

Dave Archbold:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this workshop on ICANN's geographic regions. My name is Dave Archbold and I am Chairman of the Working Group. I'd like to start by running through a very brief history of where we were and how we got to here.

About four to five years ago now, ccNSO completed a report expressing concerns about ICANN's geographic regions to the ICANN Board. The Board set up a cross-constituency Working Group, and our initial report covered how geographic regions are used within ICANN. The interim report looked at what we are trying to achieve when we are using geographic regions and asked the question, "Are we actually achieving those goals?" And in this final report, we are looking at recommendations for improvements. I'll run briefly through the findings of the report.

We've been able to find no single independent authoritative list of countries and regions that ICANN can simply adopt. The present regional structure has a number of problems; and in fact, has never properly been authorized. The original intent was that the structure should change to reflect the changing makeup of the Internet community. In practice it hasn't, but does that really matter now?

Geographic regions have worked reasonably well for their original purpose, and that's providing geographic diversity of the ICANN Board itself but perhaps not quite so well for use by the SOs and the ACs. We also noted, and it's quite important, that changing the current number of regions from five will actually cause some

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significant financial and organizational issues for ICANN. So we've got some provisional recommendations.

First of all, we believe still need a formal top-down regional structure for use with the ICANN Board membership; and a good starting place for that we believe is the present structure of the regional Internet registries. In other words, we follow ICANN's infrastructure. Now a number of countries would be in a quorate to follow that infrastructure. A number of countries would have to move from one region to another, and we believe they should have the opportunity to opt to remain in their own region if they wish.

And then we have got to consider giving a more general right to self-select with agreement of the government of the individual sovereign state. That's all to do with the Board. Moving to the SOs and ACs, we recommend that they may use this same top-down structure if they wish, but they could also look at adopting alternative methodology for ensuring geographical diversity and cultural diversity and subject to the Board oversight that should be approved.

Let's look briefly at what changes would happen if the RIR structure were adopted. As you can see, there'll be no change to the African Region whatsoever. The Asia Pacific and the Australia Region would reduce from 73 down to 58 members. We can look at the changes there, if anybody wants to go into the detail. Europe would remain at the same 78 total countries, but the makeup would change; there would be 24 gains and 24 losses. Latin America and

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Caribbean, a slight drop. North America; quite a significant increase in the number of jurisdictions within the group.

I have said that ICANN would have to manage, if you like, its own geographic structure, and perhaps the best starting place for that is to adopt the RIR structure. The reasons for that include the number of regions would remain at five, and that would avoid the significant restructuring and administrative costs that I mentioned earlier. Aligning the regions generally with the technical infrastructure of the numbering resource allocation system seems logical and defensible.

As I mentioned, a total of 62 countries and territories would likely move to new regions; but of these, many are territories simply being assigned to the proper geographic region as opposed to being allocated to the region of their mother country. Another group moves several Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries out of the AP and into Europe. This would reduce the geographic spread of the AP and many of the countries consider themselves more oriented toward Europe than Asia anyway.

Now there I would look at, for example, Turkey and perhaps Azerbaijan and some of the other Central European ones. Lastly, much of the English and French-speaking Caribbean would move into the North American region from LAC. Most have closer language, cultural, and travel links with North America than they do with Latin America.

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This move would increase the number of countries in a previously numerically very small region, and actually increase the options for representation and participation within the region. As has been requested, quite strongly, there would be no change to the African region. And this should also encourage participation as joint meetings of the RIR and ICANN regions should be facilitated.

It wouldn't be without disadvantages, of course. No Arab region would be created, and an Arab region has been one of the most strongly advocated that we've had. It will also split the Caribbean between two regions, partly on geography and partly on language. And of course, some countries might downright not want to change regions. And some mother countries might not want their territories to be in a different region than themselves. That depends on many things, including the political relationship between the mother countries and the territories. But having said all that, we believe that giving countries the one-off option to say, "No, I don't want to change regions. I'll stay in my old one" helps solve some of these problems.

Another thing that we are recommending is the introduction of some bottom-up special interest groups. No don't get hung up on the name 'special interest groups.' It's a name I use; some people don't like it. It's groups of some kind, which could be temporary or long-term, but groups of countries with shared interests. For example, Small Island States which could incorporate both Caribbean Islands and Pacific Islands.

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Arab nations might find a special interest group, whilst perhaps not as good as their own region it's an acceptable compromise. And the Caribbean countries, if they wish to maintain a Caribbean focus or a split between LAC and North America there's no reason why they couldn't have their own special interest group. We've got to make it clear that we don't see the special interest groups as being part of the ICANN decision-making structure. This is an alternative structure, if you like; but obviously the special interest group can lobby for the support of the official representatives.

