

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
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"NRO Regrets the Lost Opportunity for Ethiopia to Host an AfriNIC Training and Meeting Event"

The Number Resource Organisation (NRO), is an organization formed by the five Regional Internet address Registries which are responsible for the management of IP address space (IPv4 and IPv6) around the world.

On behalf of its member AfriNIC, the NRO expresses its great concern at the recent banning of the AfriNIC meeting which was planned to be held in Addis Ababa next month.

"AfriNIC is a non-profit organisation of limited resources, but with a critical role to play in ensuring the healthy development of the Internet in Africa" said Paul Wilson, Chairman, NRO. "This recent action is very unfortunate, both for AfriNIC, which has incurred major cost and inconvenience, and for the many international visitors who planned to attend, both from within the African continent and from the rest of the world. This is a setback for AfriNIC's activities, for Ethiopia and for the African Internet community as a whole."

The AfriNIC meeting, organised in the form of a public conference, was to include training sessions on IP resource management services and transitioning to IPv6, presentations from international experts, and discussion sessions on issues critical to the African Internet community.

Fortunately, the meeting will still take place, however in Mauritius where AfriNIC is headquartered. "It is very unfortunate for the technical community in Ethiopia that we can no longer be present there", said Adiel Akplogan, CEO of AfriNIC. "These major meetings are held only twice per year, and each time we select a different host country so that locals can receive the benefits. I doubt that we can risk coming back to Ethiopia for quite some time, which will disadvantage the local community."

The ban, enacted by the Ethiopian Government two weeks ago, followed false claims that the AfriNIC meeting would involve certain undisclosed activities, the supposed nature of which was not revealed. On the contrary, the meeting was to have been entirely open, accessible to all members of the public, and with all sessions and agendas available on the Internet. Similar meetings are held by each of AfriNIC's four counterparts around the world, and are considered major events on the global Internet calendar. Recent meetings of the other RIRs have been held in Brasil, New Zealand, Germany, the United States, and the European RIPE group currently holding its meeting in Dubai.

It seems the rumors about the Addis Ababa meeting may have been prompted because of AfriNIC's neutral position on the question of a new ".africa" domain name, which is being promoted by an Ethiopian company "DotAfrica." However as Adiel Akplogan explains "The dot Africa bid has nothing to do with AfriNIC, therefore our position is absolutely neutral as our responsibility is for IP addresses, which are completely independent from domain names. However AfriNIC as a major player in the region will welcome the opportunity to have a domain (dotAfrica) that will identify the African landscape on the Internet."

Paul Wilson added: "It is very unfortunate that misunderstandings and lack of awareness about the role of AfriNIC have brought about this problem, which was sparked by a malicious rumour. Ironically, a major mission of AfriNIC is to promote understanding of the Internet and its development, yet this opportunity, to perform this task in Ethiopia, has now been lost. The Internet in Africa can survive very well with or without '.africa' but it cannot survive without IP addresses, and it cannot survive without AfriNIC."

About the NRO

Formed by the Regional Internet Registries to formalize their cooperative efforts, the NRO exists to protect the unallocated number resource pool, to promote and protect the bottom-up policy development process, and to act as a focal point for Internet community input into the RIR system.

Its members are: AfriNIC, serving the African continent; APNIC, serving the Asia-Pacific region; ARIN, serving Canada, the United States, and several islands in the Caribbean and North Atlantic Ocean; LACNIC, serving Latin America and portions of the Caribbean; and RIPE NCC, serving Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

More information about the NRO is available at www.nro.net.

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