
MARRAKECH – GAC Wednesday Morning Sessions
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CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Please take your seats. We have not finished all our work yet. We have finished some but not all.

Thank you, everybody. Actually, we have reversed the order of two slots. We've anticipated the coffee break, but of course there's an important item that was scheduled for before the coffee break that we should spend a little bit of time discussing and thinking about the near future, which is of course the independent GAC secretariat.

As you know, we have a hybrid secretariat. We have support from ICANN staff that is, of course, very well appreciated and absolutely useful you and necessary, and in addition to that, we have support from an independent secretariat, which is services delivered that we get by ACIG from Australia. And we've -- this has a rather long story. I will not go into the history, but I think we all agree that this hybrid form of secretariat is what the GAC needs and what we will need also in the future. And we've had, in Buenos Aires, if I'm not mistaken and then in Dublin, we've had some initial assessment after two years, more or less two

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years, that we're now having the support of ACIG as independent part of the hybrid secretariat; done a first quick assessment and exchange and I think everybody agrees that that work ACIG is doing is extremely valuable for all of us. The briefing papers, the services that they provide to us here in writing and drafting communique, in writing text, preparing text, making proposals that we can then pick up and discuss, and so on and so forth. There's a long, long list of things they do for us that I think nobody would want to miss in the future.

But of course you know, or I hope you know, that the secretariat is not for free. They all need to make a living on the work that they do for us. And we have had the big chance that we've had three donors -- Norway, Brazil, and The Netherlands -- who have committed five years ago to support -- to fund an independent secretariat. They've been spending a significant amount of money, each of them, to provide us with the opportunity that we benefit from such a secretariat. And I think it's only fair that we all are aware of the fact that since we're all benefiting from the secretariat, we should all, in some way or another, also contribute to the funding of the secretariat, every delegation with the possibilities that it has. We know that it is not equally easy for everybody to free some resources for supporting something like this, but as we have a shared interest, I think we should also share the burden of paying for this secretariat. And I

think this is -- we cannot count on three countries to fund the secretariat alone forever. I think that is -- neither can they do it and legitimize it internally in their own national discussions, but it is something that actually wouldn't be normal if it would continue like this forever.

Fortunately, we are having already now some -- we've heard some announcement and some confirmation that other members of the GAC have joined or will join the -- to carry that burden. This is Peru, who is contributing to the funding; it is the European Commission, who announced on Monday that they will contribute to the funding; it's my government, Switzerland, who announced that they will be contributing to the funding. I know that others are discussing this. So I think if you want to secure the sustainability of this, we have to distribute the burden on as many shoulders as we can. And maybe -- I would like to give the floor to the donors, that they can explain to us -- let's say the traditional donors, the funding -- the founding donors of this, they can explain us where they are, what their situation looks like. And then we need to get to a clear understanding about what is needed for having a continued support of -- through -- by ACIG and how to ensure a sustainable funding so that there are no gaps in providing this.

Also taking into account that the workload and the demands on ACIG to deliver services, also supporting working groups and

other things, is increasing. And in the end, it's very simple. The money that we have, we can spend it, give it to ACIG. The more money we have, the more services we will get. The less money we have, the less services we get. It's fairly simple -- a fairly simple equation that these things need to be in sync; otherwise, it wouldn't work.

So maybe -- Norway. Thank you, Ornulf.

NORWAY:

Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to start to say some words from the donor side and, please, The Netherlands and Brazil, please fill in to what I'm going to say.

As you said, I think it is not -- it's not a doubt that the GAC secretariat are fulfilling the role and the intention with regard to the decision that the GAC took five years ago to have an independent hybrid secretariat. So in our evaluation, we are getting what we wanted and what the GAC needs.

As we all discussed and heard, there are coming more and more activities, PDPs, issues to be discussed. And our leadership, the chair and the vice chairs, need support to prepare for meetings, during the meetings, in between meetings, intersessional work. So there's no doubt that we really have the need for the secretariat. And we, from the Norwegian side, are very pleased

with what we have seen and what we get for that money we are putting into the secretariat.

Saying that, and also as our chair said, that five years ago the GAC took a decision to have such a secretariat. The Norwegian commitment was for five years to fund this secretariat together with Brazil and The Netherlands. And we are not able to continue the current funding level for the secretariat beyond those five years.

So, therefore, we are here discussing it, and basically to be straightforward, we need other countries or group of countries to come forward and be a part of the financing of the secretariat to be able to sustain it and unless we will not be able to uphold the secretariat.

So we are very grateful that the European Commission, Peru, and Switzerland have announced that they are committing funds for the continuation of the secretariat, and we also would encourage other administrations and group of countries to get together and to investigate the possibilities for being able to fund this secretariat.

I think, also, the services that we get from the secretariat shows that, and with the preparation, the document papers, et cetera, it's enabling us as administrations or representatives from countries to participate in all the discussions, on all the issues.

It is overwhelming the number of activities that are taking place in ICANN. So there is really, really a need for this and to enable us to participate in a positive and active way into all these processes.

So I think I'll just stop here, and if other existing donor countries have something to add. So, please, thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Norway.

Brazil.

BRAZIL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And most of the things, the points that were raised by Norway, we could certainly fully concur.

We are encouraged by the announcements made in this meeting by the European Commission, Switzerland, and Peru. We think it's very important to expand the base of donor in order to ensure sustainability for the funding of the secretariat.

I will not repeat the arguments, but I'd like also to emphasize the importance we attach to the work that has been done by the secretariat. It has really provided us an upgrade in terms of the capacity to participate in ICANN's discussion.

We think the money that has been invested in this is very well invested money.

I'd like to, in the particular context of Brazil, to indicate that the contribution coming from Brazil is not -- is coming from actually the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee in which the government is part of together with the other stakeholders. So the government as part of this multistakeholder body has been blessed by the possibility to use the resources from the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee to support the secretariat.

But this, as in the case of Norway, has put on us a very significant burden which certainly could not be sustained in the next few years. Therefore, this is something that will require some further discussion within the committee. But one thing that we can assure, that probably or certainly we'll not be able to sustain the same level of contribution. So in that regard, the announcement of the expansion of the donor base is very much welcome in our case.

And again, I'd like to thank the Brazilian Steering Committee for this and acknowledge the participation in this meeting of the executive secretary of the committee, most of you know Hartmut Glaser, and many other members of the councillors of the committee which honor us with their presence in our meeting and that follow us very closely. And this is yet another

demonstration of the kind of role and the model we follow domestically and that we are very happy to support in the context of ICANN.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much, Brazil.

The Netherlands. Thank you.

NETHERLANDS: Yes, thank you, Chair. And thank you also, my colleague donors. I think they formulated very well what is at stake in this moment.

