DURBAN – IDN Variant TLDs Program
Thursday, July 18, 2013 – 11:00 to 12:30
ICANN – Durban, South Africa

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's already a few minutes late, so if you could find your way in or out of the room, we'd really appreciate it so we can get started. Since we have a lot of room up here, I invite people to come join us at the tables so we're not looking back to who is behind us. You're welcome to join us up here.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is IDN Variant TLDs Program meeting on Thursday July 18th at 11:00 a.m. going to approximately 12:30 a.m. That again is the IDN Variant TLDs Program on Thursday July 18th 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

CYRUS NAMAZI: Good morning, everyone. My name is Cyrus Namazi. I wanted to welcome you to the IDN Variant TLD update session. I just wanted to do a very brief introduction here to highlight the criticality of this project both for ICANN and, of course, for the community. It's a project that is actually loaded with many technical, geopolitical attributes, and that adds its own tone and level of complexity to the overall project. We have a really good update ready for you for the next 90 minutes or so, and my colleague Naela and team are going to take you through that. So with that, I'm going to pass it on to Nicole who is going to walk you through the agenda for the day. Thank you.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

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NICOLETA MUNTEANU: Thank you, Cyrus. Hello, everyone, and welcome. Please allow me to do an overview of the agenda of today's session. We're going to start with a short overview the IDN Variant TLD Program followed by the presentation of the ongoing projects of Phase 4. And my colleagues here seated at the table and members of the IDN Variant TLD Program will walk you through updates of the ongoing projects. Project 2.2, the implementation of the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the DNS Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels – that will be further referred as the IDN Root LGR procedure.

Project 1, the development of Label Generation Ruleset Tool, and Project 7 to update ICANN processes and systems by identifying the impacted processes and systems that will need updates in order to incorporate IDN root label generation rules and also to incorporate input from User Experience study following a Board resolution in Beijing. We will go over the next steps of the program to end the session, and a time slot dedicated to discussion and questions with the audience and the public online. Next slide, please.

For those who have recently joined the IDN Variant TLD Program, the work around the Variant TLD issues has been a longstanding request from a number of IDN user communities. As a result, the ICANN Board of Directors adopted in 2010 a resolution directing staff to initiate work and to identify workable approaches for the Variant TLDs. While this work is being carried out, applications from the New gTLD and the IDN ccTLD programs that contain variant strings are noted for future reference and will not be evaluated for allocation before the variant management solutions are developed and implemented.

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ICANN's role in the program is to define and implement the rules and processes that must be in place to enable the allocation, delegation, and management of IDN Variant TLDs in the Root Zone. The scope of the program is to ensure a good user experience and to implement appropriate solutions without compromising the stability and security of the domain name system.

Since the origination of the program, community has been widely involved. A vital part of each step of the program involving a certain number of expert working groups, volunteers from the community, expert consultants accompanied by ICANN staff. Public comment forum and public sessions were also utilized to gather input from the community. Current and last phase of the program includes work that is dependent on the community for the development of label generation rules. Next slide, please.

This slide provides an overview of program's timeline. We apologize. It doesn't display very well on the big screen. So the program was established by Board resolution in 2010 as the IDN Variant TLD Issues Project that investigated issues relevant to individual scripts, issues that need to be resolved to facilitate a good user experience for Variant TLDs.

The program later evolved in the IDN Variant TLD Program that was tasked to develop solutions and define necessary processes that must be in place to enable the delegation of IDN Variant TLDs. Detailed description of reports and documents that were produced during the previous three phases of the program are available on ICANN website within the IDN Variant webpages.

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 So we are now two years in the program, have initiated the fourth and last phase of the program, which is comprised of implementation projects that will be discussed during this session. Conclusion of the program represented by current Phase 4 is estimated for mid next year, and its implementation work is a prerequisite IDN Variant delegation.

As I was saying at the beginning of the session – next slide, please – Phase 4 was initiated in Beijing by the ICANN Board resolution that directed staff to implement and to gather input on the two documents that were produced and published during Phase 3 of the program. The two documents are the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the DNS Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels and the Report on User Experience Implications of Active Variant TLDs. So the Board resolution directed staff to implement the procedure and also invited interested supporting organizations and advisory committees to provide input and guidance that might be factored in the implementation of recommendations from the User Experience study. Next slide, please.

As identified in the IDN Variant TLD Program Plan published last year, this last phase of the program is composed of the following implementation projects, and my team will walk you through updates on three of them that are undergoing.

Project 2.2 is scoped to implement the IDN LGR procedure. That actually represents the development of the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone. Project 7 in charge of identifying impacted programs, evaluation processes and systems at ICANN that will need to incorporate the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone. Project 7 also deals with including

input from interested supporting organizations and advisory committees on the recommendations from the User Experience study.

Project 8 will be initiated at the conclusion of Project 7 and is scoped to make the necessary updates that were to be identified in Project 7. Project 1 was initiated in Phase 3 of the program and will continue its work. Project is scoped to develop the specifications to represent the IDN Label Generation Rules.

