



Africa's map in the digital inclusion!

**URGENT**

22<sup>th</sup> November 2010

The Chief Executive Officer  
 Internet Corporation for Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN)  
 4676 Admiralty Way, Suite 330  
 Marina Del Rey, CA 90292-6601  
 United States of America

Dear Sir,

**Subject: [Our Objection to the Candidacy of Monsieur Pierre Dandjinou for the Board Seat of ICANN](#)**

We would like to register our principled objection to the proposed candidacy of Monsieur Pierre Dandjinou, who supposititious representation of the “Community at Large” on the Board Seat of the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names & Numbers (ICANN) is now in question.

We have already expressed our formal objection through the appropriate ALAC channel, dated 14 November 2009 which the Chair and relevant ICANN staff is in advisement, and our letter of objection has been posted for the community. However, we now write to you concerned on three matters:

- 1) The At-Large Board Selection Design Team (ABSdt) made it a point to state on the [Statement of Interest Form](#) supplied to the candidates: "Actual and potential conflicts of interest will not necessarily be disqualifying". This is even contrary to ICANN COI overall principles. As such, the ABSdt took no position regarding failure to make disclosure on the participant.
- 2) On another note, DCA would like to make you aware of an unauthorized letter circulating throughout the African and ICANN community by our opponents attempting to negate the authentic letter of endorsement that we has been granted by the Chairman of the AU, earlier to that.
- 3) Also, an unfounded allegation is circulating around ICANN/AfriICANN community that DCA misinformed the Ethiopian government wrong information on AfriNic training, which resulted in embarrassment and regrets by the Ethiopian Government.

The DotConnectAfrica (DCA) Organization which we represent is a very important stakeholder in this matter and intends to apply for the gTLD for Africa in the upcoming application round. As such we believe that any Board Seat for Africa is occupied by somebody we regard as a fair player, and one that would help establish and promote a level playing field anchored on transparent processes to promote the DotAfrica Initiative. We presently believe that Monsieur Pierre Dandjinou has woven a web of conflicting interests around himself by not fully disclosing his Interest – personal or otherwise – in wanting to occupy the Board Seat on ICANN

Monsieur Pierre Dandjinou has been elected as the Chair of a Task Force set-up by the African Union on DotAfrica, even though we consider the process of electing him as Chair of the AU Task Force as ‘un-representative’ since most of the key regional blocks and countries in Africa; to wit, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Egypt did not attend the meeting when this Task Force was elected and Pierre Dandjinou became its Chairperson. Without mincing words, our understanding is that this was one elaborate, yet carefully stage-managed and manipulated process, rather shambolic exercise.

Anything that has a potential major impact on the global visibility of Africa on the Internet should be seen as inclusive, open and participatory; not one that could be hijacked by a certain interest group based on specious claims and manifestly dishonorable posturing.

ICANN is already aware that DotConnectAfrica received a firm endorsement from the AU Chairperson in 2009. However, in 2010, another letter was sent to us with a copy to ICANN with an implication of withdrawal that was purportedly signed by MR. Erastus J. O. Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. We are still consternated and trying to understand how an endorsement originally signed by the AU Chairperson could have been quickly withdrawn and treated as a fait accompli based on a letter issued in the name of the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission. This scenario could be likened to US President Obama signing an Executive Order, which would be later withdrawn by the fiat of US Vice-President Joe Biden. Under normal circumstances this would be against every protocol, and rules of procedure, and would undermine institutional cohesion and credibility, especially within a governmental or inter-governmental organization.

It is on the basis of this assessment that we have come to the conclusion that the second letter was an exercise in reckless manipulation which was simply cooked up to block our efforts and confound everyone. This will not stand. Furthermore, the so-called AU Task Force was only established after this second letter.

Consequently, we would like to convey our deep feeling that those who opposed DCA, and manipulated the AUC to write the second letter based on questionable procedures, have again: 1) constituted themselves into an unrepresentative 'Task Force'; and 2) constituted themselves into a Cabal to promote the (s)election of the head of this unrepresentative Task Force to the Board Seat of ICANN so as to give the same individual additional leverage to work against our corporate aims whilst rolling back all the successes that DCA has achieved to date.

In addition to the above, we also know that Monsieur Pierre Dandjinou and his business partner who have operated as both Chair and Vice-Chair of AfriNIC, and are also both Chair and Vice-Chair of the AU Task Force. The conflicting interests are rather obvious for everyone to see, and need no further proofs or supporting evidence to elaborate. We therefore rightly believe that allowing Pierre Dandjinou to win the Board Seat of ICAAN would be tantamount to simply promoting the interests of AfriNIC and the personal interest of Pierre Dandjinou and the group interest of a hidden cabal, all based on opaque processes, even though their conflicting and often crisscrossing interests are very visible to one and all. Even at the risk of over-stressing a point already made, we believe Pierre Dandjinou is simply a discredited and biased candidate who should not be trusted with this important seat on the Board of ICANN.

Post DCA's complaint on Candidate, the Vice-Chair above Dr. Nii Oquanor, also gave a loud warning to ICANN and ALAC on AfriICANN forum not to be manipulated by DCA. This based on unfounded allegation that the Principal of DCA prevented Afrinic training in Ethiopia by supplying wrong information to the Ethiopian government, who then regretted the situation afterwards. While we are shockingly surprised as to why Dr. Nill speaks on behalf of the Ethiopian government, we would like to advise your offices and ALAC that his allegations are false and manipulative itself. Post AfriNic incident, in October 2008, DCA has received its esteemed endorsement from the Ethiopian government on dotArica (attached). It is also a public fact that AfriNic has not since been invited by the Ethiopian Government since. This certainly does not demonstrate an action of a regretful government. We therefore, wants to assure ICANN and ALAC, that DCA, its Principal Ms. Bekele, and the dotafrica initiative is in excellent standing with the Ethiopian government. Should verification be required, the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington, as well as the Ethiopian Telecom in Ethiopia can easily be contacted. The Principal and the dotafrica initiative enjoy tremendous support by the Ethiopian government.

We therefore hope that you will seriously consider all the bases of our principled objection as registered via this correspondence and act in the best interest of fair play, so that all key stakeholders in this matter will view you and ICANN as an honest, principled and impartial arbiter.

Yours sincerely,

With highest regards,

*Sbekele*

Ms. Sophia Bekele, B.S., M.B.A., C.I.S.A, C.C.S, CGEIT,  
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Executive Director (.Africa),  
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cc: Cherly Langdon, Heidi Ullrich, BCEC  
Attachment: letter of endorsement from Ethiopia, 2009