I think before it could have official ICANN recognition; you would probably have to set a minimum number of members before that happened. Otherwise, you could have as many special interest groups as there are countries in ICANN. And the amount of actual support from ICANN would clearly be subject to the finances available, but we would think it is more likely to be in the area of helping with communication between members.

So we're looking at things like mailing lists, websites, teleconference services or even just the ability to have a meeting in a room at the three times a year ICANN conference. That's all I want to present on the screen, but I'd be happy to discuss any of those issues or answer any questions as we go along?

Pablo Hinojosa:

Thank you David and Rob. I have followed somehow on the margin the development so far this group, mostly sign-up server, and I am quite impressed about the level of work put into it in

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terms of the whole research process for gathering all material and history on the subject. It is a very difficult subject, I guess, and it is no matter what you would not be able to please all at the same time.

I have read the material that has been put together in preparation for this meeting and it is very well argued and solidly put in many terms. The proposed solution obviously has something to do or is related with the type of organization where I'm affiliated to and since the beginning we said that we don't have any vested interest in terms of the outcomes of the group or in the solution but mostly to support with our experience and information. The proposed solution is indeed a solution option, alternative system, that is subject for a decision, so it is with no judgment that we say this is good or this is bad. I'm glad that it is useful from the side of the RIRs.

Now, the decision of a system has been proved useful; however, if the system works or not is another problem. So I think it needs to be very clear that it is a selection system rather than a system per se. So that will be mostly the comments that I would like to make at this stage. Procedural question: Can you update for the record what is the status and when this will go into public comment, and what will be the next steps or follow-up?

Dave Archbold:

Would you like to do that, Rob? You've been very good at it so far.

Rob Hoggarth:

Thank you, I'm responding to Pablo Hinojosa from the RIR community. Yeah, the next steps, Pablo, are essentially that the Working Group is developing, and as a member of the Working Group you are aware of a draft final report that's being generated. The purpose of that document has been to allow Working Group members to socialize the concept at the meeting here in Singapore.

The plan of the Working Group that was developed in San Francisco is to take that draft final report and get staff to produce a public comment forum for community reaction and feedback on the draft final report. That's likely to be a 45-60 day public comment period where the draft document will be produced in all six UN languages for potential global reaction and reach to it in individual UN languages. At that point, the Working Group will look at the feedback on the draft final report that's submitted; look at the comments, determine on their own whether there need to be further adjustments.

After that's concluded, they'll produce a final, final report. Now by the terms of the charter of this Working Group that the Board has commissioned, that final report will be transmitted by the Chair to all the SOs and ACs. The concept of this Working Group approach is that each supporting organization and advisory committee then has an opportunity "adopt" the report and say it looks great or to otherwise express concerns and potential reactions.

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It's not clear to me exactly, then, what the Working Group would do if there are serious objections, but I think then there's an evaluation that takes place as to what the feedback is. Ultimately, the final report goes to the Board with those positive reactions or negative reactions from the community and then the Board will react and decide whether to accept the recommendations or not. So as you can see, while I didn't give you specific dates and times, that's likely to take another five to six months; at least in terms of the process because it's going to be important for the SO and AC communities to have the time to be able to deliberate and discuss.

Hopefully all of you as Working Group members have been keeping people up to date so it's not going to be a surprise but as we've witnessed in terms of the arc of participation in some of these workshops, there are some communities that are very focused and interested; there are others who still aren't quite aware of what's happening so we'll want to give people an opportunity to react. I hope that was a comprehensive answer to your question.

Dave Archbold:

If I could add something on top of that. It may sound a somewhat convoluted procedure to go to, all the SOs and ACs, before the report goes to the Board; but if we don't do that I'm sure the Board is just going to turn around and send it to all the SOs and ACs before they take any recommendation on it. So we're really trying to shorten the process slightly by ensuring that that's all been done so the Board actually gets both our report plus the comments from all the SOs and ACs at the same time.

Rob Hoggarth: Mr. Chair, may I ask a question of Mr. Hinojosa?

Dave Archbold: Please do.

Rob Hoggarth: A couple of people here in Singapore have mentioned without any great detail to me – it's interesting that you are potentially, as a Working Group, looking at the RIR structure as a framework or a guide for a future ICANN structure; but even within the RIR community we have differences of opinion or on occasion, I don't know if the term is correct – disputes. Can you give us a sense as to what the RIR has been with their own structure and how solid and capable that's been?

