PRAGUE – GAC Open Plenary – New gTLD Preparatory Discussion
Saturday, June 23, 2012 – 15:00 to 16:30
ICANN - Prague, Czech Republic

CHAIR DRYDEN: Good afternoon, everyone. If we could retake our seats, we'll restart.

Okay.

So we have a bit of time now before we meet with the GNSO at 4:30 to have an initial exchange within the GAC about where we are at regarding new gTLDs, in particular, the issues that we will be discussing with the board in this additional session that we have now scheduled. So I'd like to make use of this time to talk a bit about how we're going to manage that meeting and also to get a sense of what GAC members are thinking currently about these issues.

We sent the letter of advice several days ago. And, clearly, this is going to be the key piece of context for both us and the board when we're having an exchange with them. So let's keep that in mind.

In a moment, we're going to project a list of issues as a kind of agenda for the meeting tomorrow with the board.

But, before we really get into more of the particular substance associated with the issues, could we have an initial round of comments from GAC members about some of the issues as they see them? And I may be able to provide a bit of context as well from my exchanges with the board. But I will say that I expect the board to come to the session tomorrow on the basis that they know mistakes have been made and that there are items that they know the GAC has been asking for and

have not received or have not received in a way or in a timely enough manner to really allow the GAC to do its work.

So I think that's positive from the board's side and that they intend to join us tomorrow to listen. So this is an opportunity for you to communicate directly with the board about how this has -- the circumstance has created some challenges for you. And I hope we make good use of it.

So I do expect that, when we begin the session, that a number of you may want to make initial remarks before we go through a more substantive agenda. And I think that that is a good way for us to provide that context to them. And, as I say, I do expect them to be listening to us tomorrow.

So, as I say, we're going to post a draft agenda. But are there any comments at the moment initially about the general state of things regarding digital archery, early warning, batching, GAC advice and objections, and root zone scaling?

EU Commission, please.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Thank you, Madam Chair. We will probably have more precise comments once we have the list of issues and we're able to listen to the views of other GAC members as well.

But on the side of European Commission, I would like to point out two issues that happened very recently that made us worried, even more worried than we were before.

The first is that we learned that a member of ICANN staff who manages the -- used to manage the new gTLD program has resigned and that the current manager for stakeholder relations, Mr. Kurt Pritz, is assuming interim the manager of the new gTLD program. Without wanting to get into the nitty-gritty details of how ICANN manages its staff, which is not our job, but we are worried that one person -- if one person can actually manage this workload and what impact this will have on the new gTLD program. So we would expect very precise clarifications from the board on how they're going to manage this situation.

And the second thing that happened very recently is that we learned that the digital archery system has been suspended because, apparently, there were glitches. Now, I must say that I'm starting to become a bit tired of hearing this word "glitch," and I would like to understand precisely what that means and what impact it would have on the batching and what impact it would have on our work. And, quite frankly, I would like to understand how is it possible that the flagship program of ICANN suffers from so many glitches, very honestly. Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, EU Commission. So let's add an issue to our list that captures the point about resourcing to ensure the smooth operations of the program. I suspect that this is something where the GAC would like to exchange with the board or seek assurances.

New Zealand?

NEW ZEALAND:	Thank you, Heather. And thank you to the EU Commission for those comments. Absolutely pertinent.
	I wonder if, in terms of the digital archery, we might not want to go further and actually deliver some advice that it's time the whole nonsense is stopped.
CHAIR DRYDEN:	Thank you, New Zealand.
	Okay. Kenya, please.
KENYA:	Thank you, Heather. A number of comments from my African colleagues -- and I don't know where we would place it here -- is the concern around the outright failure of the outreach activities and especially the support applicant program, taking into consideration that only three have applied and the three that have applied are actually ICANN insiders. So, generally, we can call it failure of just generally the outreach activities and how the board intends to deal with that going forward.
CHAIR DRYDEN:	Thank you, Kenya. Okay. We will add an agenda item about that as well. It does tie into I think the overall operations and support to the program and how it's been run.
	So UK, please.