I just want to only say two things as additional. I think first of all, would I echo that we will have a financial gap in the situation in which also my government will not be able to support next year on the same level, meaning that our commitment for five years will terminate this year.

So the gap, including the new contributions, is still there for next year.

Secondly, I want to echo the good work which has been done by the team from Michelle, Tom, Tracey. But I also would like to add that this is, as the Chair said, it's a real hybrid model. It's a hybrid model which all GAC members in the beginning agreed

to, and which can only work in the way that there is an equally professional team on ICANN side -- Olof, Julia, Karine, maybe some others, even -- that balance the workload upon us as a GAC membership. And not only their work interfacing with ICANN, doing all the many work that is needed within ICANN to facilitate us, and besides that, we have all the facilities we can enjoy from ICANN, like translation, the facilities, the transcripts, et cetera.

So I think this formula works very well for us. It's according to our wishes some years ago as we agreed.

So I would urge that we could have the same level of support on the work which is done by the ACIG secretariat is the same level as we have now.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Thomas. I think it's actually now more than appropriate to give big applause to the three donors because we normally don't think about it but they have heavily invested in making this happening and in providing sustainability for five years. I think thank you for this. This was fundamentally important.

[Applause]

With this, as you say, the situation is the following, that funding is secured until the end of this year from the current donors. New donors have stepped in. The amounts that the three main donors have been contributing were very high, were higher than what we have with the new additional donors. So we really need to share this burden with more, with others. And it is also -- the more new donors we have, the easier it is for the current donors to actually say -- how they get on national level, because I know how these things work because I am asking for money in my government as well, they say why do we have to pay? We paid last year. Why do we have to pay next year as well? What about the others?

And if you cannot prove others are joining in, then they may think, well, the money goes to a friend of yours or whatever. If you can say we started it, others have joined, that is also a signal that it's not just you but it's actually everybody who appreciates the institution or the service that you support, and it makes it easier for you to actually also continue to receive some money or to get the okay from those who deal with the funds. So this is a very, very clear urge on everybody, on all of us. No matter what the amount is that you can free, no matter what the channel is that the money will go through. Some have arrangements that they cannot pay directly to ICANN. Others have the -- So this is why we had to find a mechanism. Others

have -- other, depends on your legal bases. For instance, we also have a challenge that we have a legal basis that doesn't allow us to just pay financial contributions because that would be a subsidy and we don't have a legal basis so we have to find another way and so on and so forth. So there are administrative challenges, but if the political will is there, you always find a solution, whatever the channel is, that actually the contribution is ending up in the end at ACIG so that they can do their work. We will find a way for that. This is clear.

So there is no burden -- if the political will is there, there's no burden actually that this can be done. So no matter what the amount is, we need more names in terms of members that say, yes, I am happy to support. There's no threshold on the amount. And also what the duration is concerned. Some may say we are this year in a situation to give something. We give it for one year. We don't know what happens next year. Others may make a contribution for a particular amount over three years, over five years, whatever. Anything that we can get will end up in services that we -- that are provided to us. So again, this equation is fairly simple.

So, please, this is an urge to everybody. Think about it. Think about what you can contribute to your -- to the secretariat. It may also be, like, for instance, in the case of Brazil that it's not actually the government who is actually contributing, there

other cases, but there's somebody that works with the government that can share the burden on a national level, that has a shared interest that the GAC is working in this multistakeholder environment. So also on national level. There may be several stakeholders that contribute. There may be groups of countries that have a structure they can you guess, an international or regional entity that can help. Whatever the channel is. If there is a political will, if you think you want to continue to benefit from our secretariat on an adequate level, then please think about this, talk to each other, and help us find a way to get this on a next level of sustainability. Of the.

Thank you very much.

European Commission and then Norway.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Thank you, Chair.

Just to thank you, current and other future donors, and to say that we are happy to be able to financially contribute to the GAC secretariat.

In the past, when the GAC was much smaller, the European Commission itself acted as the GAC secretariat for a few years, so our commitment was there and clear since many years. But now, as has been mentioned already, as the GAC has more and

more members and as the issues which we want the GAC to address are also increasing and becoming more complex, the need to have an independent secretariat is pretty clear.

We believe that an independent secretariat able to facilitate the work -- for instance, by providing objective and neutral briefings explaining the issues at stake and the options available to the GAC -- substantially improve the effectiveness and the impact of GAC.

So we hope others will see the importance and the value of this and will also contribute in sharing the burden in order to have such a good secretariat as has been said.

So just to echo what the chair was saying. Even small amounts, if they come from a variety of countries, will be critical in ensuring we keep our well-functioning and independent secretariat.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I have the U.K., Netherlands and Argentina.

UNITED KINGDOM:

Yes. Thank you, Chair, and thank you and the donors for setting out the problem and the call for sharing the load, as you say, so clearly.

So the U.K. is in one of the group of GAC members who are discussing that you referred to, Chair, and actually the discussion started at the highest level with my minister on Monday, and he certainly indicated political will to help out.

Now I've got the challenge of actually delivering the dosh, you know.

So I just want -- I've just sketched out what I need. And I say this because I'm sure many ministries are in the same boat. We're subject to austerity cuts. We're cutting. We're cut back in every year on how much we can spend. So I've got to put a case, you know, to my colleagues in the department and in the treasury on -- you know, for an allocation of some money to provide to the funding -- to the fund for the secretariat.

So I need a set of documents, you know, to be able to do this. And maybe many colleagues are in the same position.

So I just sketched out what I need.

I think, first of all, I need a review of how the hybrid model has performed, so if there's a document that sets out, with the help

of the donors, the existing donors, how the hybrid model has performed.

Secondly, a review of how ACIG has performed in delivering the secretariat services. We all know they've done a fantastic job, of course, but I need a document that sets this out.

And then thirdly, I would need a kind of five-year look-ahead, you know. That -- we talked about this in terms of investment and support for the GAC and its place here in the ICANN community. So some look-ahead as to the secretariat's role in the next five years.

I need a specification of exactly what the secretariat does, so a list of functions and so on, with some indication of the budget they require for each key function. I don't know if this is maybe already readily available. And then who oversees the expenses. You know, who -- what is the mechanism for ensuring the money is spent as effectively and efficiently as possible.

And then I need really a sort of -- what is it? It's kind of a sense -- you know, what we get for our money, you know. This is what, you know, the people in the treasury say. "Why are we spending this money? What does the U.K. get out of it?"

So I mean I can describe, you know, that this is -- we can't do our work here without the support of the secretariat, and the

leadership can't do their work, and so on, as has been described. So I just need some sort of sense, and a set of key points, "This is the benefit flowing to the individual GAC members."

So it's a -- you know, the processes are incredibly tough to get approval for the money. That kind of roster of documents is what I need.

