



**For immediate release:**

## **.Asia Sunrise and Landrush Auctions Integrity Uncompromised** *DotAsia Organisation is Fully Prepared to Cooperate with Law Enforcement Agencies where Necessary to Tackle Illegal Behaviour during the Auctions*

Hong Kong, 15 May 2008 – In response to recent allegations against DotAsia and auction services provider Pool.com, DotAsia issued a statement yesterday clarifying false claims that inappropriate behaviour by DotAsia has affected ongoing .Asia Sunrise and Landrush Auctions.

DotAsia Organisation, the not-for-profit organization overseeing the operations and policies for the global “.Asia” Top-Level-Domain (TLD) has confirmed that they have been and will continue proactively taking measures to stop any inappropriate activities such as tampering and collusion during the auctions. In fact, DotAsia has published a Special Advisory on Auction Tampering earlier in March. DotAsia also confirms that it has received allegations regarding unfair auction practices in April and has launched internal investigations immediately. The registry has taken action on several occasions where bid rigging activities were reported or suspected and has otherwise found no evidence suggesting any bidder has been advantaged or disadvantaged due to their relationship or non-relationship with Pool.com during the auctions.

Responding to an allegation that DotAsia concealed certain domain auctions to the benefit of its partner, DotAsia reaffirmed that according to its policy, posted online since early 2007, names with only one successfully verified application in Sunrise (or in Landrush) does not go through the auction process and therefore will not be shown in the closed auction list. All Sunrise (SR2) applications, for which the alleged names pertain, are verified for their trademark claims by reputable third party verification providers, Deloitte and AGIP (Abu-Ghazaleh Intellectual Property). This ensures the integrity of the Sunrise process and that only qualified applicants are invited to participate in corresponding auctions. This also explains why even if there were multiple applications submitted for the same domain, if certain Sunrise applications failed the verification process, or was withdrawn, leaving only one qualified application the domain will be allocated to the remaining applicant and not go through an auction process. The priority of an application, which phase of Sunrise or Landrush, also affects whether a domain that received multiple applications would enter into the auction process.

“We understand the concerns from the community arising from the misguided allegations. I believe that our dedication and integrity will eventually shine through,” says Edmon Chung, CEO of DotAsia. “I can assure all .Asia registrants and auction participants that our processes and systems are not compromised. Measures are in place, including arrangements specifically addressing conflict of interest situations and arms-length organisations with Pool.com, such as data confidentiality and escrow procedures. We are confident that the auction system provides a fair and equitable platform for all participants. It is important to understand also that even as a provider, Pool.com or other providers should not be removed of their ability to protect their trademarks through the .Asia Sunrise process. That is why the confidentiality and escrow processes are in place to address potential conflict of interest situations.”

Further allegation made implications that the auction process favoured parties who have a relationship with Pool.com. DotAsia refutes the remark by pointing out that besides measures in

place to address conflict of interest issues, the structure of the .Asia auction facilitates a fair process. An English style auction, adopted by .Asia, is used such that the incremental leading bid price can be observed by all parties. Auctions are automatically extended for a substantial amount of time (24 hours) if a change of lead occurred in the final 24 hours of an auction. There is no reason to believe that any party could gain an advantage because the only way to win an auction is to place a bid higher than all other bidders. Bidding at specific times, such as close to the end of an auction period, does not give any advantage to a bidder. The automatic extension of 24 hours means that trailing bidders, after a change of lead, will have ample time to react and to increase their bid. Therefore, allegations that the system favours any particular bidder are unsound.

Chung added that, “As can be observed from the email correspondence publicized by the disgruntled customer, we have not only been responding diligently to their inquiries, providing reassurance to them that we take such issues seriously, we have also offered to conduct auctions they are participating in on a separate platform to further relief their anxiety regarding Pool.com. This demonstrates our dedication to providing participants with the most comfortable environment and process to compete for .Asia domains, and is consistent with our commitment to a stable and orderly introduction of the .Asia domain into the technical and social fabric of the Internet.”

DotAsia also added that all auction activities are fully logged and that the organisation is prepared to cooperate with law enforcement agencies where appropriate to crack down on illegal and criminal activities at the .Asia auctions, if found. Bid rigging for example, can be a criminal offence and generally involves agreement or arrangement among auction participants not to submit a bid, or prearranged submissions of bids.

When asked about the personal attacks in the allegations, Chung added, “I can understand the frustration from an eager customer for valuable .Asia domain names, however, it is important to maintain the integrity of the registry and to treat participants with equity. While I feel disappointed about the misleading allegations, I have faith in the community and believe, as an old Chinese saying goes, that ‘justice will be in people’s heart (公道自在人心)’. I sincerely hope that the parties issuing the allegations will refrain from propagating false or misleading information about me or other parties. Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to offer my sincere regrets to all those participating in the .Asia auctions for their anxiety about the matter, and to reassure everyone that we are taking more proactive measures to deter and stop any inappropriate activities during the auctions. We will also work even harder to keep communication channels open.”

DotAsia encourages anyone who suspect or has been recipient of bid rigging solicitations to report these offensive behaviours to the registry directly. You can contact DotAsia directly at: [info@registry.asia](mailto:info@registry.asia) or, for any inquires about auctions specifically: [auctions@registry.asia](mailto:auctions@registry.asia).