



the Internet Business Council for Africa

Internet Business Council for Africa (IBCA)

**Comment on GAC
Proposal for Protection
of Geographic Names
in New gTLDs**



Presentation by IBCA

Geographic Names Database

- Although potentially technically challenging the GAC should produce a comprehensive list of names to be included in the Geographic Names Database that will be connected to a Geographic Information System.
- The GIS database could include:
 - For each data record:
 - Name,
 - Country,
 - Location,
 - Exact or approximate international grid reference using the Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Coordinate System, UTM Zone, etc.
- Applicants can then apply for any names that are not in the Global geoNames database, just like public authorities dealing with Land Use and environmental planning processes already have methods of restricting the allocation of land (a geographic resource) that is already in use.

Geographical names as trademarks

- Using the River Nile as an example, there would be many companies that are either already named as Nile Insurance or Nile Bank or Nile Hilton, Blue Nile Resort, etc. Even so, any of such names are probably being used in several riparian countries that are associated with the River Nile Basin.
- List of existing trademarks that are linked/related to geoNames should also be established globally, and linked to the geoNames GIS Database, so that existing trademarks that are related to geoNames can be used/allowed in TLD names.
- Most of the existing such trademarks or business names are derivatives of geonames rather than direct or near matches. Derivative names should not be treated as geographic.

Public Interest

- Public interest in this new proposal should be properly defined; also care should be taken so as not to reserve all names at the expense of increasing the domain namespace.

Q. How will Public interest be secured in the instance of disagreements between ICANN and governments, what are the standards of remedy and who determines the roles of the parties?

Awareness

- Awareness is important to build the ISO 3166-2 list but this should be well guided to prevent the governments from violating the rights of businesses which could border on e-censorship.

The report suggests that

“All countries should be encouraged to enhancing the ISO 3166-2 list by submitting official requests from national administrations, in a way that regions and sub-regions are included in this important reference list.”

- It must be noted that this could take many years and probably infringe n existing businesses who already registered these names therefore:
- Criterion of determining this names should be properly documented and thought out to prevent conflicts, also
- Names of geographic locations could change from time to time and although this could be a rare occurrence, what are the steps to mitigate such scenarios.



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