Governmental Advisory Committee

23 April 2015

Dr. Stephen Crocker
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Reference: Country and Territory Names

Dear Steve,

Several GAC members have noted with concern a number of requests from new gTLD registry operators for the release of country and territory names at the second level. These requests have been filed by registries following the Registry Services Evaluation Process (RSEP) and as per this process, posted for public comments.

As you are aware, the use of country and territory names in the DNS is a sensitive matter for many GAC members, an aspect highlighted repeatedly by the GAC, most recently in its Singapore Communiqué. In the Singapore Communiqué, the GAC proposed to participate in the development of a public database to streamline the release authorization process for country and territory names at the second level, by which, if they so wish, could indicate their consent to the use of their country and territory names.
At the same time, the GAC cautioned ICANN not to consider the absence of input from a government as agreement, due to the fact that a sensitive issue such as this calls for consultation with the relevant government.

The GAC has started to work on a proposal for such a database and on related aspects of the process for release of country and territory names. This work has priority status for the GAC and a proposal will soon be shared with ICANN.

In the meantime, it is the expectation of the GAC that a realistic timeline will be followed, and that existent RSEP requests will not be approved before an adequate process involving the GAC and individual governments in the release of country and territory names at the second level has been developed. I trust that this expectation is shared by the Board and look forward to further exchanges to address any additional questions or concerns on this topic.

Very best regards,

Mr Thomas Schneider
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee

Cc: Cherine Chalaby, ICANN Chair of the New gTLD Committee
Akram Atallah, President of ICANN's Global Domains Division