



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 Matter of Conflict of Interest on .AFRICA (DotAfrica) new gTLD Applications Regarding Mr. Mike Silber a Member of the ICANN Board from South Africa*

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

Mr. Mike Silber is a current member of the ICANN Board of Directors from South Africa. He is also a current member of the Board of Directors of the South African Domain Names Authority (**ZADNA**). However, we believe that he is already 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.

Mr. Mike Silber was a **former director of UniForum SA**, the administrator of the .co.za domain registry. 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). Since DCA Trust has also applied for the same geographical string name, we are indeed troubled by the fact that Mr. Mike Silber 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 Mike Silber might use his ICANN Board position to favour UniForum in any decision regarding .AFRICA.

To further buttress our point, we would like to add that the South African Domain Names Authority proposed the establishment of the South Africa Central Registry (ZA CR), which is part of UniForum. We therefore have very strong reasons to suppose that ZADNA, who have already expressed support for the UniForum ZA Central Registry application for dotAfrica (.AFRICA) gTLD; **and Mike Silber, by virtue of his current affiliation to ZADNA and previous affiliation to UniForum SA, has an undeclared Conflict of Interest** regarding the outcome of the DotAfrica (.AFRICA) application that has been submitted by UniForum ZA Central Registry (also trading as Registry.Africa). We believe that these relationships would pose insurmountable ethical difficulties for Mr. Mike Silber as to make him become biased against the application for the .AFRICA (DotAfrica) geographical string name that has been submitted by DCA Trust.

It is for these reasons that we strongly believe that Mr. Mike Silber would be strongly prejudiced against DCA's application and, to avoid a conflict of interest, should therefore recuse himself from participating in any future Board-level, Executive-level or Committee-level discussions and or decisions regarding any of the .AFRICA (dotAfrica) gTLD application(s) submitted to ICANN. We remain seriously concerned that his presence on the ICANN Board would be used to advance negative positions that would weaken DCA's application whilst advocating for the competing application submitted by UniForum ZA Central Registry.

Before closing, we also would like to expressly request the ICANN Board to censure Mr. Mike Silber for activities unbecoming, and request him not to engage in any further discussions with prospective third-party registry services providers and giving advice or either making or recommending business connections between such prospective providers of registry technical services and new gTLD applicants. Before the closing of applications window, DCA Trust was approached by a certain provider of registry data escrow services and expressed the interest in wanting to be the registry data escrow agent for DCA's .AFRICA application, and claimed that he had been referred to DCA by Mr. Mike Silber. On the basis of this compelling evidence, we therefore suspect that Mr. Mike Silber has been regularly engaging in this type of activity of advising registry services providers and recommending them to associate or affiliate themselves to new gTLD applicants; or assisting such service providers or providing informal consultancy or assistance or simply engaging in the process of aiding and abetting. DCA Trust believes that recklessly engaging in such activities would compromise the integrity of an ICANN Board member.

We therefore appeal to the ICANN leaders represented by the ICANN Board and ICANN Executives to disallow Mr. Mike Silber from taking part **in any discussion or decision or evaluation activities relating to the new gTLD applications submitted for Africa (.africa).**

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