**AFRALO / AfrICANN joint meeting**

**Abu Dhabi, Wednesday 1st November 2017**

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**Statement**

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We, African ICANN Community members participating in the ICANN 60 International Public meeting in Abu Dhabi and attending the joint AFRALO / AfrICANN meeting on Wednesday 1st November 2017, discussed the general data protection regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) (GDPR).

We acknowledge the fact that the regulations have elicited a lot of interest from many stakeholders within the ICANN community and the ICANN organization due to their Possible implications, especially on Whois. We also note the fact that the regulations are of big interest for Africa. This is due to the fact that significant content and domain registrations of the region are hosted off the continent with a significant number of them within the EU and we interested to understand the negative and positive implication of the GDPR once implemented.

Many African countries lack data protection or requisite privacy legislation. The few that have utilize a diverse set of standards that are not harmonized despite the cross border nature of data exchange brought about by increased use of the Internet.

While some countries have sufficient data protection laws, a majority lack GDPR compliant Data Protection.

The GDPR comes into force on 25th May 2018. We encourage African countries that are major trading partners of the European Union to consider adopting relevant measures needed to ensure compliance. More importantly, we encourage Registries and Registrars who are serving non-EU regions like Africa to ensure implementation does not have damaging implication on their non-EU customers. This will ensure that cross border transactions with the EU are not affected. There are both financial and non-financial implications of ensuring compliance under this comprehensive regulation.

We urge all stakeholders to:

* examine how the regulations will affect their organizations
* implement policies that comply with the GDPR
* raise awareness on the purpose of the GDPR to mitigate any risks that may result from non compliance
* use GDPR to their advantage.

Meanwhile, we believe that ICANN should investigate if there are compliance issues under the registry agreement (RA) and the registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA) because of the GDPR and work with contracted parties to understand these issues and take the necessary actions to solve them. We also encourage the ICANN Board to conduct an awareness campaign to educate the community on the implications of the GDPR as it concerns the technical identifiers.

Lastly we believe the GDPR issue is of particular interest to the ICANN Ecosystem because of the fact that eCommerce and access to information online is entirely dependent on the DNS Ecosystem that ICANN is a key player.

Thank you!