So I -- maybe you're -- you know, you and ACIG and the donors are already sort of putting together a package. I would need that to take this forward and deliver on the political will that my minister said, "Yeah, sure, how much do you need?" Thanks.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you. I see the U.K. is a fairly bureaucratic organization. But of course we do understand and we are already -- I mean, we've had this first report a few meetings ago where we assessed what ACIG is doing and then we had an expression of appreciation that is on the record from the GAC and we are currently compiling, also, with regard to procedures, like how would that actually work with -- how is this organized and, as you say, who is overseeing this and so on and so forth. There's a contract, of course, between -- for the time being between ACIG and ICANN because the GAC has no legal entity. That contract will have to be renewed or replaced by another contract of a different sort. This is also something that we'll have to deal

with. We'll start actually -- we actually have already started to think about the next version of this. So there are a number of elements, of course, that you all need to know, and of course this has, I think, a high priority, so we are working on this.

Yes, U.K., please.

UNITED KINGDOM: Yes. Thanks very much. And I missed off one point. How do we actually pay? What are the options, the mechanics of actually paying? I need that, too. Thanks.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: You give the money to me and I will put 50% forward to ACIG and the rest will be invested for good things for my family and so on and so forth, of course.

[Laughter]

UNITED KINGDOM: You're after another 1958 Citroen, aren't you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: No. I will import a '48 Plymouth from Cuba because they are fairly great.

[Laughter]

No. The -- basically I can, in two words, explain the situation to you. As the contract was established at the time with ICANN, so it is ICANN who pays the services of ACIG because they are the two parties to the contract, but ICANN pays it only -- and ICANN was not very keen on getting involved but because there was no other legal entity, there was ICANN who was the other party to the contract. ICANN pays only if they get the money from us. "Us" is the donors. But there were some reasons why it was difficult to send that money directly from the donors to ICANN, and also from practical reasons, the donors, it's easier for them to pay the money at once, but we have like a regular invoicing from ACIG that is -- their invoices are approved by myself, and once they are approved by myself, ICANN pays the money. But that's not the sum for a whole year; that's based on the invoices that basically come after every meeting. So that means we created -- we needed to have a bank account where you can actually -- the donors can put the money in and then you can pay the amount of the invoice to ICANN which then pays it to ACIG. I hope that's not too complicated to understand. And so for -- in order to have a bank account, the simplest solution was to create the Swiss association, an association under Swiss law, because you need to have three people that can create this association. You don't have to go for a huge administrative burden. The bank verifies that you are not doing money

laundering, and if that's okay, you get a bank account. And it's also tax-exempt.

So this is the situation, but as I said, this was created as a tool to allow the donors at that time to actually make the transfers. If -- depending on your legal bases and on your provisions, if you need something else, that will be created and this is -- it's all transparent. There's no secrets on these things. We just need to make sure that those who are willing to pay can actually pay, through whatever way that needs to be transparent and clear, and if somebody has questions or also some elements that we can put on the Web site, it will be contained as information that we are about to prepare that we can hand you over. So there will be parts that will describe the activities of the secretariat and how this works and what the benefits are and there will be another document that will give some information on how, on a practical level, the transfer of money is done and the oversight over the services is done, so that these two parts, they are equally important, of course.

I hope that was clear enough but not too long.

I have the Netherlands.

NETHERLANDS: Yes. Thank you, Thomas. Thank you, Chair. And thank you, U.K. I think it's very worthy, this thing where -- let's say the various things you need. And as our chair indicated, we are working on this document.

And also, just to add to what Thomas said, it will be contained in two parts. One is -- would -- we would say the political part, which really you need for -- to present to management, et cetera. The second document will be administrative. How does the structure work, what is the financial governance, who do we contact, et cetera.

So I think U.K.'s points fit very well in one of both documents. Thank you very much.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I have Argentina and Peru.

ARGENTINA: Thank you, Chair. First of all, I would like to first thank you, the donor countries and the new donor countries, for their contribution to the secretariat. Also thank ACIG and ICANN staff for the great job that they do. The briefings and all the help that they give us for GAC and for working groups is extremely useful and very good.

As you may have heard in the news, we have a new administration in Argentina so I -- I will commit myself to ask the -- for the help from the country, but I think that the documents that United Kingdom explained for me would be very, very useful, of course, in Spanish. I can translate if it's not too long but a translation into Spanish would be much useful. Because they will ask why and how and all that. So I won't repeat what Mark said that he described in very, very detail.

Another question.

Does it have to be a contribution from an institution related to the government? Could it be private? It is possible or not? It is a possibility that it could be only related with the government, the government, or other institutions or other sources of funding?

And you said that the amount could be any. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

As long as things are transparent and clear, anything that is workable is, of course, appreciated, so it's up to you as a GAC member to organize yourself on a national level or on a supernational level on how -- what your partners are, in sharing this burden.

So there's -- of course this is in our hands. We can -- it's up to us. Nobody tells us how we should organize this. I hope that answers the question. Peru?

PERU:

Thank you, Chair. I would speak in Spanish.

When we addressed this issue in our Dublin meeting, I said that I was going to find out in my country how we could share in this effort, and I did so following the example of our Brazilian neighbors, and we have joined the list of donors based on our possibilities and also through a company that registers .PE. That domain.

And I believe that this is a model that you can follow, and other countries with the same economic development levels as Peru can also follow these steps and they should also do that. We are receiving support for -- from the secretariat that goes beyond secretarial functions, and only a few people here can devote 100% of their time to GAC work in their capitals.

In my case, I also have to attend to many other responsibilities and the work being done by the secretariat for me is essential because it really helps me to distinguish, to differentiate, what matters are urgent from those that I can -- that I can look at later. So I believe that the secretariat team is doing an excellent

job and this is an effort that everybody has to join, and if Peru can do that, other countries can also do so.

Of course considering their own means, their own possibilities.

So now I believe that it is time for all of us to get involved, the big ones and the small ones, based on our possibilities. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you for your remarks, Peru.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank the donor countries and the new ones as well, and I, in particular, want to thank the secretariat for the excellent work they have been doing. It's more than excellent.

Yes, I think it will be extremely useful to have all this information in written form. I don't ask for a Hungarian translation, so English will do.

It is very attractive to them that there is a Swiss bank account. I will have some doubts that officials would like to transfer money to a Swiss bank account, but still it's doable. I will try to do my best. So probably it's as simple as that. I'll try to convince governments I can to contribute. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. And again, just to make that clear, we were in a situation a few years ago where there was no way that the money could transfer, and hence, that was a tool to solve the problems. If we need other tools to solve other problems, they will be found. That's very clear.

Singapore.

SINGAPORE: Thank you, Chair. Singapore appreciates the good work done by ACIG for us for the past five years, and recognize the issue on financial stability.

