Verbatim Extract from the ICANN new gTLD Website: Public Portion of the Application

(http://gtldresult.icann.org/application-result/applicationstatus/applicationdetails/1184)

Mission/Purpose

18(a). Describe the mission/purpose of your proposed gTLD.

Introduction: Mission, Vision and Purpose:

UniForum SA is a non-profit company incorporated in South Africa and trading as the .ZA Central Registry ("ZACR"). The African Union Commission (AUC) has, on behalf of its member states, officially appointed UniForum SA to apply for and launch the dotAfrica TLD.

In this application the Applicant may be referred to as UniForum SA, Registry.Africa, the ZA Central Registry and/or simply ZACR. Although it is the intention of the Applicant to conduct its business under the Registry.Africa banner in the event that its application is successful, the evaluating team should, for purposes of this application, consider any reference to UniForum SA, Registry.Africa, ZA Central Registry and/or ZACR as interchangeable and synonymous with the Applicant.

The ZACR and its partners in Africa, representing governments, ccTLD administrators, the technical and user communities, share a collective vision of establishing and running a successful, African-based registry operation for the benefit and pride of Africa.

Our primary objective and mission can therefore be summarised as follows: "To establish a world class domain name registry operation for the dotAfrica Top Level Domain (TLD) by engaging and utilising African technology, know-how and funding; for the benefit and pride of Africans; in partnership with African governments and other ICT stakeholder groups".

Our mission is to establish the dotAfrica TLD as a proud identifier of Africa's online identity, fairly reflecting the continent's rich cultural, social and economic diversity and potential. In essence we will strive to develop and position the dotAfrica TLD as the preferred option for individuals and businesses either based in Africa or with strong associations with the continent and its people.

The dotAfrica TLD represents a unique opportunity for Africa to develop and enhance its domain name and Internet eco-systems and communities by collaborating with each other to:

- identify, engage and develop African-based specialist skills and resources;
- share knowledge and develop DNS thought-leadership; and

- implement world class registry standards and contribute towards their continued development.

18(b). How do you expect that your proposed gTLD will benefit registrants, Internet users, and others?

By Africa, for Africa:

The dotAfrica TLD is a collaborative, public-private, African initiative, supported by African governments through the African Union and administered through the expertise and resources of the private sector. Shortly after its appointment in terms of the African Union RFP process, the Applicant, in consultation with Internet community representatives from all over Africa, at a meeting held in Johannesburg, established a Steering Committee to exercise moral and ethical oversight over the dotAfrica project.

Representatives of the broader African Internet community are currently participating in the project through the SteerCom, which comprises African Internet experts, country code managers, registrars and others volunteers. For a list of the SteerCom members refer to www.AfricaInOneSpace.org.

The SteerCom is engaged under formal Terms of Reference, which include, amongst others, a mandate to identify the criteria and processes for the incorporation of a new non-profit organisation, namely the dotAfrica Foundation. The SteerCom is therefore the precursor to the dotAfrica Foundation, which will work closely with the Applicant in assuming the moral and ethical oversight of the dotAfrica TLD and the development of policy issues. The SteerCom will be dissolved once the Foundation is incorporated and established.

Benefitting the African and Global Internet Communities:

Reinvestment into Africa:
Funds generated through the administration of the dotAfrica TLD will benefit Africans and the African continent through various skills development and capacity-building initiatives relating to the local domain name and Internet sectors. By investing in the development and enhancement of critical Internet infrastructure and resources, end-users will receive more efficient and reliable services, which will have a follow-on enabling effect on socio-economic growth and investment in the region.

Upon delegation of the dotAfrica TLD the Applicant will establish a Development Fund, which will comprise surplus operational funds generated through the administration of the dotAfrica gTLD. This Fund will be transferred to and administered by the dotAfrica Foundation, to be applied to development projects and initiatives in Africa. These include:

(A) The Development of African ccTLDs:
ccTLDs provide important Internet infrastructure that promote and support local economic growth, education and communication. The

Development Fund must support the role of existing organisations such as AfTLD and strengthen and develop new African ccTLDs. Primary objectives of this development initiative are to:

(i) make available and/or share technical resources and know-how, developed and maintained in Africa;

(ii) develop and harmonise African ccTLD strategy and policy to make it more attractive and accessible to local and international markets;
(iii) harness and optimise the business potential that ccTLDs present, and to develop domestic strategies and partnerships to facilitate the dissemination of benefits down the domain name value chain; and

(iv) establish collaborative centres of excellence throughout Africa through which new technical skills and thought leadership can thrive and develop.

