Arnhem, 10 May 2013

To: Chair, Board of Directors ICANN
        President&CEO ICANN

Subject: Summary of previous comments of the ccNSOP WG on ICANN's Strategic Plans

Dear Mr. Chehadé and Mr. Crocker, Dear Fadi and Steve,

In its reaction to the draft Strategic Plan 2013-2016 of November 2012, the Strategic and Operational Planning Working Group of the ccNSO recommended to discontinue the development of the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan and to focus staff and community efforts on the development of the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan in 2013.

We compliment you for following that recommendation and herewith give a follow-up to the commitment we made in that same submission:

> *"to creating a high-level overview and summary of the comments still valid and which the SOP has submitted on ICANN's Strategic Plans since the WG's creation in 2009. This overview will be provided to ICANN (via the Chair and the CEO) and also to the ccNSO Council"*

The SOP WG was created to coordinate and increase participation of ccTLD managers in ICANN's Strategic and Operational planning processes. The scope of activity of the Working Group is to do whatever it deems relevant and necessary to facilitate and improve participation of ccTLD managers in the aforementioned processes. The views of the Working Group do not represent the ccNSO, its Council, or ccTLD managers collectively or individually. However, the SOP WG is mandated to make submissions on its own behalf.

The SOP WG hopes that, with a high-level summary of its previous comments and a ccTLD community strategic perspective, it provides valuable input for ICANN's new Strategic Planning Process.

Best regards,

Roelof Meijer
Chair
SOP WG

High-level summary of previous comments

- Over time the strategic planning process itself has been changed several times. In order to ensure the continued participation, the SOP WG urges to **establish an organised process** that ICANN and community commit to for a longer period that is predictable both in terms of schedule and process, and allows enough time to provide substantial input in each of the relevant phases of the process. During the process, ICANN should provide meaningful feed-back on the suggestions by the community.

- The basis of the Strategic Plan should begin with **a clear articulation of ICANN's overall mission and vision**. The current vision, "One world, one internet", while laudable, does not in our view communicate any particular mission or vision that can actually guide the organization. **Both mission and vision should be better elaborated and clearly target the global public interest and the protection and further development of the multi-stakeholder model.**

- Having better articulated this overall mission and vision, **ICANN needs to next establish a clear vision of its own work by defining strategic objectives, operational plans, milestones and measurable results**. While ICANN relies to a considerable extent on the volunteer community for its overall success, it nevertheless needs to establish goals that it as an organization will achieve.

- The SOP WG has repeatedly commented on the high number (and steady increase thereof) of strategic objectives listed in ICANN's Strategic Plans. For example, in the draft 2012-2015 Strategic Plan the number of strategic objectives increased to 24 (from 18 in the 2011-2014 plan). In our view **realistic ambitions, appropriate priority setting and a clear and strong focus** are crucial conditions for real progress.

- We suggest that for each of the defined strategic objectives (sub-) **goals** are set **for each year covered by the plan**. This will allow for on-going monitoring and reporting (to the board and the community) on progress on the strategic objectives on a year to year basis. In order to monitor progress, the **inclusion of strategic metrics and key performance indicators** is strongly recommended. However, a balance between measuring and performing is necessary.

- In ICANN's own words, the new gTLD program potentially constitutes a landslide change to the DNS and the Internet. Contrary to the plans to date, the new Strategic Plan **should address that potential change on a strategic level.**

- The **change in the use of domain names** and the (related or not) significant **decline in domain name sales, should receive attention** in ICANN's strategic plan.

- **Acting in the global public interest should be one of the pillars** and driving forces for ICANN's work and the ICANN community.

- "*World-class corporate governance*" should be incorporated in ICANN's strategic objectives

The ccTLD community perspective

In October 2009, a survey of members of the ccNSO was conducted to gain insights and measure attitudes pertaining to the strategic priorities developed within the ICANN community for the 2009-2012 planning period.

The following five priorities were considered by the ccNSO community to be the most important:

1. Enhance security, stability and resiliency in the allocation and assignment of the Internet's unique identifiers
2. Implement IDNs
3. Ensure financial accountability, stability and responsibility
4. Strengthen ICANN's multi-stakeholder model to manage increasing demand and changing needs
5. Strive for excellence in core operations

Based on the outcome of the ccNSO Panel discussions held during the ICANN meeting in Beijing (April 2013), these priorities remain to be relevant from a ccTLD perspective.
The SOP WG will continue to review future Strategic and Operational Plans taking these priorities into account.

SOP WG, May 2013.