We believe that many members share this view but are impaired by the existing payment framework which make it challenging for the burden to be shared. I think there's a lot of discussion about how we have to describe that to our government. That applies to Singapore.

We'd like to offer a suggestion on another aspect, on the contribution aspect.

GAC could look into adopting a contribution system similar to the ITU system but on a less complicated one for a start. Members' contribution can be made under a free choice system from a scale of stepped amounts. This way members can retain

autonomy in choosing the amount to contribute and records should be kept of members' contribution. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you very much, Singapore. Actually, this is something that we have started to brainstorm as well.

Maybe just to give you a quick explanation of how this system in the ITU works.

In the ITU, they have a so-called contributor unit, which is 318,000 Swiss francs. I know it because it's me who signs the contributions. And then every country can decide how many units you pay. It goes -- I think the maximum that is paid is 15 or 30 contributions a year and the minimum is a quarter of a contribution.

So every country has to give something, every member state, but it's your decision. It's not dependent on any other criteria than your own decision on how much you are able and willing to give.

And this is something that we discussed whether or not this model could or should be used for the GAC as well.

It's pretty much here to take a decision on this definitely because that may have some implication if people are forced to pay something.

If we would use such a system, my suggestion would be to put the amount of one contribution very, very, very low, something that would not hurt anybody, no country, no matter what country it is, and then you can decide whether you pay one contribution or 500 contributions or 15 or 75 or 2,000 contribution units. This is an idea that we take up happily but that will need to have some time. We would need to have some time to think about advantages and possible risks in introducing this, but let's put it that way.

We hope that we'll get this on a completely voluntary basis. If not, then we would have to start thinking more -- we will think about this anyway, but we would have to have a more urgent discussion on a more compulsory basis, but I think in the end, the amount is -- should always be up to the government because it's clear that situations are different and they may also vary over time. Not everybody is in the same situation every year. So we also need to account for that flexibility.

Thank you for this.

Norway?

NORWAY: Thank you, Chair. Just a quick comment just for information for the administrations, that in our administration, we treat this contribution to the GAC secretariat in the same way as we treat and define our contributions to the ITU and to other international organizations. So we consider this as an amount we contribute to other international organizations in the same way. So that's how we deal with it internally with our administration. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. So you see, every country has different internal rules and they have to be followed, of course, in order to make this happen.

Indonesia.

INDONESIA: Yes. Thomas, it is interesting that you mention about the similarity with the ITU funding. Based on -- I agree with you that every country has different regulations and so on. Now, with ITU, Indonesia is also providing funding for ITU because we are also a member of the ITU Council and so on.

And it is done through the administrative procedures that the ITU is an organization where the country is member states of the ITU. And as member states, you have to do funding. That is the ITU regulations.

Now, how can we do that in the GAC itself? Is it -- we don't have something like GAC state members or ICANN state members. Can we see administrative procedures like that?

I myself I do not know how you can do that in Switzerland. But in Indonesia, for example, this funding mechanism is done through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for organizations where we are a state member.

So just want to know the possibilities that we can -- when you are saying about looking at the ITU system, whether we can also say the administration procedures in the ITU system for funding. You know, just curious to know because then I have to report back at home. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you very much, Indonesia.

I think we are -- we have to conclude on this one because time is moving on. But I think -- I think we all agree that this was important to understand where we are with this issue and what can be done and needs to be done in order to secure the

sustainability of this arrangement that we don't want to lose or don't want to see reduced but actually rather expanded.

So please take note. Think about it. Talk to each other. Talk to each other on a national level. And if you have any questions, come to any of us. Any door is open to discuss whatever challenge you may face in actually making that work.

So I'll stop here on this one, and we'll move to the next which is Item Number 20. It's an update of the different working groups. As you know, unfortunately, we didn't have that much time to talk about this in -- right before, but we hope that will change in the future now with the transition, at least some key point, behind us. We will have more space in the future to allocate time differently.

But before we do that, Olof would like to make an announcement.

OLOF NORDLING:

Thank you very much, Chair. And I have an interesting announcement. When it comes to the gala tickets, some of you have asked what happened with those. And they're out of them and what's going to happen.

Well, they have promised me that as soon as they arrive, they will be delivered to us. I don't know exactly how, but I think it's

on a flying carpet. And then we'll hand it out here in the process. And, hopefully, we will be able to attend the gala tonight, yeah, providing everything is sorted with the communique, of course. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you. I saw Julie walking around with a bag. Is that it, what you have in the bag? So she's holding it up.

Okay. We will develop a process to queue behind her among criteria that we'll agree in full consensus so that everybody has equal rights to get cards that allows you to participate in the gala on an equal footing, of course. Okay. Thank you very much for this information.

Let's go back to the GAC working groups. Time is limited. We have to do this very tight. The idea is to give each group a chance to provide for a quick update about what has happened.

Maybe if they need a decision from the GAC, that would be clearly indicated and we see what we can do, that we can get to that decision.

So it's agenda Item 20. Maybe let's start with the lead with the public safety working group. It is the AUC and Thailand. Thank you.

AUC: Thank you very much, Chair. I have got very few slides.

If you could go up.

Quickly, just a reminder that the group was created in February 2015 at ICANN 52. And it has been doing quite a bit. And, again, to reiterate and encourage GAC members to join, particularly subject experts to join.

Some of the work that we've been doing recently mainly to do with WHOIS and related tracks, a lot of outreach and several meetings, WHOIS, both Domain Name System and I.P. -- yeah, next slide, please -- yes, and issues around cybersecurity, consumer protection, and other public safety topics.

Next slide, please.

We have developed a guide for ICANN -- law enforcement for ICANN that is still being evolving so that it includes as much information as possible as part of our attempt for capacity-building and outreach. And that booklet is on the Web site for everyone.

We recently held an intersessional meeting in January 2016. And thank you to the European Commission for having hosted this. We are hoping to have another one before the end of the year

hosted by the African Union Commission. And this one, we hope, will include more activities including capacity-building in collaboration obviously with ICANN -- other ICANN groups and specifically with the GAC underserved regions working group. And that's ongoing.

Next slide, please.

Other work, WHOIS case studies, which we are going to be sharing with you, has been shared on the public safety working group. Once it is ready, we will share with the rest of the GAC.

We are involved on the GNSO PDP on next generation registration data services. And our liaison is Europol, Greg. If there are any questions, he is in the room. He can respond to them. And there are quite a number of other several GAC members participating in this working group -- PDP working group.

And yesterday afternoon, we held a joint workshop with the NRO. Very, very successful. There was a lot of understanding, a lot of agreement for collaboration going forward to ensure that we lead towards a better I.P. WHOIS accuracy.

And then our follow-up on previous recommendations, the one that I spoke about today was on the privacy proxy and then on the implementation of the RAA contractual obligations. And

we're going to be seeking a status on how registrars are accredited according to our recommendations from 2011.