(B) The Development of the African Registrar Market:
Of the over 900 ICANN-accredited registrars in the world, more than 500 are based in the United States, whilst Africa has only 5. Of these only 4 are operational. Africa is clearly lagging behind its international counterparts and a solution must be found from within Africa.

The Development Fund must support and facilitate the expansion of the African Registrar market. Some of the broad objectives of this development initiative are to:
(i) promote awareness of (and engage with) the registrar model as a mechanism for domestic and regional enterprise and skills development;

(ii) develop and implement industry best practices and consumer (registrant) protection mechanisms;

(iii) develop and provide shared, cost-effective resources and services;

(iv) collectively address associated business challenges, including billing and banking issues;

(v) provide a mechanism for registrars to enter the market and to nurture their businesses into becoming globally competitive and viable; and

(vi) harness the business potential of a competitive and vibrant registrar market for the benefit of African registrants and ccTLDs.

(C) The Development of African Online Content:
The dotAfrica project is a fantastic opportunity to drive content development focusing specifically on Africa. In order to kick-start this process and achieve some level of critical mass, the Applicant will reserve certain high-search value names and then utilise these, either on its own or through strategic partnerships with content providers, to develop online content and services. The Development Fund must support and facilitate the origination, development and maintenance of African-related online content and services.

Some of the broad objectives of this development initiative are to:

(i) Encourage existing African content and service providers to

associate their content with the dotAfrica TLD in order to better engage with this user community. This is specifically relevant to African online content and service providers who utilise gTLDs instead of African ccTLDs. Potential targets for this initiative include African governments and agencies, large multi-national and parastatal organisations.
(ii) Develop strategic partnerships and associations with existing, well-established international online content and related services providers, to encourage and assist them to develop and customise their products and services specifically for the African market. Potential targets for this initiative include social media platforms, search engines providers, and leisure and business service providers.
(iii) Establish partnerships and associations with African service providers and businesses with the potential and capacity to develop sound business models for developing and driving online content and services; and assist them by making available high-search value names, start-up funding, technical support and mentoring, etcetera.

(D) The Support of Socio-Economic Development Projects and Initiatives:

The Applicant, through its administration of the successful CO.ZA domain name space in South Africa over the past 16 years, has already demonstrated its ability to establish and maintain a highly successful and sustainable social development initiative through its 'CoZa Cares' division. By 2011, this division, in collaboration with its strategic partners, had channelled over ZAR40mill (USD5,5M) towards the establishment of ICT infrastructure in over 250 schools, in 7 South African provinces.

The Development Fund must support and facilitate various African socio-economic development initiatives and projects relating to the ICT sector. Supporting ICT skills development and capacity-building initiatives, from primary school to tertiary level, is critical to develop the African thought leaders of tomorrow.

The broad objectives of this development initiative are to:

(i) facilitate the coordination of various ICT-related social-economic development initiatives in Africa, in order for the various participants to learn and benefit from each others' experiences and, where possible, to pool resources and expertise in order to address developmental challenges faced by Africa more effectively; and
(ii) identify and support worthy ICT-development projects and initiatives throughout Africa in order to ensure their sustainability.

Although the above development initiatives and projects undertaken by the dotAfrica Project partners are almost exclusively focused on the African community, we believe that there is a compelling benefit for the rest of the world. Africa comprises nearly 1 billion people, based in 54 countries with a wide diversity of language and culture. A successful dotAfrica TLD, supported by an empowered and vibrant African community, presents significant business, social and leisure opportunities for the world. Success in Africa means success for the world.

In addition to the development projects and initiatives administered through the dotAfrica Foundation, the Applicant will endeavour, as part of its registry operations, to establish a Centre of Excellence, in

terms of which African specialist skills and expertise, relating to the DNS environment, will be identified and developed. Specialist DNS expertise is a critical success factor in order to benefit the dotAfrica registry operation and African ccTLDs. The development of African DNS thought leadership and technical innovation is needed in order to sustain the empowerment of African ccTLDs.

