



DotConnectAfrica

Ref: dotafrica/2012/07/18

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## Africa's map in the digital inclusion!

July 18, 2012

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

Dear Sir,

**Subject:        *Reporting a Potential Matter of Conflict of Interest on .AFRICA (DotAfrica) new gTLD Applications Regarding Mr. Chris Disspain a Member of the ICANN Board from Australia***

DCA Trust has submitted an application for the .AFRICA (DotAfrica) gTLD string – the geographic name for Africa.

Mr. Chris Disspain is a current member of the ICANN Board of Directors from Australia. He is also the Chief Executive Officer of .au Domain Administration (auDA), which together with ARI Registry Services Ltd. (formerly Aus Registry International) are part of AusRegistry Group. ARI Registry Services is an organization that hosts and supports the .com.au registry and also provides registry management and consulting services to different clients. Furthermore, it has also assisted many organizations in preparing and submitting many applications for new gTLDs to ICANN.

According to information available from <http://www.ariservices.com/domain-reg-za.php>, ARI Registry Services had advised the South African Domain Names Authority (ZADNA) in the matter of the establishment of the South African (.ZA) Central Registry (ZA CR) which is now part of UniForum SA, the administrator of the .co.za domain registry (See <http://www.Registry.net.za> ). The ARI web site witnesses that:

***“In 2010, ARI Registry Services (ARI) was selected by the .za Domain Name Authority (ZADNA) to provide consulting services to assist ZADNA with their .za Central Registry project. This project aims to bring together a number of legacy second-level domain name registries, into a single, centralised registry, with standardised policies and procedures and utilising the Registry-Registrar distribution model.”***

UniForum SA, trading as Registry.Africa (or ZA Central Registry) has also submitted an application for the dotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD (Application ID: 1-1243-89583). However, we believe that because of the business relationship between ARI Registry Services, as a provider of technical consulting services to ZADNA, and UniForum ZA Central Registry, Mr. Chris Disspain might be deeply conflicted over dotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD,

and this could affect any views he may have on .AFRICA (dotAfrica); as to possibly affect both his judgment and inputs he would be required to make as an ICANN Director in any decision regarding the approval and delegation of the dotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD.

Since DCA Trust has also applied for the same geographical string name as UniForum, we are indeed troubled by the fact that Mr. Chris Disspain would use his presence on the ICANN Board of Directors to act deliberately as to pose an unwarranted risk to DCA's application whilst trying to take decisions that would have a favourable outcome for the competing application submitted by UniForum. In a nutshell, we really believe that Chris Disspain might use his ICANN Board position to favour ARI Registry Services' clients such as UniForum in any decision regarding .AFRICA.

We therefore appeal to the ICANN leaders represented by the ICANN Board and ICANN Executives to disallow Mr. Chris Disspain from taking part **in any discussion or decision or evaluation activities relating to the new gTLD applications submitted for Africa (.africa). To avoid any conflict of interest, Mr. Chris Disspain should be asked to recuse himself from participating in the decision-making process concerning the .AFRICA gTLD.**

Thanking you in anticipation of your kind co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

*Sbekele*

Sophia Bekele  
For DCA Trust (An Applicant for the DotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD  
Application ID: 1-1165-42560

cc: Dr. Stephen Crocker, Chairman of the ICANN Board