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Office of the Ombudsman

Remarks at Brussels Public Forum

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Mr. Chairman, Peter Dengate-Thrush, President Rod Beckstrom, members of the Board of Directors and Liaisons, esteemed members of the ICANN community, ICANN staff, ladies, and gentlemen, thank you for your warm welcome here today.

Mr. Chairman, as we approach the end of the fiscal year, let me provide you with some brief information about the activities of the Office. In the past year, following similar annual trends, the raw number of complaints (n= 61) has dropped. However, the number of complaints in the jurisdiction of the Office continues to remain on par with last year, at 31% of the total complaints (n=19).

In the fiscal year, two Ombudsman reports have been escalated to the Board of Directors, and a number of recommendations have been made.

Since we last met in Nairobi, I have observed that there have been a rising number of issues which community members have brought to my attention, but where no formal complaints have been filed. In many cases, community members wish simply to have the opportunity to share a concern with a senior official in the organization. In other cases, the opportunity to speak with the Ombudsman has resulted in the complainant receiving self help information, or in developing their possible options.

In the past several months I have made a number of presentations on behalf of the Office of the Ombudsman. These include a symposium on Online Dispute Resolution at the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law at Vienna, the International Ombudsman Association at New Orleans, and the 2010 International Forum on Online Dispute Resolution at Buenos Aires.

In September I will be a presenter at the Canadian Forum on Court Technology, at Ottawa; as the courts become more interested in Online Dispute Resolution as a method to increase access to justice and streamline court processes.

In November of this year, I will chair the first international forum on Online Dispute Resolution and consumer Protection

(www.odrandconsumers2010.org). This is being staged with no budgetary impact to ICANN. Our partners include adr.eu, PayPal, and the Law Society of British Columbia.

That concludes my report. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Public Forum this afternoon.