I will now invite my colleague Trang Nguyen who has joined the program for this last phase and walk you over updates on Project 2.2.

DAI-TRANG NGUYEN: Thank you, Nicole. So as Nicole mentioned, one of the Phase 4 implementation projects is Project 2.2, also known as the Implementation of the Procedure to Develop and Maintain the Label Generation Rules for the Root Zone in Respect of IDNA Labels.

So what exactly is a Label Generation Rule, and why is it needed? For those of you who are not familiar, the label generation rule or LGR is a set of rules to help us determine what constitutes a valid label, what are the possible variants, and whether these variants can be delegated. And the reason that these rules are needed is because some TLD applicants have expressed interest in variant TLDs in their applications, and at this point in time these variants cannot be validated in a deterministic way. Additionally, as Nicole mentioned, ICANN has committed to not delegating any variant TLDs until variant management solutions are developed and implemented. So this is really where Project 2.2 comes in. Next slide, please.

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Project 2.2 was created specifically to develop the procedures to identify Label Generation Rules for any writing system. It's a bit hard to see, but that graphic that you see up there is essentially and LGR procedure that is a two-pass process comprised of a Generation Panel and an Integration Panel. The Generation Panel represents the first pass, and its job is to develop the set of rules for a particular writing system and then submit their proposal for the Label Generation Rule to the Integration Panel.

The Integration Panel is the second pass, and its job is to review the proposal of the Generation Panel and, if accepted, integrate that proposal into a single unified IDNA Label Generation Rule. If the Integration Panel does not accept the proposal, then it will send the proposal back to the Generation Panel for additional work.

So the outcome of this two-pass process is going to be a code point repertoire and a set of label generation rules for IDNA labels. As you can imagine, we're going to have one Generation Panel for every single script. So it's sort of an iterative process for each of the writing system, and this iterative nature of the procedure allows for additional scripts and languages to be continually added to the repertoire on an ongoing basis.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We had a request to slow down.

DAI-TRANG NGUYEN: Sorry. I will speak slower. Next slide, please. So I touched on the first two bullet points on this slide, and I'm going to defer the last two bullet

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points for later in the presentation because one of my colleagues is going to talk about the third bullet point, which is essentially Project 1, and the last bullet point is essentially Project 7 that Naela will cover. Next slide, please.

So let's talk about the Generation and Integration Panels. The Generation Panel is comprised of community volunteers with expertise in specific languages or scripts. There will be one Generation Panel for each script. We published a call for Generation Panels on July 11, so if you have any linguistic expertise in any particular language or script, we encourage you to respond to the call. Where possible, we do encourage that any existing working groups in the community organize themselves and volunteer to be one of these panels. We expect that the Generation Panel would commence working the third quarter of this year.

So there are nine scripts that were represented in New gTLD applications, and in addition there are eight other scripts that are represented in applied-for and delegated IDN ccTLDs. Because of this, there is an immediate need for Generation Panels representing these scripts to be formed as soon as possible, but this doesn't preclude Generation Panels for other scripts to be formed at this point in time if there is interest. We've started to receive some expressions of interest already.

We posted a call and started to receive some expressions of interest for Generation Panel, and the team wanted to ask me to remind those of you who are interested in responding to the call to please submit the complete information that we requested, including a resume, a cover

letter with the complete information, such as address, phone number, and your current occupation.

Also, we need you to specify the script and position that you are expressing interest in, so for example, Panel Chair for the Arabic Generation Panel or a linguistic expert for the Japanese Generation Panel. So be very specific. And if you're going to be applying for more than one position, please also provide your preference. Next slide, please.

So now the Integration Panel. Integration Panel is comprised of community volunteers as well, but in addition to the linguistic expertise we also require some additional areas of expertise for the Integration Panel, such as Unicode, DNS, and IDNA. We issued a call for subject matter experts for the Integration Panel on June 6, and at the close of the call on June 27, we received a total of 25 applications. There was a wonderful geographic representation from applications received, so we were very pleased with that.

As you can see, there were 12 countries represented: Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Greece, Ireland, Pakistan, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and the U.S. We were also very pleased with the diverse backgrounds represented by the applicants, including academia, research, registries, registrars, government affairs, the technical community, and Internet policy folks, so a very diverse group of people. And we're pleased to see that all of the applications covered all of the areas of expertise needed for the Integration Panel: IDNA, DNS, linguistics, and Unicode.

So thank you to everyone who responded to the call for your time, effort, and participation. Currently, we're working on finalizing the selection criteria, and we'll share those with the community once they are available. We anticipate that the Integration Panel will be seated by the end of August/early September.

Now, I'm going to turn it over to Asmus to discuss Project 1 with you. Asmus is well-known to many of you in the community, and he has been tremendous in providing his expertise to help us move forward with these projects. Asmus?

