ICANN68 | Prep Sessions – Q&A with ICANN Org Executive Team
Friday, June 19, 2020 – 03:00 to 04:00 MYT

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay. Well, good morning, good afternoon, and good evening to all of you who have joined us today.

I'm pleased to welcome you to the ICANN 68 Q&A with the ICANN executive team. My name is Sally Cohen and I'm the senior vice president of global communications at ICANN. I'll be moderating the session today.

I know that I speak for the entire executive team when I tell you that we look forward to this session and to the opportunity to meet with you and provide some updates on the work that we're doing at ICANN Org. And, of course, to answer your questions. We appreciate and welcome the dialogue with you.

Now, before we get to the Q&A portion of this session, first, each member of the executive team is going to provide you with a brief update on their function's responses to the challenges that have been brought on by COVID-19 and also to other areas of our focus.

So this is the second time that we're holding this session virtually. And we've made a few changes to make it a little bit easier for you to interact and to participate.

There are two ways that you can ask a question or make a comment during this session. You can submit a written question or a comment into the Zoom Q&A pod that you'll find at the bottom of your screen. That's one way.

Alternately, you can also raise your hand, and you will join the queue to voice your question.

Now, you can find the raised hand icon at the bottom of your screen. And you'll see in the slide in front of you. Selecting that will automatically add you into the speakers' queue, and we'll be calling names in the order that they come in.

Your microphone will remain muted until it's your turn to speak. We'll then unmute you on our end, which will trigger a note that's going to be sent to you, requesting that you also unmute your mic.

This will also let you know that it's coming up to be your turn.

When your name is called, that's your cue to speak. And, again, please make sure that your microphone is unmuted.

Please do not ask questions to the executive team in the chat, because we will only be answering the questions that are verbal or those placed in the Q&A pod. We won't be monitoring the chat for the questions.

And we're excited to tell you that realtime interpretation is also available in French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic.

If you need information on how to use this feature, it's available on the session page on the ICANN68 meeting schedule. And a link to that page will also be available in the chat.

If you'd like to ask your question in one of the available languages, we ask that you then give participants a chance to put on their headsets so that they can hear your question.

All right. And with that, I'm going to hand it over to the ICANN president and CEO, Goran Marby.

Goran.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you.

And thank you for -- Can we stop showing that picture? No. I just got my whole screen filled by myself.

Thank you, all, for coming. I see that we have 230 or something participants on this call. And I'm really impressed by that.

So we've done this now since -- I think the first time we did it was Copenhagen. And I'm just going to reiterate why we do this. It's an opportunity for you to know some of the leaders within ICANN Org, their responsibilities, what they are doing, and most importantly, what they do for you.

The second thing is, I just want to remind you, what is ICANN Org's role in all of this?

So ICANN Org is part of the ICANN institution. Our job is to support the community and facilitate the work they do in the community that becomes the policy work. We don't participate in the policy work. We don't participate in the multistakeholder model. We're there to support it.

The second thing we do is to implement the decisions made by the board. So when a policy comes around, when a review recommendation comes around, if you read in a resolution, you will see that the board designates me and who works for me to make that implementation. So that's another important role we have.

The third one is also to be a sort of working with you and the multistakeholder model in the community to make sure that we can protect the multistakeholder model. You see that through interactions with government, you see that interaction with (indiscernible) foras, et cetera et cetera, where we contribute to the kind of information.

In the same area, we also include some technical material to help the community facilitate discussions or sometimes to make sure that -- participating conversations about the Internet itself.

And one thing that many people sometimes remember is we also have an operational role. And you see that operational role primarily through IANA, which we operate, and things like DNSSEC. That is what ICANN Org is supposed to do. And that's the limits of the work we do.

But I hope this will be much clearer now when I toss over to Susanna.

Thank you very much.

SUSANNA BENNETT: Thank you, Goran.

Good day, everyone.

I'm Susanna Bennett, the senior V.P. and chief operating officer of the organization. The operations function include board operations. The team does help the board to manage the board content and the various logistics of the board meetings, workshops, and travel (indiscernible).

The second area is risk management. Risk management is assessment of the risks in the organization and help track the mitigation and to report to the Board Risk Committee.

Security operations takes care of the physical security and health of the organization people. And you can imagine that the team has been extremely busy recently.

And the other part is the planning of the organization, including the five-year and the one-year plans.

And then certain cross-functional programs.

The key highlights of this period are primarily related to COVID-19. The Security Operations Team has been serving a key role on the Pandemic Crisis Management Team. The risk management performed risk assessment and continuity planning related to the pandemic.

Board Operations Team has been managing virtual board workshops, support the pandemic-related board work plan prioritization and the board's sustainable continuity planning.

And the planning team assess the pandemic-related impact to the FY21, FY21-25 plans.

The key milestone achieved recently include the adoption of the new one-year and five-year plans by the board and Open Data Platform, Version 1, have been launched, and the team continue to release updates to the published data, such as the domain name marketplace indicators just have been updated yesterday.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you, the community, for all your collaboration, input, and feedback.

Now over to you, Xavier.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you, Susanna.

I'm Xavier Calvez, ICANN's CFO.

Over the past few weeks, my team and I have worked hard on -- to ensure that all our finance and procurement activities continue to happen seamlessly in the circumstances of confinement that we all live in.

