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## ICANN and Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization Co-organize Domain Names Meeting in Abu Dhabi

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*New IDN & gTLD programs unveiled*

ABU DHABI: The Internet address system will soon be open to greater customization and localization through two new initiatives unveiled during a meeting held on August 4, 2009 in Abu Dhabi, UAE for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

The Corporation's new Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) and the generic Top-Level-Domain (gTLD) programs reflect the growing ubiquity of the Internet on a global scale and demands for new ways to customize its application.

Abu Dhabi's meeting was organized in coordination with Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization (TAG-Org) represented by its member company, Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Information Technology International (TAGITI) in Abu Dhabi.

The event was part of a series of global meetings hosted by ICANN for members of the Internet, government and business communities to familiarize the Internet's users with the newly established programs.

The IDN program allows for the introduction of Internet address names comprised of non-Latin based language characters, including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian. Internet penetration in the Middle East is currently at 23%, representing user growth in excess of 1,250% since the year 2000. Growing use of the Internet has been further driven by availability of online Arabic language content and applications.

In conjunction, the new gTLD addresses - that portion of a web address name that appears to the right of the dot (i.e., .com, .org, .asia, etc) - will expand on the existing 21 domains available for registration. ICANN is proposing that the limitations and restrictions be lifted and the opportunity for new gTLDs be broadened to allow all varieties of names and words.

Such developments will enable the Arab world to have access to Arabic language domain names for the first time ever. Mr. Jawad Abu Jwaied, TAGITI manager, described the meeting and the introduced programs as a remarkable development and a historic turning point for the Internet into a new era with no barriers./

The impact of these new programs is expected to be significant on the Arab world, with growing numbers of people who will be able to completely access the Internet in their native language. The programs will also allow greater opportunities for local and international companies and brands that are considering extending their online presence in the region.

Companies will be able to establish their brands online in the names that are best known to their target audience in Arabic. In the past, they were forced to use English-language names which may not be familiar to a large segment of the public.

The new IDN web addresses are expected to be available later this year, with the gTLD application process expected to begin in 2010.

The ICAAN is a global not-for-profit public-benefit corporation that oversees the coordination of international IP addresses and domain names.

TAG-Org is the largest Arab group of professional service firms in the fields of auditing, valuation, management consulting, ICT development, business advisory, training, educational consultancy, capital services, human resources development, real estate consulting, translation, legal service, Intellectual Property Rights protection and domain name registration.

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