

**Opening Remarks**  
**by**  
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**Seminar on New Generic Top-Level Domains**  
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Thank you very much for your warm welcome. It is an honor to be in the presence of such a distinguished audience.

In particular I would like to thank CNNIC and Dr. Xiaodong Lee for their exceptional assistance and attention to detail in arranging this important event.

It is said that one of the core values of the Chinese culture is “harmony”. Ancient Chinese philosophers believed harmony could generate vitality, and that people should seek harmony, but not sameness. They called for harmonious coexistence between peoples and between humanity and nature.

The multistakeholder model – ICANN’s core philosophy - is a reflection of global harmony in the modern digital age. It is based on the concept of inclusion, and it brings together stakeholders around the world who care about the future of the global communications network that has linked our economies and our lives.

This is how policy on the Internet’s domain name system is developed: inclusively, globally, transparently and carefully.

The starting premise is that anyone who is interested has a right to be heard in crafting the Internet’s future, and everyone is welcome to contribute, no matter

what their view. The multistakeholder approach is open, inclusive, balanced, and effective.

ICANN is also international, with actively engaged volunteers from around the world. It is one of the key global Internet coordination bodies. The Internet Engineering Task Force develops technical standards for the domain name system. Regional Internet Registries – like APNIC in Asia - allocate Internet addresses. Internet Service Providers, registrars, governments, civil society and individual users all contribute.

No one is in charge yet it looks like one cohesive effort. Why? What holds it together when it is really millions of individual networks?

The glue is the Internet's system of unique identifiers: domain names, IP addresses, and protocol parameters. ICANN is the global coordination body for these unique identifiers, and the global community of experts and volunteers collaborates to set policy for the domain name system.

### **China and ICANN**

ICANN and China have had a long and fruitful relationship, including China's vital support of the Affirmation of Commitments that helped set ICANN firmly on the path to being fully international.

Latin script has long dominated the naming system of the global Internet, and making the Internet completely accessible to speakers of languages using other scripts opens the door to greater harmony. Two years ago, ICANN coordinated the Internet community's work to open the top-level domain space to internationalized domain names, or IDNs. I remember the wonderful and spontaneous celebration at ICANN's international meeting in Brussels when the board of directors approved Chinese language internationalized top-level domain

names. Today there are 30 such IDNs in the Internet's root, serving 20 countries and territories.

For more than a decade, China has demonstrated great leadership in advancing the technology that makes this type of innovation possible.

You were among the first to experiment in IDNs and offer Chinese IDN registrations.

You were also a key contributor to the Chinese Domain Name Consortium, or CDNC. Through the tremendous work of CDNC, the Chinese domain name community produced a unified variant table and technical standards that are used by all CDN operators today. Prof. Hualin Qian and James Seng in particular have been recognized as major contributors to the development of IDNs.

Capitalizing on this excellent work, the Chinese speaking community was among the first to be delegated an IDN top-level domain: .zhongguo (.中国)

Most recently, the Chinese community has been an active contributor to email address internationalization, and we look forward to your continuing leadership in this area.

### **New Generic Top-Level Domains**

One of the biggest developments in the Internet's history will begin in January when ICANN starts accepting applications for new generic top-level domains. The program was carefully crafted by the global Internet community to help ICANN fulfill its mission to increase consumer choice, competition and innovation.

ICANN's role is to ensure that the program is fairly, objectively and successfully implemented - to educate, not to advocate. We are a non-profit organization that

works in the public interest, and our goal is to help organizations decide whether they wish to participate.

So what is this new program? What do you need to know about it? Should you consider it?

A top-level domain is the right-most label in a domain name, for instance, the “CN” in “dot CN”. Currently there are 21 generic top-level domains and 250 country code top-level domains. Add in the 30 IDN country code domains and that brings the total number of top-level domains to about 300.

Now Internet address names will be able to end with almost any word in any language.

