



## **WITSA Resolution on ICANN's Continued Improvements in Institutional Confidence**

June 2009

The Internet has become an essential component in economic activity and personal communications around the globe. As important as it is today, its role is expected to expand even further as the Internet expands and reaches all parts of the world and increasingly, is used as a medium to deliver different forms of communications and applications, serving the individual user, businesses of all sizes, and governmental services. As the Internet grows in global reach, its security and resiliency become of increasing importance to users, to businesses, and to governments. And, as the Internet expands, the unique model of private sector led, multistakeholder coordination and management of the Internet's unique indicators remains a key priority of the business community, and of WITSA's members.

ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, plays a unique and critical role as it fulfills its core mission of coordinating and managing the unique indicators of the global Internet – Domain Names, IP addresses, protocols, and as it interacts with other key players, such as the Root server operators and Regional Internet Registries and country code managers.

Founded just ten years ago, the International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has achieved significant progress in developing the mechanisms and processes that can enable it to fulfill its role as the trusted steward of the Domain Name System (DNS), and related technical indicators, such as IP addresses and protocols that underpin the Internet's technical operation. In September 2009, the Joint Project Agreement (JPA), an agreement between the U.S. Department of Commerce and ICANN is scheduled to expire.

ICANN and the Department of Commerce have each undertaken extensive consultations with the global community regarding what changes and improvements are needed in ICANN. Five key areas for improvement have been proposed by ICANN's President's Strategy Committee:

- Safeguarding against Internal and External Capture
- Transparency and Accountability to the multi stakeholder community
- Meeting the needs of the Global Internet Community
- Financial and operational stability
- Security and stability of the Internet's Unique Indicators

While ICANN has made progress in global acceptance, and many governments participate in ICANN's processes through the Governmental Advisory Committee, some governments continue the debate over whether a group of governments, or an intergovernmental organization should replace or provide oversight to ICANN continues.

In the environment where the private sector model is under threat, and where the scope of its responsibilities have profound implications for global commerce and economic stability of the Internet's technical functioning, it is essential that ICANN take further steps to improve its accountability and transparency; make further improvements in its operational processes in policy development, and in addressing security issues both for the organization and for the unique indicators.

While calling for continued changes in improved accountability, transparency, broadened participation, especially from the business sector, WITSA continues its support for ICANN. Achieving an ICANN that is a trusted, transparent and accountable steward for the technical management and coordination of the unique indicators of the Internet and associated policies is a high priority to WITSA's members.

#### Key Principles for Improving Institutional Confidence in ICANN:

- WITSA supports ICANN's private sector, multistakeholder model of governance of the global Internet's unique indicators, such as IP addresses, domain names, and related services.
- WITSA supports the continued role of governments in a supportive and advisory capacity within ICANN and supports the increased participation of all governments in ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee.
- WITSA believes that further enhancements in ICANN's accountability and transparency are essential. Improved mechanisms in both transparency and accountability mechanisms will contribute to ICANN's credibility and acceptance by all parties, including governments.
- WITSA supports ICANN's role as the private sector led, trusted steward of the globally unique indicators, based on bottom up coordination and consensus based policy development. ICANN should continue its support to ICANN's organizations and structures to broaden and deepen participation.
- WITSA supports an increased focus on outreach in particular to ensure informed participation from the global business community in ICANN's processes.
- WITSA supports ICANN's focus on continued internationalization; however, the concept of internationalization must be viewed more broadly than just the location of ICANN staff and offices. The DNS itself is facing a major change in its internationalization with the introduction and incorporation of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNS). Incorporating this change throughout the Internet's global indicators and 'eco system' represents challenges and benefits. It represents a significant and fundamental change across the Internet, and must become a higher priority for ICANN as it seeks to meet the needs of the globally distributed multi stakeholder Internet community. Other forms of support include appropriate mechanisms to support the participation of governments from the least developed countries; further enhancements to translations and interpretation of documents and meetings.
- WITSA supports the continuation of the private sector led multi stakeholder model of ICANN and recommends that ICANN complete the detailed implementation proposals to address improvements in accountability mechanisms, safeguarding against all forms of capture, maintaining financial and operational stability, and ensuring the security and stability of the unique indicators of the Internet.