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CADNA Asserts That The ICANN Affirmation of Commitments Falls Short

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2009-- The Coalition Against Domain Name Abuse (CADNA) regards the new Affirmation of Commitments (AOC) agreement between the United States Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) as gravely falling short on the fundamental issue of ICANN accountability. While CADNA is pleased that the AOC extends ICANN's relationship with the U.S. government and embraces greater international influence, the agreement does not endow the entities charged with overseeing ICANN with the power necessary to ensure that ICANN follows through with recommendations and commitments.

"The Affirmation of Commitments document missed the mark by failing to create accountability for ICANN," said Josh Bourne, President of CADNA. "The points addressed and the intent expressed in the new agreement touch on the many issues that are important for a stable and transparent Internet—however, without proper oversight and accountability, ICANN is not beholden to follow through on any of the promises made in the AOC."

Furthermore, while the AOC calls for periodic internal reviews, only an independent review can provide an honest and objective assessment of the operations of an organization.

In congressional hearings earlier this summer, representatives relentlessly criticized ICANN and its practices. CADNA applauds Congress' recent responsiveness to concerns regarding ICANN and urges continued action. Congress should maintain its momentum and establish a federal commission to review ICANN's governance, structure, and policies. This federal commission should take six to twelve months to fully audit ICANN and develop recommendations for steps moving forward. The commission should draw from businesses, governments, academics, and other experts.

Ultimately, CADNA is disappointed that the underlying issue of accountability has not been addressed and encourages the Obama administration to continue working to correct ICANN.

"ICANN is still broken and as a regulator that has been captured from within, it cannot properly self-correct," said Bourne. "Independent, outside pressure and accountability are needed to reform ICANN."