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Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications

Twenty-Seventh Session
Geneva, September 18 to 21, 2012

ACCREDITATION OF A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Document prepared by the Secretariat

1.   The Annex to this document contains information on a non-governmental organization which has requested to be granted observer status in sessions of the Standing Committee on the Law of Trademarks, Industrial Designs and Geographical Indications (SCT), according to the SCT's Rules of Procedure (document SCT/1/2, paragraph 6).

> *2.   The SCT is invited to approve the representation in sessions of the Committee of the non-governmental organization referred to in the Annex to this document.*

[Annex follows]

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS REQUESTED REPRESENTATION AS OBSERVER IN SESSIONS OF THE SCT

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

Introduction

ICANN was created in 1998 following the United States Government's "White Paper on the Management of Internet Domain Names and Addresses". ICANN is essentially two entities:

First, it is a California public benefit nonprofit corporation, performing a technical coordination function for the global public interest.

Second, it is a global community of stakeholders, including industry, governments and Internet users.

ICANN is the authoritative body for technical coordination of the Domain Name System, the system that uniquely identifies computers and server addresses on the Internet. It does this through a stakeholder---driven, bottom---up, consensus---based policy development process.

A key mandate for ICANN is to create competition in the domain name market and to "oversee policy for determining the circumstances under which new TLDs are added to the root system".

ICANN pursues policies in the public interest through the introduction and fostering of competition, resulting in choice of vendors, differentiation in service offerings, and lower prices.

On September 30, 2009, ICANN and the US Department of Commerce executed the Affirmation of Commitments, a landmark agreement that replaced the Joint Project Agreement under which ICANN had previously operated. The Affirmation memorializes ICANN's technical coordination role, and the US Government's commitment to the multi---stakeholder model. The Affirmation also sets out specific commitments on accountability, transparency and the interests of global Internet users; preservation of DNS security, stability and resiliency; promotion of competition, consumer trust and consumer choice; and enforcement of Whois policies. These commitments are woven into ICANN's ongoing work.

The ICANN Model

ICANN's processes and policy development depend on the engagement of stakeholders around the world. Stakeholders participate in ICANN in many different ways, including participation in the policy development processes, in the public comment processes, on advisory committees, and in ICANN's public meetings.

There are 3 ICANN public meetings every year (the locations rotate on a regional basis); they are open to all stakeholders and (typically) attract 1500 participants with roughly double that engaging remotely.

ICANN's robust model is based on the principle of reaching consensus solutions to difficult problems. First, a model solution is proposed. Through public comment processes and other engagement, the ICANN community provides its input. ICANN integrates that comment and produces a new version. The cycle does not stop there. ICANN generally seeks further input from its Supporting Organizations, the community of Internet end users, governments and others on the sufficiency of the second version. This cycle of iteration---comment---integration

continues until no new ideas appear – that is when it is time to move forward and take action on the community's work. The ICANN model provides predictability, and protects against any single person or entity capturing the policy process or unduly influencing the outcome.

Global engagement

ICANN plays a significant role in the overall Internet Governance agenda, and as such is involved in national, regional and global initiatives. Nationally, through a Global Partnerships team it works with governments and other key stakeholders to promote participation in ICANN but also engagement in Internet governance policies in general.

ICANN works regionally, with satellite offices in Brussels and Sydney, to support the Community and to enhance participation. Within Europe we have relationships with key stakeholders such as the OECD, UNESCO, the ITU and the Council of Europe.

Globally, ICANN is a key contributor to the work of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and to other UN institutions.

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