

BC OUTREACH REPORT ON THE 2017 AFRICAN INTERNET SUMMIT HELD IN NAIROBI, KENYA.

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The African Internet Summit 2017 held as scheduled at the BOMA Conference Center in Nairobi and was well attended by different interest groups ranging from members of the technical community to academia and business. A good number of local business owners mostly entrepreneurs and small business owners were present at all the sessions and networking events.

The BC reps had an opportunity to conduct outreach to participants at the conference, particularly on the 2nd of June during the community session with the theme **"HOW DO SMALL PROJECTS PROMOTE INTERNET DEVELOPMENT"**. It was a full hour of presentation and interaction dedicated to the Business Constituency and the activity of its member - MicroBoss at supporting start-up incubation Nigeria.

I opened up my presentation acknowledging the sponsorship I had received from the BC to enable my physical participation at the summit and went on to introduce the BC and its role within the ICANN ecosystem, before proceeding through with the rest of my presentation. This spurred questions of interest about the BC, ICANN and my company's small project aimed at providing infrastructure for small businesses to start and grow their business in Abuja, Nigeria.

My presentation ran for 20 minutes while the remaining time was dedicated to questions. The audience engaged me for over 40 minutes due to the huge interest in our project and the BC. I took time to explain that engagement in the BC was between companies through their representatives, as a cluster of individuals were interested to know how they could engage the BC further. It was interesting for them to know that where prospective members could not meet the membership criteria set in our charter, there were other Constituencies they could join within ICANN.

Questions bothered around the nature of what we do as BC, to what financial benefits members stood to gain from their membership. A cross section of the audience not new to ICANN probed to know how to manage participation, as ICANN had multiple meetings across continents which would cost a fortune to attend. I educated the audience on the remote tools provided for participation and the ICANN fellowship program, besides other membership incentives and Support available in the BC. Ultimately, I informed the audience we were well focused on policy development.

My presentation bore information and links to joining the BC, while copies of the BC factsheet and cards were circulated at my session to compliment those earlier distributed to delegates at the conference through the use of the ICANN booth, besides one-on-one engagements. **Footprint Africa Business Solution** an online consultancy from Mauritius, showed appreciable interest in the BC and should be encouraged by the outreach committee and secretariat to join the BC.

THE CONFERENCE TAKE-AWAY:

The conference spotted a number of interesting sessions with a full day devoted to policy issues under development. I found the policy development process at Afrinic interesting and recommend that the BC monitor their proceedings – especially those of interest to Business. The topic that generated the most interest was “**Internet Shut Down**” as its recommendation was termed controversial [[Link- Anti-Shutdown, No. 9](#)]. The proposal on the Anti-Shutdown Policy was such that requested for Governments that shut down the internet in their Countries be sanctioned, and have their block of IP resources revoked. Whilst it is clear in this instance that the bulk of IP resources within each country is largely owned by businesses, such revocation would be to the detriment of businesses for an action taken by Government. Its import if approved would have lead to further shutdowns and pitched business against Governments; asides resulting to further loss of service and revenue in the African region.

The Policy development process at the African Internet Summit and Afrinic is of great impact to the business sector in Africa, likewise other RIR’s such that the business constituency should keep an eye on developments emanating from these bodies. There is a serious need for the business community to monitor and contribute to discussions ongoing in fora’s such as this to secure our interest, especially when such policy developed could have an effect on the business climate within the region its developed and adopted.

The Conference also had a number of other stakeholders within the ICANN ecosystem conducting visible outreach. Most active was At-Large, they went all out to secure sessions with participants, collaborating with the ICANN team on ground to speak at their sessions and maintaining a stand at the conference.

Special thanks to the Business Constituency for making this outreach possible through your funding and hoping to see our Constituency engage more via partnerships of this nature within the Global South.

Lawrence O-R.
BC Member, from Nigeria.