of business.

In the current round the GAC has identified the following non-exhaustive list of strings that the above safeguards should apply to:

- **Children:**
 - .kid, .kids, .kinder, .game, .games, .juegos, .play, .school, .schule, .toys
- **Environmental:**
 - .earth, .eco, .green, .bio, .organic
- **Health and Fitness:**
 - .care, .diet, .fit, .fitness, .health, .healthcare, .heart, .hiv, .hospital,, .med, .medical, .organic, .pharmacy, .rehab, .surgery, .clinic, .healthy (IDN Chinese equivalent), .dental, .dentist .doctor, .dds, .physio
- **Financial:**
 - capital, . cash, .cashbackbonus, .broker, .brokers, .claims, .exchange, .finance, .financial, .fianancialaid, .forex, .fund, .investments, .lease, .loan, .loans, .market, . markets, .money, .pay, .payu, .retirement, .save, .trading, .autoinsurance, .bank, .banque, .carinsurance, .credit, .creditcard, .creditunion,.insurance, .insure, ira, .lifeinsurance, .mortgage, .mutualfunds, .mutuelle, .netbank, .reit, .tax, .travelersinsurance, .vermogensberater, .vermogensberatung and .vesicherung.
- **Gambling:**
 - .bet, .bingo, .lotto, .poker, and .spreadbetting, .casino
- **Charity:**
 - .care, .gives, .giving, .charity (and IDN Chinese equivalent)
- **Education:**
 - degree, .mba, .university
- **Intellectual Property**
 - .audio, .book (and IDN equivalent), .broadway, .film, .game, .games, .juegos, .movie, .music, .software, .song, .tunes, .fashion (and IDN equivalent), .video, .app, .art, .author, .band, .beats, .cloud (and IDN equivalent), .data, .design, .digital, .download, .entertainment, .fan, .fans, .free, .gratis, .discount, .sale, .hiphop, .media, .news, .online, .pictures, .radio, .rip, .show, .theater, .theatre, .tour, .tours, .tvs, .video, .zip
- **Professional Services:**
 - .abogado, .accountant, .accountants, .architect, .associates, .attorney, .broker, .brokers, .cpa, .doctor, .dentist, .dds, .engineer, .lawyer, .legal, .realtor, .realty, .vet
- **Corporate Identifiers:**
 - .corp, .gmbh, .inc, .limited, .llc, .llp, .ltda, .ltd, .sarl, .srl, .sal
- **Generic Geographic Terms:**
 - .town, .city, .capital

- .reise, .reisen⁵
- .weather
- .engineering
- .law
- **Inherently Governmental Functions**
 - .army, .navy, .airforce
- In addition, applicants for the following strings should develop clear policies and processes to minimise the risk of cyber bullying/harassment
 - .fail, .gripe, .sucks, .wtf

The GAC further advises the Board:

1. In addition, some of the above strings may require further targeted safeguards, to address specific risks, and to bring registry policies in line with arrangements in place offline. In particular, a limited subset of the above strings are associated with market sectors which have clear and/or regulated entry requirements (such as: financial, gambling, professional services, environmental, health and fitness, corporate identifiers, and charity) in multiple jurisdictions, and the additional safeguards below should apply to some of the strings in those sectors:
 6. At the time of registration, the registry operator must verify and validate the registrants' authorisations, charters, licenses and/or other related credentials for participation in that sector.
 7. In case of doubt with regard to the authenticity of licenses or credentials, Registry Operators should consult with relevant national supervisory authorities, or their equivalents.
 8. The registry operator must conduct periodic post-registration checks to ensure registrants' validity and compliance with the above requirements in order to ensure they continue to conform to appropriate regulations and licensing requirements and generally conduct their activities in the interests of the consumers they serve.

Category 2

Restricted Registration Policies

The GAC advises the ICANN Board:

1. **Restricted Access**
 - As an exception to the general rule that the gTLD domain name space is operated in an open manner registration may be restricted, in particular for strings mentioned under category 1

⁵ Austria, Germany, and Switzerland support requirements for registry operators to develop registration policies that allow only travel-related entities to register domain names. Second Level Domains should have a connection to travel industries and/or its customers

above. In these cases, the registration restrictions should be appropriate for the types of risks associated with the TLD. The registry operator should administer access in these kinds of registries in a transparent way that does not give an undue preference to any registrars or registrants, including itself, and shall not subject registrars or registrants to an undue disadvantage.

2. Exclusive Access

- For strings representing generic terms, exclusive registry access should serve a public interest goal.