UNITED KINGDOM:	Yes, thank you. I was going to make a similar point. Clearly there are always lessons to be learned. And we're still expecting a subsequent round. And, clearly, this is an issue I think ICANN should go public on and say that the global outreach and involvement of stakeholders in all continents should be a clearly stated objective with regard to the second round, whenever that is, and that this deficiency of performance at this time with all eyes on the first round is very regrettable. And, you know, I think we should really make that point. And that ICANN -- ICANN really ought to, in its statements, acknowledge that and underline its commitment to address that in subsequent rounds.

My -- the second point I just wanted to raise was, with regard to digital archery, I think we can advise the board that, having looked at the applications received, our expectation is that, if they handle it in one go as one batch, a single batch -- that's kind of conditioned, there's no batch but all of them won't go -- the resourcing and ability to handle that will need careful management and the commission point is well taken.

But in our expectation is that there will be a kind of natural rollout, a flow, if you like. There will be some very straightforward applications, particularly those from brands, that will go through evaluation pretty quickly. They'll be professional in their submissions and so on. So there shouldn't be too many tricky incidents. And then now there are, obviously, the contentions and then there are other applications that may give rise to problems that need further time and so on. And then there may be the objections.

So our perspective is that there will be a sort of natural evolution and that the resourcing should just -- and match that and that it's not completely impracticable to contemplate dispensing with digital archery and dispensing with this notion of batches. And that would possibly relegate applications to consideration much further down the line, which is undesirable. Certainly, some of the cities have made that point that they fear that their proposals would be, you know, relegated to later batches.

And there are other issues about batching which crop up. You know, if there's an objection to one that was in a batch and then a similar proposal that's in another batch, how do you reconcile that? So there are all kinds of problems.

Finally, I think do we need to be clear, when we see the new gTLDs committee tomorrow, effectively, the board, where we are on early warning? A number of us have said we can contemplate considering all applications in one extended early warning period that would take us up to Toronto and maybe a little bit after Toronto to allow us some time to I was going to say resolve any glitches on our part. I don't really mean that. To discuss things face-to-face with regard to any issues that do arise in our early warning operation.

But my question is ought we to be in a position to state clearly this is our proposal on early warning when we meet them tomorrow? I don't know if you mentioned that in your opening when I wasn't here. Sorry about that.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, U.K.

So the main piece of context is the GAC letter, I think, for these exchanges. And so we have communicated that we expect to do -- process all the applications in one go. And we've also indicated we have a timeline issue because of the way we organize ourselves and we need face-to-face meetings and so on about needing to go to the March meeting in order to provide our advice regarding the first batch or the batch of applications at that time.

So the new proposal that I'm hearing is that we go beyond what the issues that we've raised about digital archery in the letter and that are proposed on this agenda from saying we have questions about the methodology, we have concerns about fairness, to saying we're not sure that you need to use the secondary time stamp. We're not sure you need to use the results of digital archery. And then can we have a discussion about what the implications of that actually are?

And that way you're talking about this timeline that the GAC has outlined and said we think we can do this timeline, not the one you're proposing within 7 months. We can do this one. And then actually talk about how you deal with batching and root zone scalability, and then actually move the discussion forward more to focus on that. And I think that is probably where we're at. Things are moving quickly, and we're trying to adapt and so is the board.

But the question is can we communicate tomorrow then, in terms of the issues that we want to raise, that -- or put it to the board that we may actually want to talk about what do we do now? We don't think we can

continue with digital archery and, you know, examining that in further detail.

I'm seeing some nodding, so I think that's probably the case. And I'll take comments on that. And then we'll continue to talk about the issues.

So I see Germany, Australia, United States. All right. So over to this corner of the table. Germany, please.

GERMANY: Yes, thank you. Good afternoon, everybody. I just wanted to discuss this issue of batching. I fully understand the position of colleagues that it might be much easier if we do not have such batching and use only one batch, as U.K. has explained.

But I wonder whether it wouldn't be necessary to have some criteria for prioritizing the applications. Because, if you have 2,000 applications -- I don't think it's possible to process them in parallel. And, therefore, yes, you need to have some kind of prioritization discussion. And this would be the same problems we tried to solve or ICANN tried to solve with the digital archery, which we have some problems with.

