

**Remarks by
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INTRODUCTION

I am delighted to be here today with Janis Karklins, former chair of ICANN's Governmental Advisory Committee and a significant contributor on Internet governance. Congratulations, Janis, on your great new position as UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information.

THE GLOBAL INTERNET

From Mandarin Chinese with around a billion speakers to Ter Sami, a Russian dialect with only two known speakers, the world's 6500 languages are a fundamental component of our common heritage.

That linguistic heritage must transfer online if the Internet is to be truly global. Our economies, our communications, our social and cultural lives are linked by the Internet – the most powerful communications tool in the history of mankind. And everyone on the planet has a right to be a part of that.

INTERNATIONALIZED DOMAIN NAMES

UNESCO and ICANN share a commitment to full internationalization of the Internet to preserve our heritage and to ensure that mankind's greatest communications tool embraces all people around the world.

ICANN works toward a common good – a stable, secure and unified global Internet. It fulfills the goal by maintaining the security and stability of the domain name system, which is one important component of the global Internet. And it is a multistakeholder, multinational institution overseen “by the world, for the world”, reflecting its increasingly global work.

Our economies, our communications, our social and cultural lives are linked by the Internet, and a truly global Internet means that anyone can connect to anyone anywhere, at any time. For many millions, the introduction of internationalized domain names means they can do so in their primary language.

Five of the top ten languages used on the Internet today rely on a non-Latin script: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian. Millions more fall into the broad category of “other” languages – not in the top ten – and many of them rely on non-Latin scripts.

In late 2009 ICANN launched a fast track process to introduce internationalized domain names, and in May the Russian top-level domain name in Cyrillic was entered into the Internet’s DNS root. For the first time, people whose primary language is written in Cyrillic could navigate online entirely in their own language. Arabic, Chinese, Sinhalese, Tamil and Thai scripts followed, and billions more can now access the Internet using only their primary language script.

Thirty-three requests representing 22 languages are being processed through the fast track system and 14 IDN country code top-level domains are now in the root, representing 11 countries and territories.

The 22 languages include Arabic, Chinese and Russian, three of the ten most used languages. They have Internet penetrations of 20 percent, 33 percent and 43 percent respectively, so there is still a lot of room for continued development and growth within these language groups.

We expect to receive requests from many other countries and territories, and we welcome UNESCO’s plan to provide linguistic support to those that want to participate in the fast track process but need linguistic help in preparing their request. ICANN also has staff available to assist those in general need of help in applying.

An internationalized domain name offers multiple benefits. It helps to foster innovation and creativity, and to provide better branding opportunities for local companies, countries and communities. It increases convenience and consumer choice, and generates educational opportunities. And most important, it opens the Internet to millions who until now have been hindered by the need to use Latin scripts.

A VALUED PARTNER

One of the great things about ICANN is its ability to partner with a wide range of international parties to achieve specific goals. Our partnership with UNESCO, laid out in a Cooperation Agreement last December, enables our close cooperation in supporting the introduction of top-level internationalized domain names and making the Internet accessible to the world’s language communities that UNESCO does so much to support.

In keeping with that agreement, UNESCO is committed to working with ICANN to provide linguistic support for countries and territories applying for their IDN ccTLD strings through the fast track process.

UNESCO and ICANN are considering joint activities to further facilitate the introduction of internationalized domain names at the top level, including helping communities to develop their own IDN tables – the lists of characters

to be used with their IDN. This requires ICANN and UNESCO to work closely with language communities to increase local and regional awareness of IDNs and to help with IDN implementation in all regions.

Today we signed a new letter of intent to further our relationship, and this is the next step in fulfilling our obligations under the Cooperation Agreement. We will make the letter of intent available for public comment by the ICANN community.

CONCLUSION

As we meet today, people who have never used the Internet are joining the online community. The world is a network of villages; they have their own languages. But we are all becoming connected through this amazing global system. Millions of people – the next wave of Internet users – will now be able to use their primary language scripts to do so.

We are very grateful to UNESCO for their leadership on language preservation. And we welcome their support and cooperation as we open the door of the Internet to the world.

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