This is the third time that ICANN has accepted applications for new top-level domain names; the first two were in 2000 and 2004. Eight names were added as a result of the last round. Some of those applications were under extended consideration because a number of issues had to be addressed – the use of geographic names, community definitions, and names that raised government and other sensitivities.

The lessons of those initial processes have informed the development of the new gTLD program, and they guide the implementation of a fair and predictable evaluation process.

The current application period will be more open – to allow innovation and local community participation, and to allow new choices to flower. Carefully crafted rules and guidance have been developed for the new gTLD program because it is important to ensure the security and stability of the Internet, to protect legal rights and to safeguard the interests of cultural communities.

## **Opportunities and risks**

A new gTLD is an opportunity to present your organization online in a new and innovative way. It could be a marketing opportunity or a way to gather together a community of people with common interests – culture, sports, science or geographic location, for instance.

ICANN will accept applications beginning on 12 January. If you decide to apply, you must register for an application by 29 March and complete it by 12 April.

If you do apply, you will have to meet very strict technical and financial requirements, as outlined in the *Applicant Guidebook*. This is because a new gTLD is more than a business: it means running a part of the Internet, and it is important that anyone who undertakes this has the knowledge and expertise to operate a registry without endangering the Internet's security and stability.

This is an opportunity that should be carefully considered. Applying for a gTLD is an ambitious endeavor, requiring a significant, long-term commitment. Even applying is a substantial undertaking: it involves a fifty-question application covering a number of areas, including your business plan and proposed registry services. The materials required include detailed, technical, financial and security planning.

The long-term effort requires substantial investment. It costs US \$185,000 to apply [1.175 million Yuan Renminbi; source: Oanda 03-12-11] and there are ongoing operational costs involved in operating a critical piece of Internet infrastructure.

Applying for a new gTLD means running an Internet registry – and you must either do it yourself or be responsible for a third party that is helping you. You must demonstrate the ability to remain in business in an ongoing manner.

Audited or official financial documents are required and background checks will be conducted.

And as with any new business venture, there are no guarantees. Some new businesses could fail, even if with proper planning.

If you decide to apply, what should you do?

Time is short. We will start accepting applications in just over one month. If you have not done so, now is the time to get expert advice and get your marketing people engaged. If you need help there are many companies around the world that offer this service.

If you do not choose to apply, you should still pay attention to those who do, to take advantage of new opportunities and use the protections built into the program to safeguard your brand or community. The application materials will be posted to allow public comment and an opportunity to file formal objections to any application. For example, if you believe your rights are being infringed or there is misappropriation of a community label, you will be able to object.

### **Need more information?**

You can find more information online at [www.icann.org](http://www.icann.org). There is a link to a microsite devoted to new gTLDs and this is the definitive source of neutral and objective information about the program. Much of it is available in all six UN languages, including Simplified Chinese.

### **Dr. Xiaodong Lee**

And finally, as a reflection of the very high priority we place on the success of the new gTLD program in China and throughout Asia, it is my great honor to make a significant announcement.

I am delighted to announce - to you and to the world - that beginning on Monday, Dr. Xiaodong Lee will join ICANN as Vice President for Asia.

I do not need to tell this esteemed audience what an important development this is - for ICANN, for China and for Asia. Dr. Lee has an impressive history of achievement, and respect for him reaches far beyond China's borders. His broad range of knowledge and expertise will make a major contribution to ICANN and to the future of the global Internet. It is a visible demonstration of our commitment to fully engage globally.

ICANN is thrilled to have Dr. Lee join at such a critical time. His appointment sends a powerful signal that we recognize the importance of the new gTLD program to China's and Asia's online future.

Xiaodong, we warmly welcome you to ICANN.

### **Conclusion**

The harmony of the global Internet is based on hearing all voices. In the past two months I have visited many countries, participating in events like this one – meeting important and influential people, discussing and debating the benefits and risks of this historic development in the domain name system. I have learned so much on this path, and it has been a privilege to be part of this collaborative effort.

I am honored by your presence here today, and thank you very much for your attention.

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