Pablo Hinojosa: Thank you. Sorry I didn't identify myself before; Pablo Hinojosa. I work for APNIC, one of the RIRs, and actually this comes to a follow-up question that I also had in mind. Of course, the way that the framework for the definition of regions and how it evolved was not attending representation aspects in the ICANN structure. It also evolved through process of creation of the RIRs and how its members were served in particular geographic regions. Also, you may be aware about the policies for creating RIRs as well.

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I would suggest to look, for example, at the ICP-2 framework in IANA. That establishes the process of creation of new RIRs. So I think it is important to consider these aspects because if this framework evolves or changes within the RIR community, we'll have, or not, instructor so how fixed you would like this framework to be in time, or how attached to the RIR evolution of this framework this would be.

So my question to the group is, has this been fully considered? What will happen if a new RIR is created? What will happen if the system somehow changes? Will ICANN be attached to it or you will have fixed time approach in terms of saying how the RIR system is today and then you work from there. So those are the questions I wanted to ask the group to consider.

I think while the historic background documentation is very well presented in the document, we still need to explore some of the potential effects or impact of choosing a framework that was not designed particularly to resolve any sort of representational aspects at the ICANN framework. Actually, it is very much of an arbitrary kind of decision. So would you attach to the system and how it evolves or at a fixed time?

Dave Archbold.

I'm very grateful for your comment, Pablo, and they actually bear out and put in a slightly different perspective some of the feedback that we got back from ALAC yesterday; and I think it's the biggest

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thing I'm going to take away from here how we present that relationship with the RIR structure.

I think what we have got to explain is that really what we're saying is there is no authoritative external resource out there that ICANN can just adopt. We'll go into the detail for that. So, they're going to have to bite the bullet and create their own list. They've got to start somewhere, and we're recommending that the better place to start is with the RIR's current structure, then with the supposedly based upon UN statistics structure because at least the RIR structure doesn't automatically group territories and put them mother country's region.

It actually keeps them in the right geographical place, which certainly, as a dependent territory's representative, I find it is a much better default position to start from. Similarly, I think the makeup of the split in the Caribbean is not a bad thing, because I think increasing the number of countries within North America is probably a good idea. It does answer some of the concerns that have been expressed by the Western nations; countries that are looking more towards Europe; but I think that we've got to get it over that this is just a starting place, so on Day One we're looking at the RIR structure.

It's a snapshot, so I would say no; we are not going to be following subsequent changes that the RIR may do. It's a snapshot, and then we do things like allowing one-off options to remain in the old region; that's going to change some detail. We've got in there that we think that the Board should look at allowing future self-

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selections, and I think we've got to go into a little bit more detail on that. So, I think that answers your questions. It's a one-off snapshot. It's not tied to the structure.

It's to help ICANN create its own allocation, which it will then after maintain and keep up to date in future. Now, we haven't talked about all that detail in the group, I'm telling you, but that's what I've got out of discussions that we've had yesterday and today.

Olga Cavalli: My name is Olga Cavalli, GNSO Council. My question is for Pablo. Maybe I missed something Pablo; how probable is that there will be new RIR regions? It's something that may happen or – how flexible is IANA on the RIR regions about that?

Pablo Hinojosa: I'm sorry, I don't know the answer to that question, and I would not risk to share probability. It would be mere speculation.

Dave Archbold: Have we got any other questions, comments?

Olga Cavalli: This is Olga Cavalli, GNSO. One procedural question; I would like to share the slides with the council, would you send them to me? And about the report, when would be the best time to send the report as a latest version is before the public comment, when it's

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for public comments? Are we changing this new version with some – that is question?

Dave Archbold:

The slides, I think, are already available on the website. You could look them up. They're on this meeting, so in fact you could get them from there rather than me having to send them again. The report, I think I'm going to have a go at updating it along the lines that we have talked about this morning, probably before I even leave Singapore.

We then put that out to the full Working Group for comment, giving you about 14 days, I would hope, to come back with any comment; at the end of which we can send for translation for the public consultation and at that time very happy for you to take that version and share it around. Yes, Pablo?

Pablo Hinojosa:

I think the affiliation to the Working Group has been not very stable, at least on our participation as RIRs, but if I may request, or if this is a possibility, precisely because of the course of the discussions to create the figure of observers because I think that is how I perceive our participation has been. This is also, I think, good in terms of if the Working Group proceeds with this solution in order not to perceive that this is something actually coming from the RIRs, so if we could not be authors but observers to the process, that would be appreciated.

Rob Hoggarth: We can certainly reflect that in the draft document.

Dave Archbold: Does anybody else wish to speak? That being the case, I think we declare the meeting closed. Thank you very much, everybody.

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