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Mr Cherine Chalaby, Chair, New gTLD Program  
Committee  
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16 May 2014

Dear Sirs,

### **Safeguards and Governing Principles for Health-Related Top-Level Domains**

I am writing to call your attention to the critical need to ensure appropriate safeguards and governing principles for health-related generic top-level domains (gTLDs). Health information, data, products and services have an important and unique status on the Internet. The misuse of health-related gTLDs could present a serious risk to the public or become a platform for the sale of illicit and unsafe medicines, medical devices and other health products and services. In 2013, the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly recognized that it is essential to ensure secure online management of health data, and emphasized that the health-related gTLDs, including .health, should be operated in a way that protects public health.

It is therefore imperative that operators of health-related gTLDs manage them for and in the public interest. In the context of the allocation of the new gTLDs, the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) recommended to the ICANN Board in its Beijing Communiqué a set of generic safeguards in order to reinforce existing processes for raising and addressing concerns with certain strings, including health-related gTLDs. They stressed that some strings, including health-related gTLDs, “may require further targeted safeguards” to address specific risks. The World Health Organization (WHO) agrees and believes that strengthening the management of health-related gTLDs will not only address the concerns of the global health community, but will also enable providers and businesses to flourish in a safe and assured environment.

You have seen the many concerns expressed by the global health community and other relevant stakeholders on the .health gTLD alone, one of the most opposed names, in the form of GAC advice, public comments, community objections, and objections submitted by ICANN’s independent objector. In that regard, we call your attention to the Beijing Communiqué in which “The GAC advises the board that in those cases where a community, which is clearly impacted by a set of new gTLD applications in contention, has expressed a collective and clear opinion on those applications, such opinion should be duly taken into account, together with all other relevant information”:

(<http://www.icann.org/en/news/correspondence/gac-to-board-18apr13-en.pdf>).

cc: newgtld@icann.org

ENCL: (1)

The concerns raised so far by the health community have not yet been taken into account by the ICANN Board. We therefore call on the ICANN Board to require the adoption without restriction, by any third party potentially eligible as operator of the health-related top-level domains, and in particular the .health gTLD, of the safeguards on new gTLDs developed by the GAC in its past Communiqués as well as the overarching governing principles developed by WHO, which can be found here: <http://www.who.int/ehealth/programmes/governance/en/index3.html>.

We thank you in advance for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Kiény', is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp or watermark.

Dr Marie-Paule Kiény  
Assistant Director-General  
Health Systems and Innovation