

31 August 2026

RE: AFRALO-AFRICANN ICANN84 Statement: Bridging the Digital Divide & Internet Fragmentation Risks

Hadia Elminiawi
Chair, African Regional At-Large Organization (AFRALO)

Dear Hadia,

On behalf of the ICANN Board of Directors, I would like to thank you and your AFRALO/AFRICANN colleagues for your letter and the recommendations related to the digital divide and Internet fragmentation risks set out in the [ICANN84 AFRALO-AFRICANN Statement](#), "*Bridging the Digital Divide & Internet Fragmentation Risks*."

The emphasis on preserving a single, globally interoperable Internet directly aligns with ICANN's mission and strategic vision. The Board appreciates the recognition of the ongoing efforts by ICANN and the broader community to strengthen the security, stability and resilience of the Domain Name System (DNS).

The [ICANN Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030](#) identifies four strategic objectives to focus our work. Two of these objectives directly address issues raised in the Statement:

- Strengthening the security, stability, and resilience of the Internet's unique identifier systems
- Evolving and promoting a single, interoperable Internet and maintaining effective technical coordination through the multistakeholder model.

The Statement raises several important issues impacting Africa, including affordable connectivity, digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and Internet governance. While some of these issues extend beyond ICANN's mission and require action by other organizations and stakeholders, ICANN remains committed to contributing where its technical expertise and coordination of the Internet's unique identifier systems can support these broader goals.

Regarding your recommendation on *expanding affordable connectivity*:

Improving access to affordable Internet connectivity requires the collective efforts of governments and stakeholders. Consistent with its mission, ICANN contributes to the technical infrastructure of the Internet by coordinating the Internet's unique identifier systems and fostering a healthy DNS ecosystem that underpins the global Internet.

[The 2023 Africa Domain Name System Industry Study](#) provides an important resource for the development of the region's DNS ecosystem and related business opportunities. A broad range of stakeholders contributed to the study, and it continues to serve as a valuable reference for the community.

Through the Coalition for Digital Africa and in collaboration with its partners, ICANN supports initiatives that strengthen Internet infrastructure, including work with [Internet Exchange Points \(IXPs\)](#) and the deployment of additional [L-Root server instances](#). These efforts contribute to improving DNS resilience, performance, and reliability across the continent.

With respect to your recommendation to *promote digital inclusion and capacity building*, ICANN continues to support and promote [Universal Acceptance](#) through engagement with academia, At-Large Structures, and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, ICANN remains committed to supporting the long-term development of the technical capacity through its Technical Engagement initiatives. This includes providing targeted assistance and training¹ to ccTLD operators, network operators, and other technical stakeholders to implement DNS security and resilience best practices, through the [KINDNS Framework](#) and beyond. ICANN also provides "train-the-trainer" events to help build sustainable local expertise, strengthen institutional capacity, and expand the reach of technical knowledge across the Internet community.

We are pleased that [ICANN's Africa Regional Plan for Fiscal Years 2026–2030](#) reflects your recommendations on *safeguarding Internet interoperability and strengthening cybersecurity and trust*, as well as in collaborative initiatives such as the projects carried out under the Coalition for Digital Africa. The Board appreciates AFRALO's Call to Action and the constructive recommendations set out in its statement. Continued engagement across the broader Internet governance ecosystem will be important for those recommendations that extend beyond ICANN's mission, as meaningful progress depends on collaboration among governments, the technical community, civil society, and other stakeholders.

Thank you again for your thoughtful statement. The Board looks forward to our continued collaboration and to the continued contributions of AFRALO and AFRICANN communities to national, regional, and global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) initiatives and other multistakeholder forums across Africa, where these important discussions will continue.

Sincerely,
/s/ Tripti Sinha
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

¹ Technical Engagement Course Catalogue - <https://www.icann.org/resources/pages/tech-engagement-training-course-catalog-2021-04-22-en>