Representatives from 18 regional ccTLDs and observers from 17 other organisation met in Dubai, UAE between June 3 and June 6, 2007 for a members meeting and two days of non-technical training.

**IDNs**
The meeting made an extensive review of IDN projects, policy issues and the current technical situation. The meeting noted the billions of people in the Asia-Pacific region that are being denied even basic access to information and services delivered over the Internet due to their lack of knowledge of the Latin character set.

The meeting also recognised the important policy issues and challenges that are delaying introduction of IDN's in the top level of the DNS structure.

**ICT in UAE**
The Director General of UAE’s Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Mr. Mohammed Al Ghanim, reported that UAE has embarked on a very strong and very focused move to use ICT as a core platform for its future development. He noted that this has already resulted in UAE rising to the top of the region in the UN’s e-Government Readiness ranking and having the highest Internet penetration in the Middle-East.

The UAE’s activities have two threads. The first is the enhanced use of ICT for consumers (business, individuals and families). This includes a very significant effort to build strong confidence in the use of e-commerce and e-government engagements. The second is the growth of the domestic ICT industries – including a dedicated fund to promote Research, Development and Investment. These initiatives, among others, are aimed at continuing UAE’s rise in the Global ICT Readiness index rankings.

The .ae ccTLD is in a transition as it shifts from a unit within the incumbent telecom operator to being a stand-alone, self-sustaining organisation dedicated to provide robust DNS technical and policy services while facilitating a competitive and robust environment for registrars.

There are already more than 40,000 names in .ae which operates an open registry.

**GAC**
Janis Karklins, the Chair of the GAC, spoke about the GAC’s current focuses: The Introduction of IDNs at the top level, the transition between IPv4 and IPv6, Internet Security, and the capacity building of government representatives.

The GAC participates in a joint working group with the ccNSO that is currently tasked to identifying only issues (not yet solutions) that need to be addressed for the introduction of IDNs.

The GAC is currently reaching out to government representatives from the region to participate in the GAC meetings and deliberations. With only 21 participating governments from a region with more than 75 ccTLDs, there is plenty of opportunity for increased participation. APTLD members were encouraged to engage with their domestic government’s GAC representatives.

**Arabic Domain Names (ADN) Pilot Project**
Abdulaziz Al-Zoman (.sa) reported on the extensive experiences and achievements of the Arabic Domain Name Pilot Project (APN). Full end-to-end testing of Arabic IDN’s at the top level has
been running successfully in a test environment for some time. This trial has been making use of both browser plug-ins and separate Arabic Root Servers.

With more than 250,000,000 people living the Arab region and with less than 10% being literate in English, the need for idn.idn in Arabic is vital. (The idn.ascii ccTLD model makes no sense in the Arab world because of the structural nature of Arabic being read and written from right to left and the Latin based .ascii being read and written from left to right.)

Other IDN Activities
IDN at the second and third levels in the ccTLD environment are plentiful in the region. Like the cooperative Arabic Domain Names Pilot Project, the Chinese speaking nations and territories of China, Taiwan, Singapore, Macau and Hong Kong having been working together as part of the Chinese Domain Name Consortium (CDNC) to run pilots to identify challenges and establish solutions. Additional presentations were received from Singapore (Chinese & Tamil), Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and India (where there are many languages and many scripts).

Work has been done by CDNC to develop non-Latin script e-mail applications (both at the client and the transport levels) and an agreement for the CDNC and the ADN groups to share experiences was made.

Growth in IDNs at the second and third level is strong. As at the end of the 1st quarter of 2007 there were more than 2 Million IDN Names, with most of these coming in the ccTLDs and in the Asia-Pacific region.

We also heard of other group’s activities around IDN – including the ITU’s efforts through their study group 17 and ICANN’s efforts through the gNSO, GAC and Security and Stability committee.

New Opportunities for ccTLDs
The group heard of the activities of some member’s implementation of e-num, but saw little to suggest that e-num was a potential new source of income. However, continued delays in e-num implementations run the risk of a fragmentation of the opportunity and the reliance of carrier based proprietary and closed solutions. Members were encouraged to ensure they were involved in their country’s efforts.

Jaeyoun Kim of Korea reported the extensive spread of the use of RFIDs and their use as triggers to information sharing. This, and the ‘keyword’ facilities for quick access to URL’s from mobile phones, PDA,s and fixed Internet devices, were clearly new areas for ccTLDs to pursue their skills in operating a secure and robust registration utility.

The meeting also heard of growing activities in secondary markets as well as name tasting and monetisation. The meeting discussed the merits of these activities for ccTLDs and their benefits were fundamentally based on the objectives of the ccTLD in serving its communities. All speaker suggested that Domain Name ‘kiting’ was not a widespread activity. The overwhelming volumes experienced in the .com and .net name haven’t yet made their way to the ccTLD space, at least in the Asia-Pacific Region.

We also heard about the secondary markets in domain names in the COM/NET space and how this is beginning to spill over to the ccTLD space in the APTLD region. We also heard of the positive impacts this could have on a ccTLD’s primary market.

There is growing efforts by the ccTLD managers to expand their local Internet community through a host of techniques. We heard from both .my and .nz on their activities in building local Internet confidence, and we also heard from PIR (operators of .org) on their extensive activities throughout
the world and their successful efforts at concurrently building ccTLD and .org registrations in their pilot program in Mexico.

**Technology**
We heard of Korea’s (.kr) long established experience in getting IPv6 into their registry – and the still conservative approach at the root level.

Alireza Saleh (.ir) gave a well received tutorial on Anycasting – with a note of its benefits in spreading the day-to-day load as well as buffering localised attach vectors.

Full details and presentation materials are available on [www.aptd.org](http://www.aptd.org).