Building a Global Brand with a Focus on Africa:

Africa, the Cradle of Humankind:
"Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most-populous continent, after Asia. Africa, particularly central Eastern Africa, is widely regarded within the scientific community to be the origin of humans and the Hominidae clade , as evidenced by the discovery of the earliest hominids and their ancestors, as well as later ones that have been dated to around seven million years ago." (wikipedia)

Africa, the Economic Opportunity:
"The economies of the fastest growing African nations experienced growth significantly above the global average rates. Many international agencies are gaining increasing interest in investing emerging African economies, especially as Africa continues to maintain high economic growth despite the current global economic recession. The rate of return on investment in Africa is currently the highest in the developing world."

Differentiation of dotAfrica from other new gTLDs:
There will be many arguments raised by registries in differentiating their new gTLDs from others. As a geographic indicator, the dotAfrica TLD, which is unique in essence, will automatically assume the reputation and goodwill of the region it represents. Africa represents a unique part of the world, with unique people, challenges and prospects. dotAfrica, therefore presents an opportunity to engage with the region and its people, thereby potentially unlocking the economic and social potential of a vast and diverse continent.

Whilst there are 54 ccTLDs that could potentially serve the needs of the African Internet community, not a single one of these is ideally positioned to provide a collective identity to the continent as a whole. With many of these ccTLDs in turmoil or unable to provide reliable services, dotAfrica will offer a secure, stable, and open TLD that will be recognized in Africa as well around the world.

Marketing, Communication and Public Relations:
The marketing of the dotAfrica domain name brand will occur in terms of a defined strategy to create competitive advantages to governments, businesses and individuals within Africa and abroad. The entire African continent has unique needs, cultures, and political realities, market requirements and socio-economic conditions, which are influenced by internal and external forces. These variables need to be taken into account in our marketing and communication strategy with our various stakeholders.

Multiple media tools must be used in the dotAfrica marketing strategy. Radio remains a major source of information throughout Africa, but mobile penetration must also be used to dotAfrica's advantage. Broadband penetration outside of a very small number of countries has been limited, but Internet access via mobile telephone is on the rise.

Digital and pay-for-service television access is on the rise. The vast target market needs to be segmented, in order to develop key messaging for each market sector. Each dotAfrica registration will help fund the dotAfrica Foundation that has the core mandate to promote digital inclusion, social development, and technical development of the Internet in the region.

A dotAfrica domain name is the perfect platform for global branding, marketing, and visibility with a focus on customers and markets in Africa which can help increase tourism, build and enhance international business relationships with Africa, and boost economic benefits. The marketing and communication campaign for dotAfrica is already using a number of communication platforms to create awareness and communicate with the various stakeholders, including: Facebook & Twitter and; dotAfrica website (africainonespace.org); and dotAfrica mailing lists. Traditional media such as newspapers, and radio and modern digital media have been used to spread the dotAfrica message. An African multi-stakeholder committee comprising of diverse skills has been established to focus on activities and strategy required for a successful PR campaign.

Registry Operations:
From a technical/operational perspective the dotAfrica TLD registry will operate on the Extensible Provisioning Protocol platform, which is an internationally accepted standard for registry functions across the world and which has the flexibility to incorporate extensions such as DNSSEC and extensions pertaining to domain specific policy requirements. The dotAfrica registry platform is wholly developed, maintained and hosted in Africa.

The applicant has a highly experienced team of experts dedicated to the on going development, maintenance, administration and training of the core registry services. The dotAfrica registry platform, which has been developed, implemented and maintained on the back of over 17 years registry experience by the Applicant, also provides WHOIS services, Secure EPP Message Handling, DNS and DNSSEC services. A key point of the registry system is the flexible Policy Integration and configuration independent of the core development team.

As part of the global DNS environment, the dotAfrica registry platform also integrates with specialist 3rd party DNS related systems and services, which when viewed collectively, provides a mature comprehensive, well-balanced world-class registry solution for dotAfrica. External systems and services compliant with industry best practises and ICANN requirements include: Data Escrow services; Anycast and Unicast services; and Off-site Hot Standby Failover Hosting.

