

Press Release – Internet Growth in Africa and IPv4 Global Exhaustion

AfriNIC, the Regional Internet Registry for Africa, held a press conference today 9th August 2007 at Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles, Mauritius regarding the Internet Growth in Africa and the IPv4 Global Exhaustion.

Internet Protocol version 4 (IPv4) the protocol used today to run the Internet for more than 20 years now has started showing its limit with mainly the running out of number identifiers associated to it, known as Internet Protocol addresses (IP addresses).

During the Press Conference, Adiel Akplogan, CEO of AfriNIC, presented the situation of the global IPv4 consumption with emphasis on the fact that the increase in IP address allocation by RIRs is the result of tremendous growth of Internet usage during the past few years, both worldwide and in Africa region. IP address allocation in Africa has grown more than 100% during the past two years. This growth, in combination with increased demand from the emerging countries, is worsening the situation of the IPv4 Global Exhaustion. He explains that IPv4 exhaustion will indirectly have impact on end-user as their ability to access the Internet itself also depends on these IP numbers.

Adiel Akplogan also stated that: “soon within three to four years, AfriNIC will not be able to continue to allocate IPv4 addresses to Network Operators as it is currently doing in an aggregated manner”. Studies show that the actual central pool of IPv4 addresses will exhaust by 2010.

It then becomes an imperative for the community to start thinking seriously at transitioning to Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6). Although IPv4 and IPv6 will coexist on the Internet for a while, it is important that every network be IPv6-Ready. Several mechanisms are in place to allow the two versions of the protocol to coexist on the same network. According to the CEO of AfriNIC this has to be a strategic decision as the whole development of Internet in the region lays on it. “Everybody has a role to play” he said, Government, Regulators, Network Operators and even End users.

AfriNIC has started since 2005 a campaign, which will be intensified, to raise awareness on IPv6 through technical trainings and experience sharing events. Only 33 Operators have IPv6 addresses allocated in Africa region. We need by 1/1/11 to have IPv6 allocated in all countries in Africa.

While the time is not for panic, it is important to start acting right now to avoid last minutes rush. Several policies are being discuss today in all Regional Internet Registries policy discussion forum to put mitigate the impact of the IPv4 exhaustion and manage the remaining pool in an appropriate manner in order to keep the core network stable.

About AfriNIC

AfriNIC is a non-governmental and not-for-profit membership based organisation. Its main role is to serve Africa region as Regional Internet Registry, like the four other continents which have their own RIR.

AfriNIC’s mission is “To provide professional and efficient distribution of Internet number resources to the African Internet community, to support Internet technology usage and development across the continent and strengthen self Internet governance in Africa by encouraging a participative policy development.”

AfriNIC holds bi-annual conferences and the next one will be in Durban, South Africa from 23rd to 28th September 2007. See www.afrinic.net for more details

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