ASMUS FREYTAG: Thank you, Trang. So I'm going to talk very briefly about the Label Generation Ruleset Tool work, and I want to preface the – next slide, please – I would like to preface the remarks by equating a bit of terminology. Many of you might be familiar with the term IDN Table, and in essence an existing IDN Table is nothing but a particular Label Generation Ruleset for a given domain.

So what we're trying to do is we're trying to develop a data format for these IDN Tables or the LGR that will be, unlike the existing formats, be able to be a universal format that can represent all the different features. Some of the things we're going to do is that once this is supposed to be machine-readable, so one of the things we're going to do with it is to create rules that allow it to take existing legacy IDN Tables in some of the several existing older formats and convert them into this new universal format.

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With the universal format in place, we will be able to have a tool to mechanically validate labels against the LGRs derived from the old format, be able to generate the variant set for each label by simple machine lookup from the LGR data format. And we are not going to be able to finalize all of those things because the Root Zone LGR project may generate additional demands based on what the Generation Panels will decide, and we want to be able to incorporate those demands into the development. So we're looking at a process that interleaves the development of this format and those tools with the work on the LGR. Next slide, please.

So in the particular project of developing these IDN Table or LGR data formats – which is a process that was initiated by Kim Davies who is sitting here right next to me, and he and I are in the process of pushing that further – we went and pushed the latest draft on July 9 of this years. And we certainly appreciate anybody who is interested in looking this over and giving us feedback. Some of the additions compared to the previous draft that has been out for comments was to provide a section that gives representation for the grammar needed to express the so-called "whole-label evaluation rules" which are call for in the Root Zone LGR development process. That is something that is in that form not found in existing IDN Tables.

We are trying to represent this in a language form that is based in some ways on regular expressions and where possible will leverage Unicode properties in the definition of rules. As a result of a rule, you can then get various different actions like block or allocate. As I mentioned before, once the panels are formed and have taken out their work, we will make any further adjustments needed to cover what is required for

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the Root Zone LGR. But in the meantime, we are certainly open to comments if other people have requirements or see gaps in our ability to express current IDN Tables in that format. And with that, I'd like the next slide.

So the key benefit, to repeat, of this work will be that unlike existing IDN Tables the data that we develop for the Root Zone LGR will be machine-readable. And that means that in various stages of the process of evaluating and validating an applied-for label, certain checks can be automated. Having a conversion from existing formats allows us to leverage existing tables. We can compare them to the newly developed. We can reuse them if that is appropriate for the Root Zone, and it would also make possible for new TLD operators who set their own Label Generation Rulesets to base these off of the Root Zone LGR and in a very simple and straightforward manner define differences and additions.

One key aspect of this is that we're looking forward to having both the underlying data and the tools available publicly, which would allow applicants to run prescreening test prior to submission of an application. So they will have higher predictability whether any of their labels is going to be permissible and also which types of variants and which specific variants would be potentially allocatable for a label like that.

And with that, I'm going to ask for the next slide, and it is time to turn the microphone over to Naela.

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NAELA SARRAS: Thank you, Asmus. So my name is Naela Sarras. I'm one of the team members looking after the IDN Variant project, and I am going to take you into the last project that we want to talk about here in the IDN Variant TLD Program. So as my colleagues stated before, we have four projects defined in this phase, and three of them are running concurrently, Project 7 being one. So this project is sort of unique. It has two inputs working from it. One is the input from the User Experience study, which I will go into next, and then the other one is the incorporation of the IDN LGR into the ICANN systems and processes, which I'll also discuss.

So on the input from the user study, what I'll do is I'll give a very high level of the study and key recommendations that appeared in the study, but I really recommend that if people here haven't looked at it yet to download and read the study itself. It offers much more detail about the scripts evaluated and the case studies looked at and then leading up to the issues that were documented in the recommendations that they made in the study. The study, by the way, did conclude in Phase 3 of the program and published in March 2013, so earlier this year.

So on this slide here in the blue area, we're looking at the focus of the study. So the intersection here is the overlap area between Variant IDN Labels where they intersect with TLDs, so a very narrow focus. However, the study also looked at issues from a user perspective. So as expected, the user isn't necessarily cognizant of a TLD as a standalone when they're interacting with a domain name. So this study did consider fully qualified domain names, and it also looked at existing variant implementations in the country code IDN TLDs. And the overriding goal altogether was to balance the user expectations with the conservative

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and consistent implementations of the implementations. So can I have the next slide, please.

So as this is an input into the Project 7, this slide figure at the top is not very clear but basically the study is done and published. In April as my colleague Nicole explained earlier, the Board asked that supporting organizations and advisory committees to provide any input and advice they have on the recommendations. And now we're in this last phase where we're waiting for that input and we're going to try and incorporate it into Project 7.