But my concern is that the real issue will stand even if we desist or ICANN desists from the batching system.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Germany. Australia, please.

AUSTRALIA:	Thank you, chair. And thank you to everyone who's contributed to this. It's much easier going after a few people have added to the context.

So to Hubert's question, I think you raised some really important points. And I've spoken to a number of people here, and I've been trying to think through some of this myself. And I think you raise a really good question, and this is assuming we go down the path where we ask the board. Now that ICANN itself has decided to suspend, temporarily, digital archery, we can focus on what alternatives do we have. I mean, there's been a broad -- a pretty broad series of comments from the community saying that they see problems with digital archery and batching. Some of the GAC members raise concerns on the GAC list. The letter which the GAC sent to the board was sent just after ICANN had committed to launching or initiating digital archery. So at that time the GAC was a little bit constrained. And we focused on how we can improve the processes within that context to deal with some of the fairness and equity issues and so on. So I think, now that that's been suspended, we can probably have a very useful discussion with the board asking some of the questions which you've raised. So, while we have this time, is it possible to move away from batching and digital archery and find out another way to deal with the underlying concerns?

So, as I understand it, digital archery and batching were put in place for two main reasons. One was that ICANN had administrative constraints in how many applications it could process at once.

So it might be useful to have a discussion with them -- now that we've seen the number of applications, we know over 700 of them are contested, which means they'll be dealt with in a slightly different way

anyway. 700 of the applications, not of the strings are contested. But they'll be dealt with in a slightly different processing way anyway on an alternate time frame. So there's 12 to 1300 left that will be dealt with in the same way.

So it will be useful to ask ICANN whether this changes the equation from their point of view. As the GAC, as we wrote to the board, we saw and I certainly saw that dealing with all the applications at the one time possibly will introduce some deficiencies. So, if there are a number of applications from the same applicant and they end up in different batches, it's potentially inefficient to deal with one applicant batch off batch after batch; whereas, if you're dealing with them all at one time, it would potentially be a bit more efficient. If there are similar strings in different batches -- so I understand all the dot musics will be in one batch and dot music and dot tunes, for example, might be in different batches. So it might -- to deal with those consistently and fairly, it might be useful to deal with them around the same time as well. So could be useful to raise these questions with the board and see how this changes the picture.

So, certainly, from my point of view, I would like to have that discussion with the board. Is it possible to look at an alternative to digital archery and batching, and what would that mean? If there is going to be a new bottleneck after the application process, what are the options for dealing with that?

As the UK has suggested, it seems to me that, if there are only a little over 1200 applications that are not contested, the likelihood of 1,000 of those, which is the limit the board limits itself to introducing to the root

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in that first year, I'm not sure that they would all be rushing so much. At least a number of applications are probably partly for defensive reasons and may not be rushing to get it done as soon as they can anyway. The door is open for us to actually have a good look at this with the board, so I'm very keen to.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Australia. United States?

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Thank you. And thank you to colleagues for having raised some of the same concerns that we would. We certainly concur with several of the points that have been flagged. I thought it would be useful to take a step backwards and to thank all the colleagues who have been chiming in on the list and the chair for your efforts pulling this letter together so quickly, getting it in front of the board, and I think your last push was to make sure that they understood this was really of fundamental importance to the GAC and that we needed to have an exchange with the board and new gTLD committee quite quickly. I appreciate your efforts to do that. I don't imagine it was very easy to pull off.

And, just speaking as one GAC member, I'm sure everybody has the same story to tell. Not that we like to repeat ourselves in front of the board, but I think perhaps refreshing memory and, if staff is in the room, more the better, but they can hear yet again that governments do function differently more than any other element of the multistakeholder process. And, when it comes to organizing ourselves domestically to undertake the early warning reviews and to undertake

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whatever consultative processes we needed in capital before that next step of consulting with each other on objections is a major initiative on all of our parts. This has not been a small undertaking. And perhaps that is something we might need to underscore with our board colleagues that this is not a casual consultation that we've all been preparing for in capital, and I do think they need to be reminded. Because, not to take the positions ourselves, as U.S., on digital archery, per se. I think enough questions have been raised. I think the way it's shaping up that we pose questions to the board members as to how they intend to proceed now in light of all of the most recent developments.