Next slide, please.

There is still work continuing on Spec 11. That's the agreement on security framework. And we are going to be providing the final report on that. And the new gTLD competition, consumer choice, and consumer trust review, we've got our members there. We've got the European Commission, and we've got the FTC, Laureen Kapin, representing us on that. If there are any questions regarding that, she may be able to provide more additional information.

On the Addendum RAA 3.1, addendum on illegal and counterfeit drug reporting to ICANN compliance, ongoing as well as child exploitation and sensitive strings and ensuring adequate safeguards on that.

We also discussed as a working group the issue of beginning to look at some of the IETF protocols being proposed that are relevant to public safety and specifically relevant to ICANN and to the DNS and towards that we look to beginning conversation and dialogue with the IETF representatives and liaisons in ICANN.

Now, on the privacy proxy accreditation issue that I mentioned today in our meeting with the GAC, just a note that we presented comments that had been approved by the GAC. And there's a bit of confusion, I think, among colleagues here because the document that's on the Web site -- on the GAC Web site reads "GAC public safety working group comments" -- yeah, "public safety working comments" rather than "GAC comments."

And just remind all our colleagues that consistent with the GAC working group -- working group methods, we did develop the comments in September, shared them with the GAC. The GAC approved. And we submitted that document to the GNSO working group.

There's some concerns that have been raised that, perhaps, we need more time. And so what we're going to be requesting, GAC colleagues, is that on our communique we request -- the GAC votes to provide the GAC with more time to consider this issue so that we are able to provide whether or not -- to consider some of these issues and to see whether or not the GAC is ready to provide any advice, any public policy advice, on the privacy proxy final report. I think that's all I have for now. I will ask my colleagues if there is anything to add, Thailand, Laureen, or Bobby?

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Any other comments or questions to the working group?

Thailand, Wanawit.

THAILAND: Wanawit, Thailand for the record. The issue of concern we have is it's become a cross-cutting issue amongst the working PDP process as the PDP process have specific procedures on how the working groups participates.

And I think GAC have to try to working out on our operating principles to empower or giving the credentials to the working groups that could bring the advice or comments or whatever that could sometime need to reflect the GAC in general.

And in that are the missing procedures that may publish another working group. We have the charters, and we need to propose a work plan. But the participation, opening keys during the issue scopings after we make a first initial report in PDP, we will reflect as the GAC, Thailand, GAC, no matter which country.

But if you try to get the GAC's support for making an opening become a GAC -- opening in the GAC or PSWG or any small working group. So I think that might need Henri also to help on working effort.

AUC: Thank you, Chair. I agree with my colleague from Thailand, that it's important -- it's quite clear on the terms of reference and on GAC working methods that GAC working groups, any documents coming from GAC working groups must first be presented or submitted to the GAC if the working group requires the document to be a GAC document. And I think the public safety working group followed this procedure.

But I think we may want to, once again, discuss this issue on Thursday when we are discussing operating principles so that it's very, very clear how working groups work and how documents are submitted as either GAC documents or working group documents and how we deal with that. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I think this point is well-noted. Well, basically, the setting is clear, that the GAC working groups are not, let's say, separate institutions. They are part of the GAC. They serve the GAC in the sense that you have a gathering of experts on one issue that prepare the work for the GAC. So any document, of course, you may share, informally documents. This is normal and has been done. You may even have consultations on a draft or something. But if the document has to have an effect in the sense that it's a formal document, it needs to go through the

GAC, which is what you have done. It needs to be adopted by the GAC. And then it becomes a GAC document. It becomes a formal GAC document. And so this is -- this is clear.

Of course, on the actual roads to get there, there are some challenges. One is, again, the workload and blah, blah, blah. We know this. I don't have to go into detail.

So I guess it is important for the working group to keep the GAC regularly informed about what they are doing, what they are working on. And if you can anticipate, alarm the GAC, listen, there is work where we would like -- we suggest the GAC don't miss the deadline of coming in with a comment. That is going to be the date. So we'll do everything to provide you with a draft proposal before that date so that you can prepare and share this with other parts of your national administrations that you would want to be involved to make sure that everything is coordinated and balanced and that you as a GAC official can actually fully support the document that is coming out of a working group of a particular group of experts.

So the better we are alarmed and kept informed about what will be coming, the higher the chance is that the GAC is prepared and the faster the adoption and, if necessary, if that's required, the discussion on something will go.

So I think we are all in a learning phase here, and I think we can mutually -- despite the workload, we have to mutually try to improve signaling to each other where we are and so that if there's any problem, any question, that we can early enough talk to each other and try to sort this out, see if everything is really fully shared, whether we have consensus on this in the GAC.

So I think it is -- we had working groups before, but they were purely internal. Now we have working groups that actually have issues that should -- and this is in the end -- go outside.

So we need to keep up the discussion in the framework of the operation -- operating principles. But we may also bilaterally and, like, do the quick-look thing and whatever we can improve without doing the formal thing. Will probably help us speed this up. But we need to respect -- at the same time, we need to respect the procedures because if we don't, it will take us even more time because then we need to discuss what would be the procedures and so on and so forth. So I think we are all on the same line.

So let me just for the sake of clarity ask you the question: Is there something that is coming up from your group that you would want us to discuss and adopt? And if so, by when? So

that we know what is expected in terms of decision from the GAC side. Thank you very much.

AUC: Thank you again, Chair. I think I will refer back to the privacy proxy final report. I think that's the most important one, especially taking into consideration that the GAC has received a letter from the board requesting for advice.

And today we requested the board to delay adopting the final report until the GAC deliberates on advice. So we will be sharing draft advice that the GAC colleagues can discuss, pass on to their constituencies some of the comments we had submitted earlier.

So that is what we'd like from you, yeah.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. So that we are clear, I think what has happened is the GAC has already adopted the recommendations that you have proposed. And they have been sent to the GNSO, not to the board, to the GNSO, that they take it into account. And, apparently, there's not a full satisfaction about the way the GNSO -- we know the GNSO has considered it. They decided not to take on everything that we may have liked. So the next step -- and I think what is expected of us here is your -- if I get your proposal right, do we agree on the basis of these

recommendations that we already agreed by the GAC, do we agree that this is being sent to the board? Because the PDP has now concluded. There is a public comment period until the 21st of March or something like -- the 16th. So it's even closer. That is, like, next week, right?

So, well, we are not bound as the GAC to follow that. But, of course, the sooner we can come up with something. So the concrete proposal is whether the GAC agrees to send the same, I guess, recommendations that have been adopted not just to the GNSO, which is what has already been done, but actually as advice to the board. Can you just clarify that this is the proposal?

