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Less than 10% of IPv4 Addresses Remain Unallocated, says Number Resource Organization

Deploying IPv6 - the next generation of the Internet Protocol - is vital to the continued development of the Internet

AMSTERDAM – The Number Resource Organization (NRO), the official representative of the five Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) that oversee the allocation of all Internet number resources, announced today that less than 10 percent of available IPv4 addresses remain unallocated. This small pool of existing IP addresses marks a critical moment in IPv4 address exhaustion, ultimately impacting the future network operations of all businesses and organizations around the globe.

"This is a key milestone in the growth and development of the global Internet," noted Axel Pawlik, Chairman of the NRO. "With less than 10 percent of the entire IPv4 address range still available for allocation to RIRs, it is vital that the Internet community take considered and determined action to ensure the global adoption of IPv6. The limited IPv4 addresses will not allow us enough resources to achieve the ambitions we all hold for global Internet access. The deployment of IPv6 is a key infrastructure development that will enable the network to support the billions of people and devices that will connect in the coming years," added Pawlik.

Internet Protocol is a set of technical rules that defines how devices communicate over a network. There are currently two versions of IP, IPv4 and IPv6. IPv6 includes a modern numbering system that provides a much larger address pool than IPv4. With so few IPv4 addresses remaining, the NRO is urging all Internet stakeholders to take immediate action by planning for the necessary investments required to deploy IPv6.

The NRO, alongside each individual RIR, has actively promoted IPv6 deployment for several years through grassroots outreach, speaking engagements, conferences and media outreach. To date, their combined efforts have yielded positive results in the call to action for the adoption of IPv6.

Given the less than 10 percent milestone, the NRO is continuing its call for Internet stakeholders, including governments, vendors, enterprises, telecoms operators, and end users, to fulfill their roles in IPv6 adoption, specifically encouraging the following actions:

- The business sector should provide IPv6-capable services and platforms, including web hosting and equipment, ensuring accessibility for IPv6 users.
- Software and hardware vendors should implement IPv6 support in their products to guarantee they are available at production standard when needed.
- Governments should lead the way by making their own content and services available over IPv6 and encouraging IPv6 deployment efforts in their countries. IPv6 requirements in government procurement policies are critical at this time.
- Civil society, including organizations and end users, should request that all services they receive from their ISPs and vendors are IPv6-ready, to build demand and ensure competitive availability of IPv6 services in coming years.

The NRO's campaign to promote the next generation of Internet Protocol continues to positively impact the Internet community. IPv6 allocations increased by nearly 30% in 2009, as community members continued to recognize the benefits of IPv6.

"Many decision makers don't realize how many devices require IP addresses - mobile phones, laptops, servers, routers, the list goes on," said Raul Echeberria, Secretary of the NRO. "The number of available IPv4 addresses is shrinking rapidly, and if the global Internet community fails to recognize this, it will face grave consequences in the very near future. As such, the NRO is working to educate everyone, from network operators to top executives and government representatives, about the importance of IPv6 adoption," added Echeberria.

IP addresses are allocated by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), a contract operated by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). IANA distributes IP addresses to RIRs, who in turn issue them to users in their respective regions. "This is the time for the Internet community to act," said Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's President and Chief Executive Officer. "For the global Internet to grow and prosper without limitation, we need to encourage the rapid widespread adoption of the IPv6 protocol."

Notes to Editors

About the Number Resource Organization (NRO):
The Number Resource Organization (NRO) is the coordinating mechanism for the five Regional Internet Registries (RIRs). The RIRs - AfriNIC, APNIC, ARIN, LACNIC, and the RIPE NCC - ensure the fair and equitable distribution of Internet number resources (IPv6 and IPv4 addresses and Autonomous System (AS) numbers) in their respective regions. The NRO exists to protect the unallocated Internet number resource pool, foster open and consensus-based policy development, and provide a single point of contact for communication with the RIRs. Learn more about the NRO at www.nro.net/media.

About the Regional Internet Registries (RIRs)
The five Regional Internet Registries (RIRs) that make up the NRO are independent, not-for-profit membership organizations that support the infrastructure of the Internet through technical coordination. The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) allocates blocks of IP addresses and ASNs, known collectively as Internet number resources, to the RIRs, who then distribute them to users within their own specific service regions. Organizations that receive resources directly from RIRs include Internet Service Providers (ISPs), telecommunications organizations, large corporations, governments, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders, including end users.

The RIR model of open, transparent participation has proven successful at responding to the rapidly changing Internet environment. Each RIR holds one or two open meetings per year, as well as facilitating online discussion by the community, to allow the open exchange of ideas from the technical community, the business sector, civil society, and government regulators.

The five RIRs are:
- AfriNIC, http://www.afrinic.net - Africa
- APNIC, http://www.apnic.net - Asia Pacific
- ARIN, http://www.arin.net - Canada, many Caribbean and North Atlantic islands, and the United States
- LACNIC, http://www.lacnic.net - Latin America and the Caribbean
- RIPE NCC, http://www.ripe.net - Europe, Middle East, and Parts of Central Asia