It's that, having established what I think is a very good position that we will undertake early warning by October, I think our letter also very helpfully pointed out that the earliest we could do consensus objections would have to be April 2013 because of the nature of the way we deliberate. And the GAC can only arrive at consensus in a face-to-face meeting.

What I think still remains outstanding -- unless I have been overtaken by events and I have missed something, I'm not sure we have nailed that down, that that has been understood by the board and the staff and accepted. Because the latest timelines I have seen still show a window of 7 months period from reveal date to the end of the objections period, which would take us to January 2013.

So I don't know. I'm in your hands. I don't know whether colleagues agree that, if the board has accepted that staff assessment, then do we ask the board whether they are prepared to fund an intercessional face-

to-face meeting for the GAC and between the GAC and the board? I don't know how else -- if we have to shift earlier than April, I wouldn't know how else we could do that. I'm not advocating that, by the way. I'm just suggesting we need to ask them that, if they are going to insist on the 7 months, which would take us only to January, then we need to enlist their assistance in making that happen. Otherwise, we cannot make it happen.

So I do think we need to be fairly clear that it has been very challenging for us to prepare in capitals with all of the ambiguity and all of the questions and, frankly, all of the changes. So it's been very hard to sort of master that. And just to reinforce that, you know, I think you usefully said that they are coming in listening mode. They wish to hear the GAC. That's good news.

I think, unless they are understand -- we are expecting some answers as well. So hopefully that is understood. Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: To your last question, yes, I believe that is understood that they will do their utmost to respond to the questions that we have for them, that we have already asked for that we will be asking tomorrow.

Can I suggest, then, that when some of you request the floor the beginning of tomorrow's session that you talk a bit about the implications for governments to prepare for a process like this. The importance of receiving information, clarification, and so on, in order for you to carry out your work and contribute to this process.

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I think, U.S., you are correct that it is worth underscoring that for the Board tomorrow. And for others that will be present as well.

So I think that's a welcome proposal.

And your question on how they need to proceed or how they intend to proceed, that can be captured as well when we refine the agenda that we're refining as we continue our discussions in this session.

So I have Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, and Brazil.

So Norway, please.

NORWAY: Thank you.

We'd like to support the summary of you as the chair; that we think it is constructive that we now move forward and away from the detailed discussion about the digital archery. That we think that it is -- that we are beyond that, in a way. But at the same time, we would like to state, as a matter of principle, that such an important issue as -- or such an important mechanism as the digital archery should have been on a public consultation and should have been consulted also with the governments before they took a decision on this.

It goes also to what you said about the working methods of the governments and all the pressures we have been under, all the letters we have been receiving, and in regards to the method they have chosen.

So to secure that if they choose another method of how to decide between applicants for the same strings and so on, if they choose any new creative methods, that they would take that's on a consultation before they decide.

Well -- Yeah, thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Norway.

Switzerland, please.

SWITZERLAND: (Scribes not receiving English translation).

(Scribes not receiving English translation).

(Scribes lost Skype call).

>>   ...both the Board and ICANN staff, it is still not clear what ICANN expects from the GAC regarding giving advice. And I think this, the latest text that we got from ICANN from June 12th made me quite confused about that. And, therefore, I think it's a very good idea to once again explain to them how governments work and what we need.

And I'm going to say this lack of clarity is very worrying at this late state, stage in this process. And I can only imagine how this must be for other participants in the process, applicants and people who need to object to applications, et cetera.

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I think it's very disturbing that we still have this level of uncertainty at this point.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Denmark.

                       Brazil, please.

BRAZIL: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, everybody.

                       I'd like to speak in Portuguese. Am I right, we have translation?

CHAIR DRYDEN: Yes.

BRAZIL: But in French we lost the sign to the translators. To the translators have Portuguese sign?

CHAIR DRYDEN: Yes.

BRAZIL: They don't have. They have?