- In the current round, the GAC has identified the following non-exhaustive list of strings that it considers to be generic terms, where the applicant is currently proposing to provide exclusive registry access
 - .antivirus, .app, .autoinsurance, .baby, .beauty, .blog, .book, .broker, .carinsurance, .cars, .cloud, .courses, .cpa, .cruise, .data, .dvr, .financialaid, .flowers, .food, .game, .grocery, .hair, .hotel, .hotels, .insurance, .jewelry, .mail, .makeup, .map, .mobile, .motorcycles, .movie, .music, .news, .phone, .salon, .search, .shop, .show, .skin, .song, .store, .tennis, .theater, .theatre, .tires, .tunes, .video, .watches, .weather, .yachts, .クラウド [cloud], .ストア [store], .セール [sale], .ファッション [fashion], .家電 [consumer electronics], .手表 [watches], .書籍 [book], .珠宝 [jewelry], .通販 [online shopping], .食品 [food]

ANNEX II

List of questions related to Public Interest Commitments Specifications

1. Could a third party intervene or object if it thinks that a public interest commitment is not being followed? Will governments be able to raise those sorts of concerns on behalf of their constituents?
2. If an applicant does submit a public interest commitment and it is accepted are they able to later amend it? And if so, is there a process for that?
3. What are ICANN's intentions with regard to maximizing awareness by registry operators of their commitments?
4. Will there be requirements on the operators to maximize the visibility of these commitments so that stakeholders, including governments, can quickly determine what commitments were made?
5. How can we follow up a situation where an operator has not made any commitments? What is the process for amending that situation?
6. Are the commitments enforceable, especially later changes? Are they then going into any contract compliance?
7. How will ICANN decide whether to follow the sanctions recommended by the PIC DRP? Will there be clear and transparent criteria? Based on other Dispute Resolution Procedures what is the expected fee level?
8. If serious damage has been a result of the past registration policy, will there be measures to remediate the harm?

EXHIBIT D

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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Réf. : CIE/L/20/232.14

Date : 2nd June 2014

Mr. Fadi Chehadé
President & CEO
ICANN
Email: fadi.chehade@icann.org

Subject: Delay on Dot Africa accreditation

Dear Mr. Chehadé,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support and consideration through various initiatives and projects aimed at increasing Africa's contribution to ICANN. In particular, we appreciate the professional consideration towards the African Union Commission' (AUC's) sponsored application for Africa's geographic top-level domain, DotAfrica (.Africa).

As you are certainly aware, the DotAfrica gTLD is eagerly awaited by not only African governments and the Internet community, but also African citizens and global Internet users, businesses, civil society and many other stakeholders. DotAfrica is an extremely important initiative for Africa's participation and contribution to the Internet economy and to the broader Internet governance ecosystem. It has been backed up by many decisions adopted by the highest African Union organs including the Heads of States Summit that authorized the AUC to be the sponsoring organisation for DotAfrica. In fulfilling this mandate, the AUC appointed and endorsed the ZA Central Registry (ZACR) to apply for, launch and manage the DotAfrica (.Africa) TLD.

ZACR has complied with, met and exceeded all the stringent rules governing the application process for geographic applications in accordance with the new gTLDs Applicant Guidebook. In addition, the ZACR DotAfrica application passed all the necessary evaluations, reviews and procedures despite various challenges unique to our region. The ZACR application also passed initial evaluation in 2013, and in March 2014 ZACR signed a legally binding and enforceable contract with ICANN. The AUC sponsored ZACR application has clearly met all the criteria of the applicant guidebook; it is the only applicant for the string to have done so.

It is therefore with great concern that we are faced with yet another delay in delegating this important regional TLD due to the recent Independent Review Panel (IRP) instructions stopping ICANN from processing the DotAfrica application until it has ruled on the complaint filed by DotConnectAfrica (DCA).

As you can understand, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the AUC to explain to not only its member states but also other African stakeholders, why the African geographic TLD application has become so challenging for ICANN to expedite despite the various statements made towards the need to support developing regions. The African continent is already significantly marginalised within ICANN processes, it is therefore very important that this process is not delayed any further.

While this additional delay is very unfortunate, we acknowledge that ICANN must follow its own bylaws and accountability related procedures. We are however, deeply concerned that there is no definite date provided for the final IRP decision. We are also extremely concerned that with the suspension of any further activities in preparation for the technical delegation, this AUC sponsored application may encounter further delays once the IRP decision is made therefore providing opportunities for the launch of additional challenges aimed at delaying the technical delegation and launch of this important initiative.

At this very critical and sensitive stage, we are therefore urging you to ensure that as soon as the IRP decision is communicated there will be no further delays in implementing the technical delegation to enable ZACR to finally launch this long awaited DotAfrica TLD.

We therefore request that your team exercise utmost flexibility with pre delegation procedures required of ZACR to ensure that we are all ready for prompt delegation and launch.

Please accept, Mr. President & CEO, the expression of my highest consideration.


Dr. Elham M.A. IBRAHIM (Mrs)
Commissioner
Infrastructure and Energy



CC:

- Steve Crooker Chairman of the Board of ICANN
- Lawrence E Strickling, Assistant Secretary of Commerce, NTIA
Email: Contact Information Redacted
- ZACR: Lucky Masilela
Email: Contact Information Redacted
- Ms. Heather Dryden, Chair: Government Advisory Committee (GAC), ICANN,
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