We envisage that the investment by the Applicant into the development of the African ccTLD and Registrar communities will encourage the adoption and implementation of unified standards and policies across the Africa region. This should in turn facilitate the growth of a competitive and sustainable registry/registrar market and cost savings and efficiencies for registries that collaborate on the implementation of shared services and systems.

Preliminary steps have already been taken to create awareness and engage with the African registrar and registry communities on the subject of the proposed dotAfrica registry system. A wiki site which

highlights the Applicant's EPP functionality and provides a walkthrough for current and potential registrars has been created at http:⁄⁄registry.net.za

Apart from providing a platform for growth of the cctLD and registrar communities, the dotAfrica registry solution allows registrars access to a number of key services including an automated Registrar Accreditation Process, reporting and tracking, a Registry Notification Portal, and a secure flexible interface for retrieving financial statements and invoices. This allows for the registration and maintenance of domain names by registrars and results in ease of domain registration for registrants.

More importantly it provides a registry platform that promotes simple, accessible, secure, accurate and abuse free domain registration by registrars and ultimately the end user. The dotAfrica TLD registry function will be managed in a way that is service driven, secure and stable.

Registration Policy:
The dotAfrica registration policy will be established, implemented and maintained through a multi-stakeholder Policy Committee established by the Applicant in partnership with the Steering Committee or the Foundation. The registration policy will set out the technical and administrative procedures and criteria used by the registry with regards to domain name registrations or requests for such registrations, cancellations, transfers, suspensions and revocations. The policy will be informed and guided by those developed through the ICANN multi-stakeholder process.

Although a comprehensive final registration policy must still be approved, the broad parameters of the registration policy will include:

(i) following the Sunrise and Land Rush periods, registrations will be delegated on a "first-come-first-served" basis;

(ii) registrations will be open to anyone;

(iii) access to the registry will be available only through an ICANN-Accredited Registrar who has executed a suitable accreditation agreement with the registry;

(iv) registration periods will range from 1 – 10 years.

Similar criteria will apply to the establishment, implementation and maintenance of a privacy policy for the dotAfrica TLD that is based on international best practices as well as local and international standards. The registry will strive to protect the rights and privacy of all individuals or companies associated with dotAfrica TLD names.

Financial Aspects:
The Applicant, over 17 years of administering the successful CO.ZA domain in South Africa, has demonstrated an ability and capacity to manage and administer its financial affairs in a professional and transparent manner. The Applicant has maintained highly competitive fees charged to registrars within reasonable international parameters. Simultaneously it has generated reasonable surplus funds, not only to provide a suitable operating buffer for the efficient and effective

operation of the registry, but also to fund social development initiatives and projects.

The Applicant will, under the scrutiny and oversight of the SteerCom or Foundation, apply similar financial disciplines and procedure to the administration of the dotAfrica TLD. As outlined above, the operating revenues generated through the administration of the dotAfrica TLD will be accounted for in accordance with internationally-accepted accounting practices. All surplus funds will be channelled into a Development Fund to be administered by the dotAfrica Foundation.

Although the financial parameters and policies must still be finalised and approved by the Policy Committee, the following are of importance concerning the application and launch of the dotAfrica TLD. The Applicant has made available up to US$1,300,000 to apply for and launch the dotAfrica TLD. The above funds have been committed to a dedicated dotAfrica bank account that will be used exclusively for the dotAfrica project.

The Applicant has provided a Continual Performance Guarantee to ICANN of US$140,000 with ABSA Bank, a subsidiary of Barclays Plc to secure the provision of critical registry services for the dotAfrica TLD for up to 6 years. Initial registration fees are estimated to be in the region of US$18 per year. Due to its considerable investment into its technical registry capacity for .ZA, including the procurement and development of technical skills and resources, the Applicant is able to leverage this against the provision of critical registry services for dotAfrica in the event that the TLD is commercially unsustainable in its own right.

18(c). What operating rules will you adopt to eliminate or minimize social costs?