AUC:

Yes, that's the proposal. But it is also to consider perhaps because I -- we get the feeling that there's some concerns that have been raised. There wasn't enough time -- even though the GAC did endorse the document, there's some concerns regarding some of the proposals. And the public safety working group is willing to actually refine some of the recommendations or advice that it had submitted to the GNSO.

So the question would be twofold. One, we requested the board to give us time. So the time will give us the time to actually submit new advice or refined advice for the GAC to consider that

we can then submit -- resubmit to the board. So the most important thing is to get the board to give us time, so not to adopt the final report.

And then in the meantime, the public safety working group will refine the advice and resubmit it to the GAC for consideration and to give GAC colleagues the time to discuss some of these recommendations at capital and with various stakeholders. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Okay, thank you. Then before giving the floor to Iran, it would be good for us to have an idea of the time line. In case that would be at the next meeting where we could adopt it, that would be the safe thing. If the time line is such that this would be -- have to be sent to the board before the next meeting, we would need to know when we would get a draft revised recommendation -- set of recommendations from you so that we can look at this -- have some time to look at this in the GAC to then take the decision intersessionally hopefully without a big discussion.

But there is a risk that if something is controversial, then we will need some time to look at it and discuss it in the GAC, which, of course, is more difficult intersessional but it can be done, if

necessary. So it's clear we will do everything we can within this time line.

So what is the time frame that you see?

AUC: I'd suggest the next ICANN meeting, ICANN56, so that it gives us time because some of the issues, you are correct, are controversial.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Let's wait for the answer of the board on the time line. And if we have time until the next meeting, then I think --

AUC: In the meantime, we can submit the new proposal, proposed, revised.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Iran and the U.K. Please be brief because we should move on to the next working groups. Thanks.

IRAN: Thank you, Chairman. We should be very clear what we are doing. You said that the views we have sent to the GNSO should be sent to the ICANN Board as GAC advice. It is different.

The views we sent are different formulation, different structure, different feature. GAC advice to the board has different formulations. We have no difficulty that when we send advice to the GNSO, we copied to the board in order that we make it available this is the thing.

And if we understood and if we have feedback that has not been considered partly or totally, then we, once again, send another note to the board indicating that our views have been not taken into account.

But if we you want to do something as GAC advice, you would have different formulations. So we should be quite careful. Letter or views to the GNSO has a different formulation as GAC advice to the board. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I think that is clear. And Alice has said, it will be a revised text anyway. So it will not be identical.

U.K.

UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Alice, for the report. I mentioned earlier in this meeting -- it seems a long, long time ago -- that the U.K. and Italy is working with the European NGO Alliance for

Child Safety Online with regard to developing a paper on child protection and gTLD expansion. We are planning to work this paper up into a final document that we could potentially submit to the PSWG, if they would be receptive to it, and it fits with your work program. It's something I think deserves some priority consideration.

I see Alice nodding so that's the answer. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Okay. The Netherlands and then I think we have to move on to the other working groups.

NETHERLANDS: Thank you. In the PSWG, I've seen that there are -- I think Alice mentioned this, also a draft for the communique. I think it would be good if this was to be shared very quickly, and I think we should have a discussion. I think we only put things in the communique which have been discussed.

So I'm a little bit worried that in this, let's say, drafting text, which is not discussed, will sudden -- let's say take GAC members by surprise, which is, I think, not a good thing to do.

So I would urge them to have the draft discussed in the GAC. Otherwise, it would maybe be difficult to agree on it on the GAC plenary.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. This is noted.

The thing is we can't really continue on this. We have to move on because we have one, two, three, four other working groups, and we basically have 25 minutes left for all of them.

But a final response maybe from the co-chair.

ALICE MUNYUA: Thank you, Netherlands and the U.K. We have quite a -- John Carr, who is a member of the public working safety group, and he's been contributing on child online protection.

To respond to the Netherlands' concern, the language that we're going to be submitting for the communique is actually simply asking for an extension of time from the board, to give us time to discuss this issue. And then we will share the advice, as well, in the meantime.

But for the communique, it's just simply requesting the board to provide the GAC with more time.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Okay. This is something that we have discussed so there's no issue there. Okay. All right.

Can we move on to the next group, which is the human rights group? And the human rights and international law, co-chaired by Peru, U.K., and Switzerland. I don't know who will want to give a quick update.

Yes, Mark from the U.K. Please go ahead.

UNITED KINGDOM: Thank you, chair, the GAC working group on human rights and international law met yesterday, early yesterday afternoon, and we covered quite a lot of ground to launch this working group. First of all, we endorsed formally the terms of reference, which were the subject of GAC consultation intersessionally since Dublin, so the terms of reference are now final and endorsed.

We considered the next steps for the work plan and developing that and related intersessional activity. We invited members of the working group to provide us with feedback on what is set out in the terms of reference document as agreed areas of interest following earlier consultations, and also you may recall there

was an annex of proposed topics. Briefly, the agreed areas of interest are new gTLDs, IANA stewardship transition and whether and how the UN's guiding principles on business and human rights could serve as a framework for examining ICANN's respect for human rights.

The proposed topics attached to the terms of reference for reactions and responses -- and it's not an exclusive list, of course. We invite colleagues to submit other issues for consideration in the work plan, but the proposed topics we set out were who is reform internationalized domain names and intellectual property rights.

So we invited comments on these topics with regard to formulating a work plan. The deadline for comments is 18 April. The co-chairs, which are myself; Peru, Milagros Castanon; and Jorge Cancio from Switzerland. The three of us will then review the responses received by 18th of April and then issue a draft proposal by the end of April for comments from all the members, with a view to finalizing the work plan in good time ahead of the next GAC meeting and indeed to initiate some intersessional activity before the next GAC meeting.

So that's the process in terms of developing the work plan.

We had invited Leon Sanchez, one of the co-chairs of the CCWG accountability, to update us on recommendation six of the

CCWG proposal on human rights. That was a valuable summing up of the position and the way forward with regard to implementation in the CCWG accountability work stream too. We did a quick counter across the current PDPs with regard to possible human rights elements, new gTLDs, who is -- and rights protection mechanisms, and of course I've already mentioned these as potential priority elements for the work plan subject to the comments of all colleagues.

So that was our meeting, most of the business of our meeting. We had also a joint meeting with the cross-community working party on corporate and -- ICANN's corporate and social responsibility to respect human rights. That was held yesterday evening. I'm sorry, the timing was -- turned out to be not ideal. It was a timing we had agreed with the cross-committee working party, but of course it was in the middle of our transition work. So, alas, it was unfortunate and people needed a break and so on, so that was very understandable. But it was a very useful download from the CCWP on the work of their five subgroups to map issues on rights, on case work, on their approach to developing a structured way forward, including impact assessments for all ICANN activities and so on.

