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Beckstrom Points to Multi-stakeholder Model as “Catalyst for the Internet” *Addresses Nairobi Internet Governance Forum*

Rod Beckstrom, CEO and President of ICANN, has called on the world community to speak up in defense of the multi-stakeholder model that has served as the “catalyst for the Internet.”

“The multi-stakeholder model is the catalyst for the Internet itself. By protecting that catalyst, we protect the Internet,” he said. “ICANN is an example of the multi-stakeholder model at its best: open, inclusive, balanced, effective and international.”

ICANN, which works to ensure a secure, stable and unified global Internet, is based on the multi-stakeholder concept, which allows everyone with an interest in the Internet to participate in its work.

“We need to make continued progress,” he said. “Otherwise a small number of stakeholders who do not represent the global public interest could step into the breach,” he continued. “This could stifle the voices of those whose contributions have led to the unified and open Internet that the world enjoys today.”

Citing ongoing moves toward ICANN’s full internationalization, he also urged the world community to express its views on renewal of the IANA functions contract, which ICANN performs in conjunction with the US Department of Commerce.

“The IANA contract is the next critical step in the evolution of the multi-stakeholder model, and the best vehicle for its expansion,” he stated. “Many parties around the world now seek clear progress on the structure of the contract. The credibility of the multi-stakeholder model will be judged by how well this evolution occurs.”

In his address to the United Nations Internet Governance Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, Beckstrom highlighted the need to ensure that the IANA functions contract, which expires on 31 March 2012, remains an instrument for international participation in charting the future of the Internet.

He also noted the increasingly prominent role of governments in ICANN’s work, and the international nature of its board, staff, operations and volunteer community.

Beckstrom is visiting many countries over the next several weeks to raise global awareness of new generic top-level domains, the program approved in June that will allow the use of virtually any word in any language “after the dot” in top-level Internet domains.

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*ICANN's mission is to ensure a stable, secure and unified global Internet. 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.*