

**Speech by the CEO of AfriNIC: 5<sup>th</sup> AfriNIC Public Policy Meeting – Maritim Hotel, Balaclava, Wednesday 29 November 2006, 9.15-9.30 hours**

I will continue by extending in the name of the board of AfriNIC and all the African Internet community our gratitude to the Government of Mauritius for supporting the organization of this meeting, and also more importantly for hosting and facilitating the setting up of our Headquarters in Mauritius. This support is actually not surprising, as one of the objectives of the country is to be the cyber-hub for Africa. We hope to be able to stay here as long as possible, to be able to take part in the ICT dynamics and most importantly create a bridge between the local community and the rest of the African community for experience sharing and collaboration in various ICT-related projects.

AfriNIC has grown from a project to an organization which is working with strong commitment to contribute towards reducing the gap between the Global Internet community and that of Africa. When we have moved to the operational phase of the Registry, we have first focused our efforts on raising awareness on IP address management through training

sessions all around the continent both in French and English. This has led to an increase in the number of public addresses in use in the region, multiplying by 4 the number of allocations. The biggest challenge was to fight the myth which says that there is not enough IP addresses for Africa, hence we have to work hard in our region to setup scalable network.

At the beginning of this year while we still had numerous challenges related to the consolidation of our core activity, we took an additional challenge to push for the use of IPv6 in our region ... this can sound a bit out of phase with our community needs as we do not have good networks yet in all places. We are still struggling to raise our Internet penetration rate; we still do not have enough computers to access Internet in many regions of Africa. So why do we have to spend time on this new protocol? The real question for us was: why should we in Africa be stuck with a technology which has some limitations, making our life tough? Yes we need to build scalable networks, we need to secure them, we need to make them cheap. But can't we do all this while integrating better technology at the same time? All the figures are showing today that taking that challenge was a good move. We have

50 participants coming from various African countries who attended the training on Monday and Tuesday and some of these people are going to implement IPv6 very soon on their networks.

Our region is where the highest growths are expected in the coming years, and we will soon need more of all kinds of critical resources like Energy, IP address, bandwidth. We need to look ahead and be ready in all aspects to take full advantage of the growth.

We took the challenge to show that there is no fatality in anything. If people are empowered and aware, they will take the right decision. Last year there was only 5 IPv6 allocations in Africa, today we have 23 allocations and we are still getting new requests! We have launched this program last year in Egypt and the result is here for all of us to see. I'm convinced that we can do more by acting and not only talking. This second African IPv6 meeting is also a proof that we are on the right track. We will have several presentations from countries which implemented IPv6 following AfriNIC-3 in Egypt and I hope, by the end of this week, our community will have learnt

more about IPv6 and more importantly we will have strengthened the dynamics around this protocol for more exchange among operators.

My dream for us is to see Africa join the ICT technology wagon by our achievements and by our strategic interest into Internet Protocol in general. We should not always wait for others to tell us what we need to do and when to do it. We have to be pro-active, we have to improve our collaboration capacities while building our networks the way this Internet technology was designed, developed and is where it is today. And by this I mean the whole of the African Community.

As a Regional Registry our activities are not limited only to Address allocation. We are also involved in other technical activities keeping in mind our main principle which is bottom-up participation we need participation of all stakeholders - be it the Government, private sectors and civil society. We are preparing to put our limited resources available for all the community in order to allow and enhance participation.

We are here to share ideas, to discuss issues, to enhance our

network. Let us, this week, ask ourselves what we can retain from this meeting, what can I share with others, how can we contribute to build a stronger Internet community in Africa and enhance our participation to the global Internet debate, because what is done at that level will impact our network.

Thank you.