

01 August 2018

RE: Release of geographic names in the domain name system

Mr. Sanjay Kumar Rakesh
Joint Secretary
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Government of India

Dear Secretary Rakesh,

Thank you for your letter dated 22 November 2017 regarding the release of geographic names in the Domain Name System. We appreciate your patience while the ICANN organization has continued to review the work on this matter with the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). Your letter has been posted to ICANN's Correspondence page at <https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/rakesh-to-chalaby-22nov17-en.pdf>.

We note your concerns regarding the release of two-character labels and of country and territory names in new gTLDs. We additionally note your comment regarding the use of the ISO-3166 list while discussing geographic names. As you are aware, various discussions are taking place in the ICANN community with respect to geographic names; we have outlined the various workstreams on this topic below. We encourage you to participate and bring forward your points and concerns to the various community discussions that are taking place.

Implementation of Specification 5 Section 2 of the New gTLD Registry Agreement

With respect to two-letter domain names reserved at the second level by Specification 5, Section 2 of the [Registry Agreement](#), on 13 December 2016, the ICANN org [authorized](#) the release of reserved two-letter domain names subject to the registry implementing [required measures to avoid confusion](#). The required measures were developed through a community process and are comprised of pre- and post-registration measures that would be implemented concurrently to avoid confusion throughout the lifecycle of a two-letter domain name registration. These required measures are enforceable through ICANN's Compliance department and are additional to other safeguards already built into the Registry Agreement as well as other measures that registries may implement at their discretion.

Following the Board resolution of 8 November 2016, the ICANN Board and the ICANN org have been engaging with the GAC and various governments, including the government of India, on this topic to provide added clarity and information related to the process that was undertaken, as well as the measures implemented by the registries prior to the release of two-character country codes at the second level. This dialogue included a discussion at recent GAC sessions at ICANN59 in Johannesburg, ICANN60 in Abu Dhabi and more recently during ICANN61 in Puerto Rico.

To further address concerns regarding the release of two-letter domain names that correspond with country codes, the ICANN org has provided additional dedicated services to some GAC

Members, including the monitoring of their corresponding two-letter country code domain registrations at the second level in new gTLDs and explanations of possible recourse mechanisms in the event of a misuse. These resources are available to the Government of India; please contact Laurent Ferrali (laurent.ferrali@icann.org) if you need any assistance.

Implementation of Specification 5 Section 4 of the New gTLD Registry Agreement

With respect to country and territory names reserved at the lower levels by Specification 5 Section 4 of the Registry Agreement, on 28 May 2017, the ICANN Board [approved](#) the release of country and territory names at the second level to the extent the relevant government has indicated its approval in the [GAC's database](#).

ISO-3166 List in the Context of Geographic Name Discussions

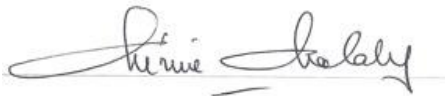
With respect to the use of the ISO-3166 list in the context of geographic names, two community workstreams may be particularly fitting for discussion of this topic:

- The GAC [Geographic Names Working Group](#) - the objective of this working group is to examine the protection of Geographic Names in any future expansion of the gTLD namespace and to review and consider any necessary improvements to existing protections.
- New gTLD Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group (PDP WG) - the PDP WG's [charter](#) identifies geographic names as a topic for discussion within the policy development process on subsequent procedures for introducing new gTLDs. The PDP WG has established Work Track 5, a sub-team dedicated to the topic of geographic names at the top level. Work Track 5 has an inclusive leadership structure, with a co-lead from multiple ICANN stakeholder groups. Work Track 5 began meeting on 15 November 2017 and has been meeting every other week since then. It has finalized its Terms of Reference and has begun substantive deliberations, beginning with the review of the geographic terms and treatment contained in the gTLD Applicant Guidebook used in the 2012 application process.

I hope that you find this information useful. Thank you for your participation in the ICANN multistakeholder model, and I look forward to further engagements with you.

Sincerely,

Cherine Chalaby



Chair, ICANN Board of Directors

cc: Ms. Manal Ismail – Chair, ICANN GAC