To get to the recommendations, the study looked at 10 different variant implementations across a number of scripts. They identified challenges across different user groups. So they looked at end users, users who manage the registration process, as well as registrants and the technical community at large. And the technical community includes implementers, software developers, and administrators who have to interact with the systems and have to support IDNs. So after identifying all the challenges, they came up with 25 recommendations to ICANN itself, to the registries, registrars, and the technical community.

And in terms of the input that we're waiting on as a team, that we do on the 1st of July. We do have input from ALAC as of, I think, the beginning of July and we're waiting on the rest of the SOs and ACs that wish to submit input to come through. So I have said this previously in this meeting, even though the input did not come exactly on July 1, we understand with the meeting a number of groups are actually working on their input here at this meeting. So we've sort of established an

internal deadline of 28 July for ourselves just to give the community time to get the input in because we do need it in order to incorporate it.

So why don't we – are we talking? Yes. So a little bit about the recommendations that appeared in the report – and I'm going to make this really brief because I do encourage everyone to read the report itself. So the recommendations were divided into three categories: the "must" recommendations, "should" recommendations, and "may" recommendations. ICANN has the bulk of those recommendations, and most of them are in the "must" category. We'll give just some highlights of these recommendations that appeared in the report.

So implementing a well-defined and conservative allocation process [inaudible] in the report. Developing a simple and consistent lifecycle for variant TLDs across languages and scripts, so it's not enough to know whether a variant string is allocatable or [blocked], but also a predictability about what will happen throughout the lifecycle of the TLD. So this recommendation is after a consistent lifecycle to help with predictability.

And then another recommendation that appeared was maintaining an LGR (Label Generation Rules) repository and making it available to users. So what this recommendation is after is an LGR that's easily consumed by software developers and is accessible to the wider technical community not just registries and registrars. So those are highlights that I want to cover here, and again you can read those for yourselves.

If I can go to the second slide, some of the recommendations as we said also were at the registry level concerned with allocations of the primary

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label and all the variant labels to be bundled or grouped on an administrative level and that they be allocated to the same entity. And where possible, the recommendations call for the IDN LGR to be used at the lower levels in the tree and that deviations from the LGR be documented within the wider community. And the study also makes recommendations towards creating educational materials on the use and impacts of variants for different user communities. And finally, we do have up there a sample recommendation that appeared on the registrar side, and that is to extend the support to different linguistic communities that are potential users of these TLDs. So those are the recommendations, and as I said earlier we did receive input from the ALAC.

So we'll go ahead and give a quick briefing about the recommendations that appeared. What appears under the plus is the recommendation, and then what has an arrow next to it is initial thoughts from the project team on these recommendations. So the ALAC called for IDN Variant TLDs to be introduced carefully and to implement the complementary policies concurrently, at the same time. So this is, indeed, the mission of Projects 2.2 and 7 focused on the implementation of the IDN LGR procedure and updating the relevant systems and processes that need to go with it to incorporate this LGR.

Another recommendation that appeared was input from ALAC is to bundle the delegation of TLDs to ensure consumer trust. So this is also consistent with Recommendation 6.1.1 from the User Experience report, which calls for allocation of variant TLDs to the same entity. And this recommendation is intended beyond the TLD level down the tree as well. So if we could switch, thank you.

Other input was to perform outreach by ICANN itself, the registries and registrars to the user communities and prepare for the delegation of IDN Variant TLDs. This again is also consistent with the Project 6 recommendations to ICANN registries and registrars to provide the educational materials in appropriate languages and to work with ICANN to develop those materials.

The advice also includes advice on finding common ground between the technical and linguistic communities to help ensure the IDN variants don't undermine the security and stability of the DNS. And we think that the two-pass LGR process here – in terms of our thoughts on this recommendation – the two-step LGR process gets exactly at this recommendation her and the fine balance between the linguistic community's input via the Generation Panels and the technical community's focus on security and stability through the Integration Panel.

And another guidance revolves around expediting of the implementation of the Root Zone LGR and focusing on the Han script. So this is what's exactly happening in Project 2.2 is the implementation of the IDN LGR procedure for all script communities, of course. And ICANN is working with the linguistic communities to facilitate the development of the Generation Panels, which will ultimately lead to the creation of the LGR. And finally, the strengthening of the Root Zone LGR by involving ICANN community in oversight, I believe as a team this is achieved through the process where all LGR proposals, again for the procedure, are created and the community is asked to comment on them through public comment.

So that was on the input from the User Experience side and input that's coming from the supporting organizations and advisory committees based on those recommendations. And now we'll go into the second half of the project, which is looking at incorporating the IDN LGR into the ICANN systems and processes, which really requires identifying what they are first. Can we go to the next slide, please?

So the program team is actually now in the process of identifying those impacted systems and processes and their impact on the existing systems to incorporate both the LGR itself, IDNs and variant TLDs when they become allocatable. And part of doing that, as you can imagine, this touches just about every group and every department within ICANN. So we're currently in the process of reaching out to the impacted departments to define the systems and processes. So they know their systems better than we do, and we're reaching out to them to explain what's about to happen and make sure that their systems are ready to deal with them. So we found that an initial effort of identifying the ground rules or assumptions of what they need to know is a good way to go to them because it explains the same rules that we should all be operating under. And I will go a little bit into these assumptions here.

