The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

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Internationalization of the Internet Takes Center Stage at ICANN Seoul Meeting

Meeting Will be Framed by Discussion, Debate and Collaboration

Seoul, South Korea… October 21, 2009… A program that is expected to make the Internet far more accessible to millions of people in regions such as Asia and the Middle East will be one of the central topics of ICANN's 36th International Public Meeting in Seoul, October 25-30, 2009.

ICANN's Board of Directors is scheduled to review an historic measure that could bring initial limited use of Internationalized Domain Names (IDNs) to the Internet before the end of the year. IDNs allow the use of non-Latin based language characters in the entire Internet address, which is expected to vastly increase the number of Internet users in global regions where languages such as Chinese, Korean or Arabic are spoken.

"This is an extremely important meeting for ICANN, since the IDN program is moving one step closer to reshaping the global Internet landscape," said Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's President and CEO. "In Seoul, we plan to move forward to the next step in the internationalization of the Internet, which means that eventually people from every corner of the globe will be able to navigate much of the online world using their native language scripts."

Some of the other major issues to be raised at the Seoul meeting include:

- ***The Affirmation of Commitments:*** The Seoul meeting occurs only three weeks after ICANN and the U.S. government signed an "Affirmation of Commitments." The agreement endorses ICANN's rapid adoption of IDNs. It also supports ICANN's bottom up global stakeholder model of governance and policy formation and helps guarantee that the organization is globally accountable. The Affirmation succeeds the so-called "Joint Project Agreement" between ICANN and the U.S. Department of Commerce, which called for annual reviews to be submitted to the U.S. government. Those accountability reviews will now go to the global ICANN community. To view a video of Rod Beckstrom's comments on the Affirmation of Commitments, please click here. You can embed this video on your Web site by clicking the "Get Code" button.

- ***Generic top-level Domains:*** gTLDs are the end portion of an Internet address name, such as ".com" or ".org" and are not associated with any specific country. Under a new developing program, the number of gTLDs will eventually be expanded from its current list of 21 to include almost any word, in almost any language. The third draft of a proposed "Applicant Guidebook," which spells out the rules and procedures of applying for a new gTLD, has just been published, and the Seoul meeting will afford participants a prime opportunity to discuss the latest draft. Please click here to review the Applicant Guidebook.

- ***Internet Security:*** Cyber-security threats are always evolving and changing and the threat to the domain name system (DNS) is always increasing, as the world saw several months ago with the threat from the Conficker worm. The threat was met with an unprecedented collaboration between ICANN and top security experts from Microsoft, Symantec and dozens of other companies, software vendors and organizations dedicated to preserving the security and stability of the Internet. The Seoul meeting will afford an opportunity for security experts to share updates on DNS Security (DNSSEC).

All interested journalists are encouraged to attend the ICANN meeting in Seoul at the Lotte Hotel (1, Sogong-dong, Jung-gu Seoul, Korea 100-721), October 25-28, 2009. All meetings are open to the public. Registration is free and reporters will have access to the Internet via ICANN's free WiFi system. Media kits will be available at the "Media Desk" near the main registration area.

You can find out everything you need to know about the Seoul meeting here: http://sel.icann.org.

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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.**