So that was a very useful exchange. They wanted to know the state of play with our working group, and we provided that. And we undertook, really, to keep in touch with each other as two

areas of focus, us coming from the public interests side in respect of human rights and the cross-community working party, providing inputs from a diversity of aspects. So there's a useful intersect there. Quite a lot of overlap. We will see how we might develop that relationship. But it's not exclusive, of course, to the CCWP. We all want to engage with other parts of the ICANN community, and we'll work that process through in good time ahead of the next GAC meeting.

I hope that's a useful summary. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you very much. So there seems to be some traction and the work is moving on, which I think is positive.

So I understand the draft terms -- the terms of reference are adopted by the working group. They have been shared by the GAC and there has been no opposition.

Has there been a formal adoption of the terms of reference by the GAC already or should we do this now?

UNITED KINGDOM:

Well, at the meeting there was agreement to endorse, so I think if we do have to do this formal step, yes, fine, let's do that.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: So I would just like to ask you whether we have any objections to the terms of reference to that group? And if not, they are adopted also by the GAC formally.

Okay. All right. So that's done.

So thank you very much.

Any questions or comments on the work or future work of the Human Rights and International Law Working Group?

If that is not the case, then we will go on to the next one immediately, which is the one on underserved regions. We have one of the two co-chairs here. Alice, would you say a few words on where you are and what your future, what your next activities would be? Thank you.

ALICE MUNYUA: Very few because we haven't done much. There is a survey that was done by the group and we are getting help from ACIG to provide the final report on that. And GAC members who haven't participated in the survey are still welcome to do so.

Weed a presentation on --

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Sorry, on what? Maybe it would be good to --

ALICE MUNYUA: Sorry. On government relationship with the Country Code Top Level Domain, and this was with a view of finding how that landscape is like and what the GAC or the Underserved Working Group may want to do in terms of either outreach or capacity building in collaboration with ICANN and other working groups.

We made a presentation at the high-level meeting which was well received, and we are planning capacity building. The Underserved Working Group is meant to do that every two years, and we're hoping to be able to start planning for that soon.

And then finally, and lastly, Tepua from the Cook Island has agreed to join as a co-chair so we can share some of the workload.

That's all from me.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much.

Any comments, questions on the Underserved Regions Working Group activities?

If that's not the case, then, Olga, please, give us an update on what is going on with the geo names working group.

OLGA CAVALLI:

Thank you, Chair.

First of all, the working group on protection of geographic names and new gTLDs. We had a meeting yesterday in room (saying name) over at the other hotel, but we made it. It was a crowded room, so that was a good sign.

We reviewed our updated working plan. One of the things that we agreed in our working plan is to inject some outcomes or thoughts that we have about decision like the best practices or other concepts into the different new gTLD processes. We are already started with that. And we are following the different new gTLD processes.

We had a request in the working group from Georgia and Ukraine to include in our scope of the working group the following: Consider for future rounds for new gTLD the protection of geographic and community names, including also the following cases. Annexed region like Crimea -- maybe I pronounce it wrong, (saying name), you correct me, (saying name), occupied territories controlled but not legally annexed, self-declared states like Islamic state (saying name),

(indiscernible) states with or without territory. Also there was a reference of what means in the previous Applicant Guidebook "relevant government." So it should have a special consideration of what does it mean for the new gTLD process.

In the group, there was agreement to add this scope to our work. So I would like comments from the GAC about this -- this suggestion, but I stress the fact that the working group found it interesting.

Then we reviewed a second draft of a document that we are working about public interest. We had very good inputs from our colleague, Milagros from Peru. She included comments from a paper that she has been investigating.

We prepared a new version, and we will work in a new version that maybe we share with the GAC once it's prepared.

We already interacted with Nora Abusitta and an initiative of ICANN and the Wiki. So we will input our document there when the time comes and when we have some feedback from the GAC.

And also the working group agreed in starting to address concerns raised from the comments received in our first version that was open to public comments.

We had a request from the other members of the community, from GNSO and ccNSO, to be a part of our email working list. We thought it was a good idea.

I would like comments from the GAC whether this is acceptable to me or not. I thought it's very valuable.

And I will stop here for this working group.

Other comments?

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Questions or comments.

United States.

UNITED STATES: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Olga, for the overview and the update.

I did want to just observe that while there have been quite a few different kinds of documents that have been shared and circulated among and between the working group members, we as a working group have not yet considered them final, nor have they come to the GAC as the GAC. So I did want to stress, however -- I picked up on your reference to the fact that you are already engaging with the ICANN staff, you are already feeding into the next round new gTLD activities. And just, I guess, a word

of caution or hesitation that the community sometimes might not understand the source of those positions or whatever experiences are being shared. And so I do think it's useful to sort of remind ourselves, and I believe our chair did so earlier when he opened the session, working groups are meant to work amongst each other with members for the GAC. And so whatever is produced and proposed and suggested, different analyses or different avenues of possibly progressing work, I feel pretty strongly has to come through the GAC and has to be endorsed by the GAC before it goes out to the community. I know it's always been a struggle for us all that there are colleagues in the community that might speak to a GAC member, and they have the impression that they now have a GAC view. I think we've all experienced that and have to exercise caution. But these are very, very important topics. So I do think it's really worth our while to take the extra time to bring the proposals back to the GAC so that we can -- and to allocate time. So again, hopefully -- I know this meeting was quite intense, the schedule, but hopefully as we go forward and look at agendas for upcoming meetings, we actually take the time for the working groups to meet themselves, if need be. Preferably, we would do our work online. And then to brief the entirety of the GAC so there's a real dialogue, there's a real exchange before we then take the next step.

Thank you.

OLGA CAVALLI:

Thank you, Suzanne. Very valuable comments. Before I give the floor to others, you're right, we have been injecting some comments but not in the name of the GAC; in the name of some countries that we support that. And getting some source of information from the work of the working group.

So you're right, it was not by the GAC. But what can you do? If a group of countries want to present that and people interpret as the GAC, honestly, I cannot take the blame for that.

But your comments are very valuable. I think there is a great value of working groups working with the plenary. So I take your comment in that we would like to have more plenary working group. It's a lot of value in the comments.

I wonder how we will manage that in the next. But I won't talk about that because that maybe takes a long time.

About documents, we will re-send to the working group. They are not sent to the GAC already because they are under preparation, so I appreciate your comment, which I concur with. And thank you for being in the group, and I will send you all the documents.

We have first Denmark and then Iran.

DENMARK:

Thank you very much.

I just want to build on what the U.S. has just said and come with a small suggestion, actually, of how to proceed, maybe, because this time, unfortunately, we've had so many overlaps with the different working groups, and also, we haven't been able to discuss these important issues in the GAC plenary. So maybe we should have a GAC plenary online meeting before the next meeting in June so that we can discuss these issues in plenary.

