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ICANN's President and CEO to Step Down

Mexico City, Mexico… March 2, 2009…. Founders and leaders of the Internet today praised the achievements of Paul Twomey, the President and Chief Executive Officer of ICANN, after learning that Twomey has advised ICANN's Board of Directors that he will not seek renewal of his contract when it expires on July 1.

Twomey announced his decision at the opening session of ICANN's 34th International Public Meeting in Mexico City, which has drawn more than 1,200 attendees from every corner of the globe.
"Last year, I told the Board that I did not want to renew my contract as President and CEO for another 3 year term," said Twomey. "While I am deeply and personally committed to ICANN and its success, I think this is a ripe time for me to move on to another leadership position in the private or international sectors."

Twomey was named CEO and President in 2003, after serving, for 4 years, as the chairman of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). He oversaw the phenomenal growth of an organization that has become the primary coordinator of the Internet's global address system.

"I'm delighted to have taken part in defining ICANN's role in assuring a stable and secure Internet," said Twomey. "The Board has asked me to stay on until it finds a successor and then to have a period of handover and transition with the new President and CEO. During this transition period I shall be appointed to the new position of Senior President."

"Paul Twomey has overseen ICANN's phenomenal growth while always maintaining a vision of the future," said Peter Dengate Thrush, Chairman of the Board. "Ten years ago when Paul began working with ICANN, there were 100 million users of the Internet, today there are 1.4 billion and they all get to where they want to go because of the tireless work of Paul and his ICANN staff."

Upon learning of Twomey's decision to step down, some of the leading founders and supporters of the Internet praised his strong leadership.

Vint Cert, considered by many to be the father of the Internet said "I can think of no other person who has had more influence on the course of ICANN's evolution than Paul. We owe him a great debt for long and faithful service and I owe him personal thanks for his counsel during my time on the Board. The Board will be challenged to find a worthy and capable successor."

"During his tenure, ICANN has become a stronger organization and, as a key element of the Internet ecosystem, has ensured the security and stability of the Domain Name System," said Lynn St Amour, the CEO of the Internet Society (ISOC). "The Internet Society extends its appreciation to Dr. Twomey for his service and dedication to ICANN and its communities."

Egypt's Minister of Information and Communications, Tarek Kamel thanked Twomey for his many contributions.

"We were happy in Egypt and the developing world to work together with an outstanding person like Paul Twomey in Internet Governance issues... he was always trying to bring some balance to the global Internet policy dialogue," said Kamel.

Some of the innovations that Twomey shepherded during his tenure have become focal points of ICANN's Mexico City conference, including the latest developments relating to the planned introduction of new generic Top Level Domains (gTLDs) and Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) will be key areas of focus during the meeting.

The Mexico City meeting will provide an opportunity for further community discussion on the important subject of new gTLDs. On February 18th, ICANN issued a second version of its Draft Applicant Guidebook on gTLDs, consisting of detailed analysis of comments received over recent months and it is now seeking further input as part of an ongoing consultation process.

Strong local interest in the ICANN meeting is a noteworthy aspect of this gathering. For the first time, representatives of the host nation (i.e., Mexico) to an ICANN meeting have out-numbered attendees of any other country.

"We are delighted to celebrate for the first time in Mexico, this important event, which allows our industry to take part in the international efforts to maintain the proper operation of the Internet, while allowing us the opportunity to demonstrate our talent and the Mexican contributions to this important community," said Enrique Bustamente, CEO of the Internet Mexican Association (AMIPCI).

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Paul Twomey's biographical information can be found at: http://www.icann.org/en/biog/twomey.htm

The complete schedule for ICANN's 34th International Public Meeting in Mexico City, as well as links to webcast sessions and our public participation website, can be found at: http://mex.icann.org.

About ICANN:

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.**