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CHAIR DRYDEN:	So it will come through the headphones but there is a problem with the link to scribing on the screen.
BRAZIL:	Okay.

(scribes not receiving English translation).

Domains, also public interest because of public domains in the Internet.

The purchase by a large group of new domains to be later resold is something that, from the point of view of my government, we think is not of global public interest.

This is the first point.

And if the GAC treats all the applications in a single batch, there will be no way of being unfair.

Anyway, the process will be unfair, but if we divided it into batches, as would be more appropriate, we would face another problem. The problem would be at GAC we should think about the criteria that will lead us to the justifications of the creations -- of the creation of the program.

In Brazil, we are not too much convinced of them because we think we are getting into a useless problem. Anyway, we are in the midst of it, so we have to move ahead. We have to move forward, and we have to rethink about the criteria. What is public interest? What is of public interest? The ICANN Board has set an interest as well as the staff, they

have their own interest and they have their own limitations as well. And the public interest is not there.

The Board does not represent public interest. The staff does not represent public interest. But we have to think what public interest means within this New gTLD Program.

This is why I say that from the very beginning, we have to take over discussions, to discuss all over again from the very beginning of the program, because we are seeing certain problems, certain issues that at least, from the perspective of the government of Brazil, we see that we are not ready to deal with these problems.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you very much, Brazil.

So we have, I think, pretty good agreement that it's not the most useful thing to go into the details about digital archery; however, a discussion about what are alternative options would be useful. We're not going to have agreement, as the GAC, for tomorrow about what we think those alternative options may be, and I think, further, we don't have the information, I don't believe, for us to have enough maturity in our discussions that we could communicate that.

But certainly, I think we can ask the Board what are the alternatives.

We are aware of some of the concerns that having a batching process were intended to address. So that's our guidance for, I think, asking the Board about what are alternative options. If they do not use digital

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archery, if they do not use a secondary time stamp, then how to move ahead.

I also think we can usefully divide our comments into what we need to talk about tomorrow, which is a focus on the problems now: operations, the running of the program, things that haven't been delivered, the fact that you have a low rate of applications that have come through from the additional support program that was put in place and so on. At the same time, we mustn't forget that there are implications for the future and for future rounds, public interest considerations and so on. And this may be something that we raise with the Board on Tuesday or later.

But if we can focus, to the extent we're able, on Sunday to talk about the problems now so that we can communicate that we also need to make decisions very soon as a GAC on these issues. so EU Commission. I have you next.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Thank you, Madam Chair, and apologies for taking again the floor, and thanks to all the colleagues who provided their most useful views.

I just want to make sure that we understand, I understand the points that have been raised.

If I understand correctly you, chair, I think we are in agreement not to get into the details. I would caution, certainly from our perspective, our job is not to propose new batching systems. That is not our responsibility. And for a long time, we have been agreeing, I think, in the GAC that our task is not to micro manage ICANN nor to take the

responsibilities that are of the Board and of the top management of ICANN.

So on the side of the Commission, we would certainly agree, as I have already said, to signal there are problems. And, quite frankly, it is the responsibility of the Board and of the staff, as appropriate, to solve those problems.

And I would also like to signal, of course, we are all now (indiscernible) understand the reason the Commission is in a similar situation, on the same situation as most other colleagues. The New gTLD Program is taking a lot of our attention. That's understandable. But we do not believe that that is the only topic that we need to discuss with the Board.

And on the side of the Commission and of European colleagues as well, we discussed this internally prior to this meeting, we still have open issues concerning the ethics and conflicts-of-interest policy. There have been updates and developments. And there are topics that we would certainly like to discuss with the Board.

Now, whether that happens tomorrow or on Tuesday, we leave it up to the organization, to the capable hands of the chair to organize.

But just a signal, let us not forget that there are other issues that we need to discuss as well, perhaps more in the middle of term, and the New gTLD Program is not the beginning and the end of everything ICANN does.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, EU Commission.

So to that last point, I think we can deal with that on Tuesday, the issues related to conflict of interest. That seems like a good place to put that. And let's not lose sight of the point that Norway made about the importance of consultation about the methodology. And even though the GAC doesn't expect to present an alternative methodology and provide a detailed alternative if not going ahead with digital archery. I do think that is an important point for us to reemphasize.

