



October 24, 2011
For Immediate Release

ICANN Dakar Meeting Opens with Calls for Greater Internet Access for Africans

CEO Spotlights Support for Generic Top Level Domain Applicants from Developing Countries

Dakar, Senegal... Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's President and Chief Executive Officer said today that there is a real need to increase Internet access across the African continent.

"There has been tremendous progress toward greater connectivity. In ten years, the number of Internet users has grown 25-fold," said Beckstrom. "That is rapid growth, yet it still represents only 11.5 percent of the African population."

Beckstrom made his comments during the kick-off of ICANN's 42nd public meeting in Dakar, Senegal.

He told the conference that discussions will take place during the week on how to best provide financial and logistical support to applicants of new generic Top-Level Domains (gTLDs) from developing countries.

"ICANN's global community is already taking steps to help needy applicants apply for new gTLDs," said Beckstrom. "A joint working group has spent many hours working on a proposal that the Board will consider this week on how best to provide that support."

The new gTLD program will vastly expand the number of generic Top-Level Domains from the current 22, which includes such familiar endings as ".com", ".net" and ".gov."

Senegal President Abdoulaye Wade told the conference that the Internet is crucial for the growth of African economies.

He also said "the international makeup of ICANN's Board of Directors is crucial and provides legitimacy for its decisions."

The ICANN meeting will end on Friday with a meeting of the Board of Directors.

###

To download some high resolution photos from the ICANN Dakar meeting, here:

- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/icann/6276906402/in/photostream/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/icann/6276941476/in/photostream/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/icann/6277030740/in/photostream/lightbox/>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/icann/6276511315/in/photostream/lightbox/>

To hear an audio recording of the opening News conference with ICANN CEO Rod Beckstrom and Board Chair Steve Crocker, go here: <http://audio.icann.org/meetings/dakar2011/press-conference-24oct11-fr.mp3>.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brad White
Director of Global Media Affairs
Washington, D.C.
Tel. +1 (202) 570 7118
brad.white@icann.org

Andrew Robertson
Edelman Public Relations
London, U.K.
Tel. + 44 (7811) 341 945
andrew.Robertson@edelman.com

About ICANN: *ICANN's mission is to ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. To reach another person on the Internet you have to type an address into your computer - a name or a number. That address has to be unique so computers know where to find each other. ICANN coordinates these unique identifiers across the world. Without that coordination we wouldn't have one global Internet. ICANN was formed in 1998. It is a not-for-profit public-benefit corporation with participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. It promotes competition and develops policy on the Internet's unique identifiers. ICANN doesn't control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it doesn't deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet. For more information please visit: www.icann.org.*