Thank you very much.

OLGA CAVALLI:

I think it's a very good idea, if we can do that.

Iran.

IRAN:

Yes. In fact, part of the issue I wanted to raise was raised by Denmark because when Suzanne said that we leave it to the GAC meeting, I hope that she did not mean exclusively GAC physical meeting. We have to find another way to be more efficient. And one of these is the GAC online plenary is good. We have worked

through the CCWG 84 meetings and worked very, very well. So why not have that one?

So we should not wait three months to get together here and also take time of the meeting.

Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you. Just a quick reaction to this. First of all, I think it's clear that the procedures are there. I recall them.

Maybe one thing. Because there will always be people who misunderstand something, but you have to do all you can -- and that goes to everybody. You have to do all you can for actually trying to be as blunt as possible. For instance, if you put a disclaimer on a text before you start the text that says disclaimer, this is in order not to be misunderstood, this is blah, blah, blah. And you can put watermark on -- whatever. There are many ways to -- and title, and so on and so forth, and how you name the document, the electronic file, and, and, and.

So there are things that you can do to be more clear about the document. And some people will read the disclaimer. Others will read the thing, the way the document is.

So provide for as many entry doors as you can to make people understand what the status of a document is. That's one remark.

The other remark is I'm happy to help you have intersessional meetings -- okay. This is just -- it got black in front of my eyes. To organize intersessional meetings. But then again, we have the nice challenge that for some, it will be at 9:00 in the morning, for others, it will be at 9:00 in the evening, and for others it will be at 3:00 in the morning. Or we do two meetings in parallel, blah, blah, blah. So no matter what we do, there's always a problem for some. So I just ask you for indulgence. We can do whatever. I'm happy to help organize whatever you want, but there will always be a disadvantage in the sense that it won't be as easy for everybody for any reason to do that.

So just to make that clear. And I'm happy to rediscuss these issues, but we can't solve that problem to complete satisfaction for everybody. Simply not possible.

Thank you.

OLGA CAVALLI:

Thank you, Chair. Any other comments about the working group?

So just for next steps, we will readjust our working plan with some -- but it's mainly the same and work on the interest public document. Once we have a fairly good version, we will share it with the GAC. And also with the main document that we have been working on along all this year so far.

So any other comments about that working group?

I see no.

Thank you very much. About the NomCom group, we couldn't meet yesterday. It was a very busy day, but that's okay.

There are, there is a version of the terms of reference for the group that was circulated by -- to the GAC by the Buenos Aires meeting. Has been there with no changes. Only very, very few minor changes of text. So in order to start our work, we will have -- we must agree on those terms of reference. So the purpose of the meeting yesterday was asking the working group if there is no objection, on adopting them. So I would make the same question to the plenary. If there are any comments to those or objections to that terms of reference.

If we agree in them, we will then prepare the working plan.

We already have documents prepared by the working group. At the time, we had no such formality for the terms of reference but we can start from there. So we don't start from scratch.

I see no objection. So we may think that it's -- it's okay.

Thank you very much. So I will stop here.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much. I think that's it. Is there any comment, question on a general level or on any of these working groups? Yes, Manal from Egypt. Go ahead.

EGYPT: Thank you, Thomas. And in fact it doesn't have to do with any of the working groups, but just to bring to colleagues' attention that I'm currently participating at the ccNSO working group that was launched to review issues related to determining similarity in IDNs. A mail was calculated earlier on the GAC mailing list asking for volunteers from the GAC who would like to participate, and I am currently participating with Panagotis from Greece. The most challenging thing is the working group name, which is EPSRP, stands for Extended Process Similarity Review Panel for IDN ccTLD fast-track process. And just in a couple of minutes to just say what we're discussing and then I can circulate something in writing to the GAC mailing list.

The DNS stability evaluation panel in IDN fast-track process is mandated to look into whether there is string similarity, visual similarity in strings that are being applied for. And if this is the case, then the string doesn't proceed.

Should the applicant ask within a certain period of time for another panel to look into the case, then this is where the extended process, similarity review panel, comes in.

And very quickly, not to confuse everyone, the points that we're discussing right now is whether the panel should give an aggregate recommendation in cases where, for example, the small letters are not confusingly similar but capital letters are. Then should one be treated of more weight than the other or should the panel have an aggregate view on this?

Should those also be considered in confusing similarity. And also, looking into consistent procedures in similarity discussions in gTLDs and ccTLDs, and also who should be -- where can we factor in other external factors such as mitigation policies and if policies would resolve this, should the string be blocked or not.

I will stop here. I will try to circulate something in writing in a less technical format and then we can take it from there. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much, Egypt. And of course this is -- at least to some, it's a very, very important issue and we hope that you are making progress. And I'm sure that there is -- there are ways to find a more complicated name for the working group than it already is, so keep on trying.

Thank you very much.

Manal, you want to have a quick --

EGYPT: Just very quickly, although it sounds as an IDN thing but when we talk about confusing similarity, then again Latin is part of the confusing similarity, so it should be of an interest. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you for this clarification. I didn't mean that it's not of the interest of everybody, but it's of special interest for some that are blocked because so far it hasn't -- it hasn't attained enough attention to actually have traction to solve the problem, so we hope that this is moving forward.

So we'll hear an announcement by whom? By Michelle? Okay. Thank you.

MICHELLE SCOTT-TUCKER: When we write up the minutes, we need to list everyone who is here. To help us make that list, we've asked you to put your business card or a piece of paper with your name and email address on it in a bag that Julia has up the back. Oh, look. Oh, and she has a paper list that's been circulating around the tables as well with your names on it. That's to help us with the minutes. But if you put your business card in that bag, there will be a prize which I'm going to draw after lunch today, and I'm going to take the bag away at lunchtime to collate all the cards, because some of you are so eager for the prize that you put in more than one business card.

[Laughter]

Yeah. I'm onto you and I sort through them and make sure that there's only one card per person in the bag.

So I'll be taking the bag away at lunchtime, so if you haven't put your card in it yet, just one card. Put it in the bag now.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: So can you give me my 25 cards back that you don't need?
Okay. Thank you.

Olga.

OLGA CAVALLI: Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you, Michelle, about that.

Several members of the GAC came to me saying that they're interested in participating, especially in the working group on geo names. Please tell Julia to add you into the working list. Also, if you want to participate in the NomCom or other working groups that you want to contribute with. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I think with this, we're done. We will reconvene at 2:00 and have a final substantial session before the communique drafting, which is about the two-character code implementation process. You'll remember that has raised a few questions in the past and we hope to clarify a few issues on that, and then we'll start drafting the communique.

We hope that will not take longer than 8:00 in the evening, so that you may attend, at least partially, the end of the gala dinner tonight. Thank you very much. Enjoy your lunch.

[Lunch break]