So they're currently internal work that we're doing. They represent settled policy, design goals, or technical boundary conditions. They're just known facts. And they will become basically the foundation that we'll approach everyone and say, "These are the rules that you will operate from." And so far we've identified 18 assumptions, and as the Board Variant Working Group has an oversight [rule] over our work, we're currently running these by them to make sure we have the right assumptions. Eventually, I assume – currently it's internal work – but

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eventually we will finish it as an internal document, make sure it's all well-documented and publish that and make that available.

And just to give you a little bit of an example of what those assumptions mean, for example, one of the ones that we have as we approach departments is that should the delegation of IDN Variant TLDs exist, those variants – the primary label and its variant – will exist as different delegations as far as the technical aspect is concerned. But on a business level, on the process level, we need to find ways to connect them on the business level. So that's one type of assumption that we're working from.

So that's what's happening in 7, and for the Next Steps here in the program what we're looking at to do. So for Project 2.2, as my colleague Trang explained, we're setting up both the Integration Panel – we're in the selection process – and receiving proposals from the Generation Panels. That's our immediate set of work there.

With Project 7, we're going to continue to focus on identifying the updates that we need in the systems and processes and then incorporating the input that's coming based on the User Experience recommendations. And as always as has been the case with the a variant program, we may identify issues that haven't been discussed previously. And when we do, we will document these issues and make them available to the public for further comment or action. And I think, is that all? Yes.

So that's all we had today in terms of an update on where we're at with the Variant Program. And I think we're ready to open it up for discussion and comments.

[DAI-TRANG NGUYEN]:   Naela, before we start the Q&A, if I can make one correction to what I said previously. The Integration Panel is actually not made up of volunteers. They're made up of contractors. So these individuals would actually have a contractual relationship with ICANN.

NAELA SARRAS: So I will take questions and pass them on to my colleagues here, and if we have questions from the community, I'll rely on Nicole to read them out. So let's start with the room. I saw both hands up at the same time, so I'm going to start with Rinalia first.

RINALIA ABDUL RAHIM: Thank you, Naela. Rinalia Abdul Rahim from the At-Large Advisory Committee. Just a question of clarification: is it a requirement in the Root LGR procedure for the Integration Panel to provide a rationale for their decision to facilitate the follow up from the Generation Panel? Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS: Thank you, Rinalia. And I believe per the procedure, this is indeed a requirement, yes. Did you have anything else you wanted to add? Okay, thank you.

CHRIS DILLON: This is just to pick up what I think there was a mention of an update to Project 1, the table format, and the update was released on July 9 if I understood correctly. There may be a few people in the room who aren't aware of that. I'm not, and I just wonder whether perhaps Kim or

Asmus would just be able to take us through the major changes in it. And also whether a mechanism for checking across several tables is being added because I think there wasn't one in the original draft. And then just to confirm that any impurities that exist in the legacy tables, that those impurities are dealt with by Generation Panels. So that's three questions.

NAELA SARRAS: Thank you, Chris. So which one of you would like to take it? Asmus, go ahead.

ASMUS FREYTAG: So that was Chris Dillon with his set of questions. This is Asmus Freytag answering. And first of all, one of your questions I think was just answered in the presentation. We did provide the date and, in fact, I had several bullet points of the major additions to the draft. The draft is concerned with an XML format for representing an LGR. It is not, as such, a draft of all the tool work. And the format is defined to capture a single LGR, so then if you have multiples of these files you can then start writing tools to do cross-checking and other things. And I know that your last question contained the word impurities, but I have at this point spaced out and don't know any more what that question was about. So if you could, please, repeat that question.

CHRIS DILLON: Just basically things that have got into the tables, and I think there were even Egyptian hieroglyphs in some of the legacy tables. It's just how you would get rid of things that really should be got rid of. I mean, I'm

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presuming they're got rid of by Generation Panels, but I would just like to confirm it.

ASMUS FREYTAG: Okay. There seems to be a confusion here. There's a distinction between the work of defining a data table format that you can use for purposes such as the IANA registry and other purposes and that they can also be used as part of capturing with the results of the Root Zone LGR work, that on one side, compared to the actual Root Zone LGR work. There is no implication, there was no mention of, there was no suggestion that the Root Zone LGR work would somehow start with any random set of initial IDN tables that have been submitted. If you read the procedure very carefully – and as a contributor, you are probably familiar with it – you will find that there's indeed a quite different development path sketched out that really takes a fresh look at the Root starting basically at square one. My question is does Kim Davies have anything to add to this?

KIM DAVIES: I think the key point is that once we have a universal format both for the existing IDN tables that are out there right now, whatever work comes out of the Root LGR processes, we'll have a good mechanism by which to do comparisons and analysis.