We have communicated on that point, but we can add that emphasis.

So I have Italy and -- U.K., were you asking for the floor?

ITALY: Okay. Thank you, Chair.

First of all, a consideration about numbers. It is -- We, in the reveal day, we knew that 1930 applications were in the file, and -- but I want to say something about the competition strings.

We have 705 want requests for strings in competition, and the strings are 230.

So it is clear that only one can be -- can be delivered. And then we have to ask to ICANN how they want to proceed for this, because the question during the reveal day, it was said that ICANN will try to find an agreement among those applicants that are in competition and to see if they succeed in finding (indiscernible) agreement and not (indiscernible)

specified. Otherwise, there would be maybe an application tender or something like that.

This will, in any case, reduce the number from 1930 to 1400. And this has an implication also with the number of batches in cases the kind of batches will go ahead.

But I think that it will take time for ICANN practically to solve this problem. And it is not something that will be solved immediately, let's say.

Then there are other points that are coming out judging from the file of all the applications. One, for example, is those that are classified as community. And what this means? This means that the expectation is that there would be a control that only people being part of the specific community will be allowed to register second-level names.

So these are quite important problems.

Also, something similar is referring to the geographic names, because some of the geographic names are also classified as community. Some others, not.

And I think that looking at the list, ICANN will have to start solving some general problems that are referring to a certain class of applications.

Another point is the fact that there will be -- there will be applicants that applied for a large number of applications, and then also, perhaps the time spent by ICANN for making all the checks, all the technological and all the checks concerning the solidity of the applicant will be perhaps shortened.

So having said that, I think also the problem of multiple batches will not work in my opinion. This is something that -- But in the end, we have to know and to listen from the Board and from the staff how they want to proceed, with which time frame.

At this point, only, also, we, action the GAC, can plan our workload and try to separate the early warning periods by other kind of advice, GAC advice, that we have to make in the next month.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you very much, Italy.

I have U.K., then Netherlands, please.

UNITED KINGDOM: Yes, thank you, Chair.

Sorry for coming back in again.

Just very quickly, I agree with what the Commission says about us not creating the expectation that we find solutions for them. That's certainly not our task. We've got enough on our plates as it is. Well, I will ask, I think, whether doing away with batching is an option and what are the relative -- related aspects of that that they're taking into account.

So information from them on that is important.

The other point I'm very worried about is lack of responsiveness from the ICANN side to various interlocutors. And I'm mindful, for example, that dot London, which had our ministers' approval, of course, have written and haven't had a reply, they were very worried about batching and the risk to them of being relegated way down the track. And they were arguing that they had special status as a capital city and so on. But they've had no reply, so that's a worrying point.

Just finally, the meeting we are having tomorrow is with the Board gTLD committee, I haven't got the title right, but that's not the Board, is it? There are a number of board members who are not on the committee. So I just wanted to check that that's the case, and that, for example, the current CEO is going to be with us as a member of this committee, Mr. Beckstrom.

So I just wanted to check that. So that sets the agenda, really.

And finally, am I right in thinking this was a closed session to prepare for this? Is that right?

Was this a closed session we're having now?

Because there have been people wandering in and out, and perhaps, you know, that's a concern if there isn't clear signage that this meeting is closed. But unless I'm wrong.

CHAIR DRYDEN: The status of the meeting is that it's open. We concluded the closed meeting, and with the moving around the schedule, there may not have been clarity about that. But we're operating on the basis that this is

open. And we do, at the same time, have a practice at times when we're doing preparatory meetings, sessions, to close them. Be that as it may, this session has been an open session, in practice.

To your point about the gTLD committee, it bears, I think, restating what is the nature of this committee. So you might recall that the Board introduced a more strict approach to defining when a Board director is considered to be in a potential position of conflict of interest. And in applying that, it meant that the chair and vice chair of the Board were then ruled out of participating in discussions related to gTLDs.

So this provides a challenge when you're trying to convene a board meeting to make decisions and so on about gTLDs.