Rights Protection:
- Reserved Name Lists (Pre-Sunrise)
- Sunrise
- Post Delegation Dispute Resolution

The ZACR is committed to protecting the rights of governments, registrars, end users and the greater Internet community against fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices that may arise within the dotAfrica TLD. Abusive practices will be minimized through the following initiatives:

(A) Pre-Sunrise:
A pre-sunrise process will take place prior to the full-scale implementation of the Sunrise and Land-rush Policy applicable to the dotAfrica TLD. This is significant as it will provide African governments and government organisations, such as the African Union Commission (AUC), a window of opportunity to compile and submit a list of names that must be reserved or blocked from registration. These names may touch on sensitive territorial or political issues; hold special meaning in Africa (such as country names, city names, cultural sites or groups); or are simply offensive in Africa.

The Pre-Sunrise process will be done in coordination with the AUC on the terms and conditions agreed to between the AUC and the ZACR in their agreement signed on 1 March 2012 and will also be subject to all reservations prescribed by ICANN (included but not limited to reservations regarding the label 'example', two character labels, tagged domain names, prescribed registry operation names, country and territory names, etc.) as well as the GAC principles regarding new TLDS.

Names placed on the Reserve Lists will only be available to pre-defined Applicants who will be expected to apply for the names within a period of time prescribed by the dotAfrica Policy Committee.

(B) Sunrise:
A phase-based Sunrise procedure, with associated auction processes, will be implemented to allow established brands and trademark holders to register their corresponding domains within the dotAfrica TLD. Although the Policy Committee must still approve a final Sunrise Policy, a draft policy has already been developed and is currently under review. This policy caters for two Sunrise periods, namely:
- Sunrise 1, which provides priority for eligible owners of trademarks registered in Africa to obtain corresponding domains names.
- Sunrise 2, which allows eligible owners of trademarks to obtain corresponding domains names.

The ZACR will appoint an independent entity or entities to provide certain rights protection services which may include inter alia verification, validation, and dispute resolution services related to the eligibility of trademarks. In this regard the ZACR will endeavour to engage the services of African providers and institutions and has in the past worked closely with the South African Institute of Intellectual Property Law (www.SAIIPL.org.za) concerning the establishment and implementation of alternate dispute resolution mechanisms in ZA.

The final Sunrise Policy will also provide further details and clarity on Sunrise Eligibility Requirements (SERs) and a dedicated dispute resolution policy and mechanism for this phase.

(C) Land Rush
Just as in the Sunrise period, Land Rush will be implemented over several phases and will be administered through the Applicant's Registrar Web Portal. Although the Policy Committee must still approve a final Land Rush Policy, a draft policy has already been developed and is currently under review. This policy caters for three Land Rush phases, namely:
- The first phase is the "Introductory Land Rush Period" and will see premium domain names made available for purchase for certain periods at time at a certain minimum prices which will decrease as the periods progress. Where there is more than one party interested in the same domain name, that domain name will be referred to auction.
- The second phase is the "Initiation Land Rush Period". This period will last for an estimated 14 days and will also be administered through the Registrar Web Portal. A minimum fee (roughly $300 - $500) will apply to registrations during this period. Multiple applications for the same domain name during this period will also be resolved using an auction process. Undisputed applications will be allocated at the

end of the period.

- Depending on the decision made by the Policy Committee, the ZACR may elect to implement a “Limited Availability Operational Phase”, following on from the Initiation Land Rush period. This mechanism, which will endure for a limited time (0-14 days) will be to place any newly requested domain name (application) in a reserved queue for a short period. If any additional applications for the same domain name are received during this period then the domain will enter a Land Rush auction for a maximum predetermined period. At the end of the period the bids will be collected and the winner determined. This process, or a process similar to this, may also be introduced by the ZACR on an adhoc basis to mitigate the effects of multiple applications for the same name following domain release as well as spontaneous applications due to international events or announcements

(D) All Rights Protection Mechanisms prescribed by ICANN will be implemented. In particular, the Uniform Rapid Suspension System (URS) will be adopted. Initially, Examiners accredited by ICANN appointed Dispute Resolution Service Providers (according to the Applicant Guidebook Module 3, paragraph 3.2.3) will be requested to make findings in URS applications, but the Registry hopes to arrange for the appointment of a board of suitably qualified Examiners particularly in Africa to make findings in these matters.

