Rod Beckstrom
CEO and President

22 March 2010

Ms. Haiyan Qian
Director
Division of Public Administration and Development Management
UNDESA

Dear Ms. Haiyan Qian,

I refer to Ms. Doyle's email of 19 February 2010, requesting information regarding steps taken by ICANN towards enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet.

I am pleased to say that 2009 was an important year for ICANN in the context of enhanced cooperation. ICANN made real progress in several areas which are of genuine interest and particular importance to the full membership of the United Nations, and perhaps to developing countries in particular.

In terms of the overall governance of ICANN, chief among these achievements has been the negotiation of the Affirmation of Commitments (AOC) with the United States Department of Commerce: http://www.icann.org/en/documents/affirmation-of-commitments-30sep09-en.htm. The main impact of the AOC will be a transition from reliance upon a reporting mechanism, (the Joint Project Agreement or JPA), to a series of accountability mechanisms involving the full membership of ICANN's multi-stakeholder community, with an enhanced role for a reinvigorated Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). This as a significant step in the direction of our longer term commitment to the further internationalization of ICANN. In this context, a joint working group of the ICANN Board and the GAC has been established to review how the GAC interrelates with the ICANN Board. This working group is jointly chaired by a GAC Vice Chair and a member of the ICANN Board, and plans to report to both parties at the ICANN meeting in Brussels this June 2010.

Within the ICANN process a major achievement of the past year has been the ICANN Board's approval of the launch of the IDN ccTLD Fast Track process at our October 2009 meeting in Seoul, South Korea: http://www.icann.org/en/topics/idn/fast-track/. This process is a truly significant step which will enable millions of Internet users to use scripts other than those which are Latin based to access top level domains. A truly liberating experience for millions of users and an excellent example of the effectiveness of ICANN's unique bottom up multi-stakeholder policy making process.

ICANN has also worked diligently to cooperate with the many sectors of the United Nations family where there is genuine advantage in cooperation. Agreements have been signed with both the Universal Postal Union, creating the new generic top level domain of "dot Post" http://www.icann.org/en/tlds/agreements/post/post-agreement-11dec09-en.htm and with UNESCO, where we look forward to cooperating closely on a variety of linguistic and cultural questions where that body is uniquely qualified to advise.
http://www.icann.org/en/announcements/announcement-2-11dec09-en.htm
http://www.icann.org/en/global-partnerships/mous/unesco-mou-10dec09-en.pdf

Elsewhere in the UN system ICANN will continue to offer its expertise to the various specialist working groups and other meetings of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). The ITU is a welcome contributor to the ICANN process and has observer status on the GAC and has regularly participates in these meetings. The ITU also has a Board seat on a rotating basis as a member of the Technical Liaison Group at ICANN. ICANN is working with ITU leadership to improve our relationship and stand ready to participate in other bodies where the memberships believe we have a contribution to make.

Finally I should mention that ICANN worked hard to make a significant contribution to the excellent meeting of the Internet Governance Forum hosted by the Egyptian Government at Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2009. We believe that the multi-stakeholder nature of the IGF enables the forum to make a unique contribution to Internet Governance. All sectors of society, including both Governments and Civil Society can make their views are known in a uniquely constructive way. We agree with the Chair of the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, his Excellency Minister Tarek Kamel of Egypt when he concluded in his closing comments that "I could almost see a wide consensus on the need of the continuation of the IGF process with the legitimacy provided by the U.N. umbrella as well as the dynamic nature of the event which was very clear this time and needs to continue," and look forward to its mandate being renewed at the coming session of the UN General Assembly in September.

Yours Sincerely,

Rod Beckstrom