So what you make of that data, hard to say, but you'll be able to show this table has these [code] points, this table has these different sets. We can look at the intersection of those tables. We can compare the differences. Then we can have a thoughtful analysis about what those

differences represent. Right now because all the tables are in a disparate set of formats, that's really a difficult endeavor. So the universal format will really elevate the discussion so we can focus on those kind of elements.

NAELA SARRAS: So I am going to take questions from online now, so go ahead, Nicole.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: Thank you, Naela. Nicoleta Munteanu for questions from the chat room. The question is from [Gwen]. According to what has been said here, does it mean all IDN TLDs would not expect to be delegated until mid-2014 even if they complete the contracting process, PDT, and so on?

DAI-TRANG NGUYEN: Thank you for the question. No, that is not correct. All of the existing TLDs are approved under the New gTLD Program will be grandfathered.

NAELA SARRAS: So if I may, can I add as part of the evaluation there was an effort where there was some checking done on these IDN TLDs. So in essence, there was an informal LGR, if you will, that was created based on the IDN tables that were submitted. So there was checking done on these labels for validity, and as Trang said, they will be grandfathered into whatever rules that exist should there be any deviation from the rules that will be created.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU:	Nicoleta Munteanu for the chatroom. A question from Joseph Yee regarding Project 1. Will the tools code be open to public for technical review?
UNIDENTIFIED MALE:	Yes, that's the intention. In fact, there's draft code that implements the last version of the specification posted available right now. Both Asmus and I are doing independent implementations of code just to test our theories and to make sure it can both be implemented correctly and that will be available.
NICOLETA MUNTEANU:	Next question in the chatroom from Dennis Jennings: given that there are variants across different script-writing systems, how is that to be dealt with? Example: variance across Latin, Cyrillic, and Greek scripts.
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:	So I believe, yes, I'm going to pass this to Asmus as one of the writers of the procedure, but I believe the procedure calls for collaboration in that case.
ASMUS FREYTAG:	Yes, this is Asmus Freytag speaking and replying to Dennis Jennings' question. There are aspects to that. One aspect is the question of identifying variants that go across script boundaries, and that is up to the Generation Panels.

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And in the case of closely related scripts, we are looking at a process of asking and encouraging the Generation Panels to take up a cooperation among themselves so that related scripts receive consistent treatment. This is not strictly required by the procedure and is not strictly formalized by the procedure, but it has definitely been on the minds of people who have written the procedure that this should be, indeed, the desirable thing to do.

Another question is, if you have a case where you have identified a variant that, so to speak, goes outside the box – it is a variant that is not in the repertoire in which a label can exist under a given script tag in the procedure – the presumption would be that such a variance would be of the kind blocked that basically just prevent lookalike or similar or substitutable labels in another script to exist that could be confused in the Root Zone with this label that is applied for under a particular script. Because confusability and the substitutability does not strictly adhere to the somewhat arbitrary delineations that the script has embodied in the Unicode standard, for instance, this kind of stuff will have to happen.

But that is precisely why we have this two-pass process in the procedure where we have the Generation Panels that can focus on the needs and the requirements and particular properties of their own script and the Integration Panel that can help ensure through its review that all proper measures have been taken to balance various interests against each other, balance the interest of the Root against the interests of particular scripts, and in this particular case to make sure that such cases are handled in a very sensible manner.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: In response to Asmus' reply, Dennis Jennings' comment is: I suggest that this cross-script issue be made more formal in the briefing of the Generation Panels.

ASMUS FREYTAG: One of the things that is not visible yet is something we're working on in preparing for the implementation of the Root Zone LGR process. We are essentially writing an owner's manual for how to run a Generation Panel, and that kind of document largely, of course, quotes from the existing procedure and makes that a bit more readable. But additional items, just like the encouragement to go and look for particular cooperation, etc., that document is the place where we will capture what we have learned so far and what we're learning from those comments like Dennis just gave us.

NAELA SARRAS: Thank you, Asmus. I'm going to come back to the room here for questions, and I think I have Edmon next.

EDMON CHUNG: Thank you, Naela. I have two questions. I have two items, actually. The first one is on the User Experience report recommendations on registries and registrars. What I did want to ask – and I'm glad that Trang is here which means that there is an interaction directly with the New gTLD Program, I suppose – and the, I don't want to use the word concern, but at least the item is that whether the team has done any studies on the existing applications in their implementation at the

registry. Because it would have been proposed in the application that they have sent in and would have now gone through initial evaluation.

Is there any reason for concern from the community from what has already been submitted? Because Trang said that they will be grandfathered, but are anything that is already submitted with policies that may have an impact or negatively, I mean, conflict with the recommendations that are put forward. That would be, I think, of interest from the community if the team can spend a little bit of time taking a look at that. I'm sure the initial evaluation of the New gTLD applicants have taken those into consideration perhaps, but I wonder if that has happened. If it hasn't happened, a study there would be, I think, useful.