So the gTLD committee was formed and has been given the full powers of the Board to decision make on gTLDs. So Cherine Chalaby is the chair of the gTLD committee. So that means that we, in a sense, have two channels for dealing with the Board. One is strictly on gTLDs, which is the committee chaired by Cherine, and then the Board-level discussions, which are chaired, of course, by Steve as chair of the Board.

So tomorrow our meeting will be in a primary sense with the gTLD committee, but I believe that the full Board will be in attendance, because it's an open meeting. Our correspondence, our letter of advice, that's all public information. We would be privy to that whether or not you are deemed to have a potential conflict of interest. So I expect the full Board to be here tomorrow; however, I expect to be co-chairing with Cherine. Steve, as appropriate, so that he has a sense of the state of the relations (dropped audio) Board as a whole.

Okay. So I hope that provides some clarity.

Netherlands, please.

NETHERLANDS: Thank you, Heather, just coming back to my view, I see consensus building now. A consensus approach we have in the GAC. And I wonder if people think otherwise because I'm very interested in their opinions. But I think, based on Peter's proposition or analysis in the GAC list or we had quite good discussion, we had good views, I think, in the end, I would wonder if we could work a little effective and maybe also come to a kind of concept advice from our side that we could say that okay, early warning, we would like to have this in one batch, with ample time. I've not strong, but I've not heard other signals. Toronto or quickly after it. And also the final GAC advice in April. And I think to my extent raise kind of concern that we really see the disadvantages of the digital archery and batching. And that we urge the -- we advise the board to come up with an alternative solution.

Given also the fact that they can now study the GAC 1930 applications. They can see categories. They can make good analysis. And, to my opinion, at least to the opinion of many other stakeholders, a one batch proposal is feasible, according -- but then there are a couple of important ones (audio cutting out) technical skill or through categories is -- I think is not wishable. It's not the sense that you also prioritize certain categories.

I think it's important in maybe looking at prioritization of certain categories, I think it's very tricky. Applicants have started this game.

They have expectations. I -- at least from Dutch, I cannot have -- let's say I cannot have an opinion or point of view and say, okay, this category should be first and then the other one.

We have Dutch applicants from all kinds of categories of applications. Meaning that prioritization is not a good thing. And all the other effects of batching, which I think Peter and others mentioned, these are not only not predictable but also we can expect possible problems, which we haven't anticipated in the fourth batch and which we didn't see in the first batch.

So very complex. And I would say the GAC is bulling a consensus into its advising to have one batch and one set or another.

Coming back to the one batch, I think I saw where Romalau (phonetic) put this on the table much we have the point of insertion of the -- well, the insertion of the -- let's say the root zone changes into the root zone. There I think we have to be very clear that, even if the board chooses for another system of having the process of applications, we still need to make very clear that we want an interim impact analysis, the effects of -- the effects of the insertion of, for example, between 500 to a thousand in the root. And, in that moment, there should be evaluation before you continue with insertions of the root.

And just that would be all. Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Netherlands. Okay. So here's how I propose that we proceed. I will take the draft agenda that's projected here, refine it a bit, based on the comments that have been made in this session. A few

of you have asked -- and I believe I've heard those and noted those, so we can review those as well. And that we make a proposal to the board and with the GAC copied as well ahead of tomorrow's meeting.

It may be the case that we provide advice at this meeting, if we're able, if we have the information that we need as part of the communique. But for tomorrow we do seem to have this emerging concern or belief that it may not be optimal to apply digital archery or to make use of the secondary time stamp in the way currently envisioned by ICANN. And so what I can do in introductory remarks is convey that there is this general sense in the GAC or this interest in exploring other alternatives and asking the board to please give us a sense of what they may be considering. And then we can talk a bit about some of the underlying concerns that we have and have always had that we would like to have addressed as part of whatever the methodology is for doing that. So, you know, that's one way that we can help give that context to the board about how the committee's discussions are moving along.

So we're meeting with the GNSO in about 5 minutes. So -- ah, in 10 minutes, apparently. So they're running a bit late. To that gets you a bit more of a break. But still, it's a short break. So 10 minutes, please. Thank you, everyone.

(Break)