

**Address by the Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education,
José Mariano Gago, to the ICANN 28th International Public Meeting, 26-30 March 2007**

Lisbon, 25 March 2007

Welcome Session

President of ICANN
Mr. CEO of ICANN
Directors
Delegates
President of FCCN
Ladies and Gentlemen

We are certainly proud of you. The idealistic fathers of the Internet, researchers and engineers, students, social activists, deserve all our praise. They have stimulated and helped to create the tools for the extraordinary global movement of social, culture, and economic networking the Internet would allow for.

The Internet has changed our views about democracy and has allowed for a renewed impetus for freedom, not only in communication, but information itself, as well as the organization of knowledge innovation, science, education, lifelong learning, social networking. We are already and are still being deeply transformed.

ICANN is itself an innovative concept, both public and private, an extremely successful, multistakeholder organization, that has been able to steer adequately the tremendous growth in the technical and organizational challenges of the Internet. This is a model that tends to emerge in many other global domains.

The ICANN concept has also proved how deeply rooted in and dependent of the choice of the technical paradigm of the Internet and of its governance model, its societal values of freedom and inclusion. We welcome the contribution of ICANN to the emergence of renewed international debate on the contribution of Internet to human and social development, namely, at the World Summit on the Information Society, and at the Internet Governance Forum.

Portugal is fully committed to these goals and values. Portugal is a free, modern, open and innovative society, one of the fastest growing countries in Europe in science, technology, and digital inclusion in the last decade.

The Portuguese government supports this development as a matter of urgency and national priority.

The host of organization of this meeting, FCCN, has led a very active role in this process; namely, in pioneering in Europe the connectivity of all schools, local libraries and of public and free access points to the dense academic and research network, thus transformed into a national science, technology, and society network, that's its name, and in providing security and innovation.

Mr. President, we all know your personal role in the development of the Internet and in the shaping of its present governance model and in the success of ICANN. You deserve all our gratitude and applause.

We look forward to ICANN's debates and conclusions, and we wish you all a fruitful meeting, and if you can, please stay in Lisbon.

Thank you.