The second item is on the Project 7, if I remember correctly, Project 7 is the administration of all the parts that need to be in place. Project 7, I guess I'd like to bring up one particular point which is it may have intersection with the ongoing WHOIS work and also the IRD work – the Internationalized Registration Data – PDP that's going on at the GNSO. Because it has implications on the IANA WHOIS, and having participated at the original IRD Working Group, I was reminded very forcefully that the issues of IDN Variants needs to only be considered until after the WHOIS PDP are done. However, I do encourage you to take a look at the final report off the IRD, the previous final report that was completed and adopted.

In it is a footnote that included a lot of discussions that happened during the IRD discussions that concerned IDN Variant and including IDN Variant TLDs, especially the Root WHOIS. So I guess the point is that two

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things. One, there is ongoing policy development work that may have intersection with that project, and the other is I encourage you to take a look at the IRD final report on the subject.

NAELA SARRAS: Okay, so thanks, Edmon. So on the first one on the User Experience and whether doing evaluations based on the recommendations that appeared, we're going to take this and look into because certainly we're not prepared to answer that in here. And the second one, also thank you for reminding us that there's a lot of other work that touches on this, and we'll keep that in consideration as well in Project 7. In the chat room we have a question? Okay.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: A follow-up question from the chat room from [Gwen].. So the initial question was the delegation of IDN TLDs until mid-2014. To follow up, does that mean the timeline of IDN TLD delegation and inclusion into the Root Zone would not be affected by the progress of the various projects but their own progress toward delegation based on the [inaudible] ICANN relevant procedures?

DAI-TRANG NGUYEN: This is Trang. Yes, that is correct. So the delegation that the applied-for IDN TLD will proceed as per the timeline under the New gTLD Program. That work that is currently going on is with regards to IDN Variants. So a lot if they apply for TLD applications also specified certain variants that they would like to be delegated, and those have not been evaluated and

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we will not be delegating any of those IDN Variants until this work is completed.

NAELA SARRAS: So before I go back to you, I did actually want to comment back to Edmon. So I just want to tell you that the fact that you're seeing Trang here, you are correct. In this Project 7, we tried to pull in teams from the different departments specifically to pay attention to those a lot impacted here. So unfortunately, other people that are on the project can't come here because they have conflicts, but we do have team members representing also registries and registrars and IANA. So it is something that we're cognizant of. This touches every area of ICANN. So hopefully that gives you a little bit of a warm, fuzzy feeling. And so back to the online, right?

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: A question from Dennis Jennings. Does the recommendation, to the extent possible, apply the LGR developed for the Root across lower-level domains? Deviations from the LGR should be publicly documented and shared with the ICANN and the technical community. Is this recommendation being actively progressed with the registry community?

NAELA SARRAS: So actively progressed, what we're doing now as a team we're taking in all the recommendations and we're waiting for the input to come in from all the SOs and ACs. So in terms of actively progressing as in trying to figure out what it would take to implement it, not yet. We're waiting

for all the input to come in first, and then from there we'll establish a plan for how to pursue the recommendations based on the input.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: Question from the chatroom from Joseph Yee: for the assumptions ground rules identified so far for ICANN processes and systems update believing that they are not final yet, are you able to tell us what some of them are?

NAELA SARRAS: So I can, and then I might ask another person on the team also who is an author to help me out a little bit. This is from Joseph? So Joseph, what we have is still in internal drafting form. As I said at the beginning, some of them are – I think one of the ones that I can think of right offhand was as we approach each department we need to explain what it means with the IDN Variant TLDs. And so we're explaining that on a technical level those are two different distinct delegations in the Root Zone, for example, that on a business level these need to be tied together.

So, for example, on the IANA WHOIS record level somehow there needs to be a tie between the primary TLD and any variant. On the New gTLD level, there needs to be some way to tie those together as well. That's what we mean on the business level versus the technical level. Can my team members here help me out with other assumptions that they can think of? Asmus?

ASMUS FREYTAG: Well, there is a number of assumptions that have surfaced in various different levels of the activity so far. I think there seems to be an emerging or emerged consensus that some steps need to be taken to minimize the number of allocated variants because they have a large complexity cost when they exist. And so the need for that would be something that would become one of the assumptions on which we base the process. The implementation of the assumption would then be to figure out precisely what the mechanisms would be that lead to such a minimization.

Another consensus that has evolved is that the Root Zone needs to be especially conservative, and that includes it not allowing labels that are risky in the root. Part of that in the context of variants is if you have a cloud of variants that exist theoretically for a particular label, that cloud can provide a large zone of other labels that will have to be blocked. That is, they can't exist simultaneously so that there is a nice distinctiveness about labels in the Root. After all, when you talk about a variant, you mean something that can be substituted in the mind of a user with an existing label.

