COMMUNIQUE

On the implementation of the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) Top Level Domain (TLD)

The AUC wishes to provide the following clarity to all stakeholders in Africa and internationally:

1. In view of the needs expressed by the African community at large, and in order to fast track the launch and operation of the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) TLD, the Extraordinary Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Communications and Information Technologies (CITMC) held in Johannesburg acknowledged the benefits of the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) domain name to Africa and called for :
   "Establishment of dot Africa as a continental Top-Level Domain for use by organizations, businesses and individuals with guidance from African Internet agencies."

2. Following the endorsement of the outcomes of the above extraordinary conference by the Heads of States and Governments Summit in January 2010, the Ministers of the African Union in charge of Communication and Information Technologies who met at the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference in Abuja (The Abuja Declaration**),** requested the AUC to**:**

   "Set up the structure and modalities for the Implementation of the **dotAFRICA** *project."*

3. In fulfilling its mandate from African governments the AUC has, in accordance with an open and transparent Request for Proposal (RFP) process, officially endorsed UniForum SA t/a the ZA Central Registry (ZACR) to apply for and launch the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) TLD.

   THE OFFICIALLY ENDORSED APPLICATION:

4. The UniForum/ZACR, in accordance with the procedures and standards prescribed by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), has officially lodged an application for the delegation of the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) geographic Top Level Domain, under reference number: **1-1243-89583**. This application constitutes the official AUC endorsed application for the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) Top Level Domain.

Further details of this official application is available at:
http://gtldresult.icann.org/application- result/applicationstatus/applicationdetails/1184

5. The application submitted by the UniForum/ZACR, meets or exceeds, the minimum evaluation criteria set by ICANN and will result in the successful delegation of the dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) geographic TLD (gTLD).

6. Furthermore, UniForum/ZACR's application, as endorsed by the AUC, is correctly designated as a geographic application in accordance with the criteria and processes outlined by ICANN in the Applicant Guidebook.

   In particular:

   Africa (and therefore .Africa) is a clearly designated geographic area as defined in the UNESCO *"Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings"* list.

   Therefore the designation of the official dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) TLD string application, as a geographic name, is technically and procedurally correct. The "geographic evaluation process" that this application is subject to provides sufficient checks and balances for the protection of interests and rights of African governments and the Pan-African community.

7. The AUC endorsed dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) application has been, and continues to be, a collaborative Pan-African initiative involving African governments, ICT stakeholders and the broader African community.

   In this regard the stated mission and objective of the AUC's officially endorsed application is enshrined in the answers to question 18 of the Application, and reads 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***".

8. In addition, to adhere to the spirit of inclusivity of African ICT stakeholders, community and governments, the ZACR has set up a Steering Committee (Steercom) comprising of the AUC, African country code Top Level Domains (ccTLDs), African ICANN-accredited registrars, ICT regulators, UNECA and civil society.

9. The Steercom is responsible for driving the ICANN application process, and for ensuring that a suitable . dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) Foundation is set up to ensure that dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) is run in a manner that supports the development of the African domain name community. More information about the Steercom and about the progress of the AUC endorsed dotAFRICA (.AFRICA) project is available at http://africainonespace.org/

10. To emphasize their commitment to the AUC-endorsed .Africa application, at least 39 African governments have submitted letters of support to the UniForum/ZACR .Africa application.

11. Details about the AUC's officially endorsed application, including the .Africa Steercom, can be found at:
    a. http://www.AfricaInOneSpace.Org
    b. Twitter @africandomain
    c. http://www.facebook.com/africandomain
    d. http://www.youtube.com/user/Africandomain?feature=watch

CONFUSINGLY SIMILAR APPLICATION:

12. A competing private application for a confusingly similar string has been lodged by the DotConnectAfrica Trust. This application for the .dotAfrica ("dotdotafrica")TLD string, under reference number **1-1165-42560**, is an unwarranted and unnecessary intrusion on the AUC's mandate from African governments and, if allowed to proceed, will lead to confusion with the AUC's officially endorsed application. Consequently, the AUC has initiated suitable proceedings (in accordance with the ICANN new gTLD Applicant Guidebook) to oppose this application through the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) and ICANN's prescribed objection procedures.

Further details of this application is available at: http://gtldresult.icann.org/application-result/applicationstatus/applicationdetails/1276