

# **ZA dns forum**

Nii Quaynor

31, January 2022

Thank you Mr Moderator. I worked very closely with Theo Kramer in establishing Afrinic and concur with what Andile Ncaba message of role of South Africa funding the Afrinic initiative and hosting at CSIR. With that I must ask the technical community in particular, as founding chairman of Afrinic, to treasure and protect this contribution to the Africa's Internet and DNS. It is important for new participants to know the history and appreciate the sacrifices in the journey

Thanks for opportunity to share a point of view with your audience at ZADNS forum. Such forums are extremely important in the quest of "Building a Strong and more Resilient South African Domain Name Ecosystem Post COVID-19", the theme of the event

My comments are along 3 axes of Technical issues, Multi Stakeholder approach (MS) in African DNS market and the preservation of MS

### **Africa DNS technical issues**

- Like other internet services in africa, DNS suffered from lack of

local expertise for a strong, resilient and scalable deployment and usage. We have been making efforts in Capacity building (afnog and others in af\*) to try to mitigate. We however face retention challenges as when engineers matured they move global leaving africa constantly depleted

- africa DNS is slowly moving from plain and traditional DNS to modern DNS addressing new issues. The challenges like dnssec, anycast , DNS over IPv6, DNS privacy, IDN, malware mitigation,...continue to follow us

- 35 cctld still showing not signed zones

There are also some among us who don't share Africa's technical vision and speak forcefully only on what is not right with Africa. There are others who want to do things for us, as in market capture, and would portray Africa as technically incapable

We have come this far nonetheless. Africa would not cede its DNS market as the framers of the internet wanted Africa to operate its DNS. There's plenty right with Africa's DNS engineering and business

## **MS in african DNS market**

DNS ecosystems did not evolve as expected for many reasons ( market

shares, technical issues, lack of incentives to participation by actors like ( registrars, hosting, ISPs...and participants not understanding well and not staying in their roles)

Addressing these would lead to more vibrant DNS ecosystem in Africa

Interventions of Governments or public authorities tend to address issues from top down which inadvertently suggest the industry is a failure. What we do looks easy but it is very tough work and the industry actors need commendation. Africa's DNS could have easily been operated completely from outside, so

these little achievements are  
precious

The natural approach used when building networks, is coordination of bottom up processes. The technical side would thus feel a top down approach as chaos and affects confidence and stability of services

Recall that the actors in the technical industry each have decision authority on their piece of the DNS system and no one central control

The fragile balance is best maintained when public authorities focus on Governance on DNS ie user behavior, public policy while industry

focused on provision of DNS services, which is Governance of DNS

It is well known that, the technical community cannot build a mousetrap without a user, market, community telling or selecting what is desired. Thus, a technical community generally stays in its role

From experience, we know some stakeholders try to become technical expert as learn this fascinating technology and abandon their native roles. We have also seen some stakeholders pretending public policy authority. Not unexpectedly, we have also seen some technical

communities say “Okay..I’ll take my soccer ball and go play elsewhere”. All these jeopardize the trust required

Btw, Africa understands too well top down approach as we have seen many advocates of bottom up approach become the most top down in behavior, when community give them authority. It has therefore been difficult to reorient our minds and actions to the multi stakeholder approach to the community decisions, we yearn for

## **Preserving the MS**



We call for more inclusiveness in all solutions and trust in attempts to fix the DNS industry in Africa

The MS community decision making should not be confused with consultation when an authority has decided and is seeking public comment. The nature of the network, their impact and their ownership requires we decide together. At this forum, as an example, we see discussion, debate but we don't see a working group activity where we are making decisions, documented, containing set of ideas to solving a problem. That really is the purpose of the multi stakeholder approach and goes beyond dialog

We shall build on all the initiatives, including local digitalization efforts, to give life to local name spaces. Most importantly the internet benefits everyone and should be embraced as an inclusive place we live in

Continue to update and develop new BCP in name space and DNS governance taking into account new realities ( new actors: government networks, RENS, private companies, blockchain name spaces players, payments players....DID)

The multi stakeholder approach is issue based, requires respect to merit and cooperation as we share common interest of growing the DNS industry working by what can live with, consensus

## **Conclusion**

Africa has come a long way and still struggling with success stories, some good and bad news on the DNS market. ZA ecosystem, is expected to lead and show good examples for the rest of the continent to follow.

Beyond the success the co.za and the leadership in managing dot africa, we look forward to you showing the way with a vibrant and resilient name

ecosystem which serves beyond  
South Africa

Thank you for your attention