

07 April 2022

H.E. Kwesi Quartey
Deputy Chairperson
African Union Commission

Your Excellency,

I am writing in response to the African Union Commission's [earlier correspondence](#) requesting that ICANN release the acronym "AU" from the current interim reserved list of acronyms, to allow the African Union Commission to register .au at the second level in specific gTLDs delegated as part of the 2012 New gTLD Program. As you know, "AU" is on a list of International Governmental Organization names and acronyms ([IGO Identifiers List](#)) that was submitted to ICANN by the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) in March 2013. In July 2013, the ICANN Board, acting through its New gTLD Program Committee, [resolved](#) to temporarily withhold from registration all the names and acronyms on the IGO Identifiers List, while the Board and community continue to work through outstanding issues concerning protections for IGO acronyms. As a result, it is currently not possible to register any acronym that is on the IGO Identifiers List at the second level in any new gTLDs.

In order for the African Union Commission to register "au.africa", the acronym "AU" would have to be removed from the IGO identifiers list. This would result in the "AU" acronym no longer being protected in any new gTLD. In other words, once released from the IGO acronym list, anyone would be able to register "AU" as a second level domain name in any gTLD delegated under the 2012 New gTLD Program; the ability to register would not be limited to the African Union Commission.

In addition, because the IGO Identifiers List originated with the GAC, ICANN does not have the authority or ability to add, modify or remove any entry from it. The GAC prepared the list to ensure that the names and acronyms of IGOs meeting the GAC's criteria are protected at the second level in all new gTLDs. Therefore, the request to release "AU" must be directed to the GAC. ICANN org can only act on instructions from the Board, should the Board accept a request from the GAC to release the acronym from the protected list.

Should the African Union Commission wish to pursue the option of seeking removal of "AU" from the IGO Identifiers List, my suggestion would be to write to the GAC Chair, Madam Manal Ismail, and GAC Leadership at gac-leadership@icann.org with GAC Support staff in copy (gac-staff@icann.org).

Sincerely yours,



Maarten Botterman
Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

Cc:
Manal Ismail
Chair, Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC)
Göran Marby
President and Chief Executive Officer Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)