In the case where a Post Delegation Dispute Resolution Procedure (PDDRP) is initiated following allegations that the Registry profited from a bad faith registration, the Registry undertakes to participate in the procedure and be bound by the determination made. This will be specifically included in the agreement with prospective applicants for domain names in this TLD. Providers accredited by ICANN as Dispute Resolution Service Providers (according to the Applicant Guidebook Module 3, paragraph 3.2.3) will initially be requested to stand as Providers in PDDRP applications, but the Registry hopes to arrange for the appointment of a board of suitably qualified Examiners particularly in Africa to make findings in these matters.

Provision will also be made to file initial complaints that the Registry has not complied with registry restrictions through a Whois Data Problem Report System (WDPRS) through InterNIC.net at a nominal, non-refundable fee. If a complainant is not satisfied that the Registry has complied with its requirements, the matter may be escalated using the RRDRP.

In the case of Registry Restrictions Dispute Resolutions Procedures (RRDRP), the Registry undertakes to participate in the procedure and be bound by the determination made. This will be specifically included in the agreement with prospective applicants for domain names in this TLD. Providers accredited by ICANN as Dispute Resolution Service Providers (according to the Applicant Guidebook Module 3, paragraph 3.2.3) will initially be requested to stand as Providers in RRDRP applications, but the Registry hopes to arrange for the appointment of a board of suitably qualified Examiners particularly in Africa to make findings in these matters.

A dedicated online advisory ⁄ complaints portal will be created and end-users will have access to email, telephone and fax contact details of an appointed Complaints Officer who will attend to complaints directly or escalate them to the relevant divisions within the registry

for resolution. A comprehensive Complaints Handling Policy, that sets out inter alia the scope and ambit of complaints that will be dealt with; the process that must be followed to deal with domain related complaints; and the course of action that the registry may take to deal with complaints depending on their nature, will also be drafted in consultation with the dotAfrica Policy Committee.

(E) The Policy Committee (PC), which is a multi-stakeholder consultative mechanism, will play a determining role in defining policy and determining pricing mechanisms within the dotAfrica TLD. The scope and mandate of the PC will include the review and authorisation of various pricing models, including multi-year (1 — 10 years) pricing, bulk discounts and prices changes. The PC will consider the input and comments of the Registry Operator, the Foundation, Registrars, the broader Internet community and other factors concerning the affordability and competitiveness of the TLD in determining policy, prices and/or or price changes.

The PC will, after due consideration and where circumstances reasonably allow, first publish a proposed policy or price update schedule for public comment on the Registry's website and will also circulate this to the Registrar mailing lists. The proposed update schedule will also include a description of the implementation roadmap for these changes to come into effect and prescribe a deadline for further comments and objections to be submitted for consideration.

Upon final review, taking into account the input provided and objections raised during the public inspection period, the PC will provide a final policy to the Registry Operator for implementation in the manner prescribed. The Registry Provider will then publish the policy on its website and duly inform all accredited Registrars and ICANN of the policy change. The Registry Operator will then ensure that the policy is implemented as published.

PARAGRAPH ON IMPLEMENTATION OF IDN WITHIN THE DOTAFRICA gTLD REGISTRY FUNCTION

Some of Africa's languages are non-Latin scripts for example Arabic and Amharic and also many African languages are written with extended Latin scrip. Africa has diverse cultural, religious and language groups so the impetus to facilitate IDN integration within the dotAfrica gTLD framework clearly exists. The ZACR has the technical knowledge and the specialized skills needed to add IDN capability within the dotAfrica gTLD registry function but believes that it would be premature to implement IDN integration without fully understanding the technical, legal and policy ramifications that this may have in Africa and elsewhere.

Whilst the implementation of IDN is not a new phenomenon internationally, its implementation in the African context will definitely be new. Associated to this is the fact that the African internet/domain name community has to be developed in terms of the beneficiation model described earlier in this submission so that it matures in terms of infrastructure, policies and human potential to a stage where the incorporation of IDN becomes axiomatic. Given the diversity and uniqueness of the management model of the dotAfrica gTLD domain name registry and the sensitivities surrounding language issues,

the ZACR believes that it would be wise to reserve this issue for future research, discussion, debate and policy development under the guidance of a Policy Oversight Committee.

The ZACR intends to engage with those registries that have implemented IDN capability within its registry function to learn from their experience. More especially the ZACR plans to engage/consult with the broader African internet community, involving representatives from governments, registries, registrars as well as other experts and end users to investigate and resolve the challenges that IDN integration may present to Africa.