So you want to make sure that this cloud of possible substitutions really is kept free of any other delegations, and to that extent an assumption might be that the set of blocked variants – the ones that basically protect a label from confusing delegations – is maximized in order to keep the Root conservative. And that is an assumption that we have identified. It turns out this particular assumption affects not the ICANN processes as much as the work to be done in the Generation Panels and Integration panels. That's going to be addressed there. But it gives you just a kind of idea of what fundamental ground rules and types of

settled policy, types of emerged consensus elements we are collecting and bringing together in one place so that we can have an easy reference to have something against which we can then check the implementation of all these processes to see whether we are actually achieving what we're trying to achieve.

NICOLETA MUNTEANU: Two comments in the chat room from Dennis Jennings. The first comment: I look forward to an update on the coordination with the registry community. The second comment: an earlier slide suggests that Chinese, Japanese, and Korean are different scripts. I think that this is confusing and perhaps reference should be done to the Han script.

NAELA SARRAS: Okay. Thank you for those comments. Do we have any other questions online or in the room? No? Oh, so we're going to go – oh, sorry, yes – we're going to go here in the room to [inaudible]. Please, introduce yourself for the record.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: As you know, ICANN is in the process of formulation of a Generation Panel to develop the Root Zone Label [inaudible] panels. It is expected to cover the different scripts already presented in the existing application in New gTLDs IDN [inaudible] program [inaudible] Arabic and Chinese.

My question is that whether Generation Panels will work on the scripts [inaudible]. There may be independent panel based on script. Like there

may be a Generation Panel for Arabic script, and there may be a separate Generation Panel for the Chinese script.

One question more. There is another question that ICANN at the same time is creating different working group and panels at the same time. Like [inaudible] ICANN [inaudible] Generation Panels to develop the Root Zone labels for generation rules – one. Another, they also recently [advertised] on 15 July the strategy panels by the President and CEO of ICANN. Already ICANN established strategy working group in original [levels] like Middle East strategy group. Is there a common agenda, and is there a sharing of work among them in order to save the time and efforts and, of course, the financials of ICANN?

NAELA SARRAS: Sorry, I'm listening to my colleague. So the first one I didn't quite understand the question, so please forgive me. The first one was about Generation Panels. Will there be different generation panels per script, right?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes.

NAELA SARRAS: So, yes. So that is the case, right? So there will be one for the Arabic, one for the [inaudible] based scripts, however that group organizes themselves based on experts. I mean, they're more expert in that area than I am to speak to that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you. The same scenario like to identify the issues already ICANN a working group for Arabic script to identify Arabic script and the Chinese. The same model was followed.

NAELA SARRAS: So I'm glad you said that. I just want to make sure there's not a confusion a little bit about this. So in the first phase we had the six case study groups: Arabic, Chinese, [inaudible], Cyrillic, Latin, and Greek. So, yes, that was a model that these Generation Panels could, that model will probably work its way a lot into these next Generation Panels. But one of the things that I will make clear is these are not necessarily only the six scripts that we're interested in, right? So we know that there will be potentially a Generation Panel for every linguistic community, so we're not restricted to these six. And because of ICANN and the way the community works, yes, it's likely that a lot of the people that participated in these groups will become members of the Generation Panel.

Just keep in mind that the Generation Panel for a given script, it's a community that organizes themselves, makes sure that the right expertise is represented on the committee. And then they develop a work plan, and then that is submitted, and then there is input from the staff and the Integration panel on things that may be missing in that work plan. So, yes, it's going to be very similar, but I don't know that it will be similar in terms of how things operated in the first phase where, for example, in the first phase we tried to have face-to-face meetings for each panel. I don't know that that will be the model. It's really up to the Generation Panel itself to define what will work best for itself in

terms of how they develop their repertoire for their LGR. So it was in the Generation Panels.

The second if I understood it correctly you said there is this effort going on with Generation Panels and then there is this strategy group that was announced earlier by Fadi on Monday with the five experts. And then you're saying there are regional strategy groups. So I think certainly we have colleagues that are involved in the regional strategy groups, and they're already cooperating with us on what it means for them to incorporate this into their regional strategy. So certainly, yes, there is cooperation there where there's already a strategy group that's already working.

Part of the program plan for us is we understand that the Generation Panels will come forward that are most ready. But I think also part of the long-term goal for the program is for us to work through the global stakeholder engagement group within ICANN to actually reach a little bit further to make sure. Because it's easy for the people that are plugged into the community to know about this effort, but we need to reach out a bit further to the communities that aren't necessarily plugged in here. Anyone else from my team wants to add?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS: Are there any more questions from online? Okay. Alright, with that I think I will call this session to a close. This was really helpful for us. Especially, we thank everyone that joined us online. I was actually

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rather amazed by the number of attendees online. We possibly have more online than we have in the room, which is a really good sign. Maybe the future of ICANN meetings is online five years from now. So thank you, everyone, for your time. It's really helpful to come here and get this input and get feedback from you, so thank you for your time and see you in Buenos Aires.

[END OF AUDIO]