In addition, we have put a lot of efforts into re-evaluating our plans for the next few months and for the next years to reflect the potential

impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and that it has now and, of course, that it may have over the future and how it impacts our plans and financials.

This has led to reflect in many changes in our plans on a relatively short notice, as these plans were being finalized when the confinement started.

We will continue to monitor very closely over the next weeks and months how the pandemic affects our activities, with the objective that we can ensure at all times that ICANN's financials remain sound and allow us to continue to support the work of the ICANN community and of the organization, which is more important than ever in this situation of confinement.

Separately, as a part of the organizational changes that have been recently announced, I will oversee the new planning department and the new review implementation department.

These new structures are intended to evolve and improve how the entire ICANN ecosystem plans for and prioritizes its important work, including a necessary focus on the implementation of the many review recommendations that have been and will be adopted by the board.

These are exciting new opportunities to provide ICANN's efficiency, transparency, and ultimately, accountability to the public.

Thank you. And with that, I'll ask amend to provide an overview of her responsibilities.

MANDY CARVER: Thank you, Xavier.

I'm Mandy Carver, the senior vice president for Government and Intergovernmental Organization Engagement.

My team's responsible for global government and intergovernmental organization, or IGO, strategy and engagement. This is a function that we conduct in close coordination with David Conrad's OCTO team and Sally Costerton's Global Stakeholder Engagement functions.

We are based -- Government Engaged is based in Geneva, Brussels, New York, and Los Angeles.

Since the start of 2020, my team and I have evolved our function's analytic work to produce several papers about IGO activities that have the potential to inadvertently impact ICANN's mission and the stability and interoperability of the global Internet.

In addition, we continue to monitor the debates and activities of the IGO's in their various processes. As elsewhere, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disruptive effect on this space due to the conflict between the ban on travel and meetings, versus several IGO's mandated decision-making processes that requires face-to-face meetings to make decisions or move forward proposed resolutions.

This impact is going to have an ability on the ability -- this is going to impact the ability of the IGOs to produce outcome recommendations,

even for their virtual meetings. These changes have also increased government and IGO awareness and interest in the Internet.

Government engagement is tracking the discussions in these various study groups to maintain awareness of issues in development in spaces such as the open-ended working group, the government group of experts at the U.N., discussions in the ITU-D, and in various European Union structures.

GE has also taken the opportunity of this changed mode of working to reach out to new government audiences, including regulatory bodies, to conduct informational sessions on the technical underpinnings of the Internet, what we refer to as technical Internet governance. We have taken advantage of this opportunity to increase the understanding of ICANN's role and the impact of developments in the technical sphere and where these intersect with the interests of the IGO's.

Government engagement will continue to report out to the community about this work, and there are several more papers in the pipeline.

I will now pass the mic to David Conrad, ICANN's senior vice president and chief technology officer, for an overview of his responsibilities.

DAVID CONRAD: Thank you, Mandy.

Hello, everyone. I'm David Conrad, ICANN's chief technology officer, and the SVP for Identifier Research Operations and Security.

As you may have seen on my recent blog, my team is comprised of the office of the CTO, better known as OCTO, and the IANA department.

We are responsible for both helping the community understand the uses and abuses of the Internet system of unique identifiers, as well as coordinating the management of those identifiers through the IANA functions.

On the IANA side, beyond the normal day-to-day administering of the root zone and its key-signing key, asides from the few requests from the numbers community and managing the more than 3,000 protocol parameter registries, we've been working on the PTI strategic plan as mandated by the community, and we've continued to meet or exceed all the service-level expectations set by the community during the transition.

Within OCTO, the security, stability, and resiliency team has been quite busy with a project called Domain Name Security Threat Information Collection and Reporting, or DNSTICR, which looks for evidence of phishing and malware distribution associated with COVID-19-related domain names and reports that information to relevant parties so they can take appropriate actions.

In addition, the team has been working with the community to refine the DAAR report so they can better inform policy discussions. And we've been supporting a new initiative, called the DNS security

facilitation initiative that aims to provide appropriate resources to raise the bar on the security of the DNS ecosystem as a whole.

The research side of OCTO has also been busy, with publications on 5G, effects of COVID-19 lockdowns on traffic to the ICANN managed root server, providing technical input on how the DNS and the Internet works to various governments, and authoring a couple of high-level briefings on DNSSEC and the root server system.

The OCTO research team has also been supporting the Name Collision Analysis Project, and, in support of RSSAC 047, which specifies metrics for individual root servers and root server system as a whole, we've developed a prototype to collect and monitor those metrics.

Finally, in terms of technical engagement, during the pandemic, we've focused on reviewing and updating our training materials and have provided a number of webinars on technical topics. We've expanded our team to include three additional technical engagement specialists -- Nicolas Antoniello in Uruguay, Paul Muchene in Kenya, and Yazid Akanho in Benin -- to improve our coverage particularly in the LAC and African regions, and to provide capacity-building, training, and assistance to our colleagues in Government Engagement and Global Stakeholder Engagement.

Speaking of Global Stakeholder Engagement, I'll hand it off to Sally Costerton.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, David.

I am Sally Costerton, and I am responsible for Global Stakeholder Engagement, Public Responsibility Support, which includes the Newcomer programs, and ICANN Learn, and the ICANN Meetings Team.

I'm also responsible for overseeing our regional offices outside the United States.

Over the past months, the teams have worked closely with community members to provide our stakeholders around the world with a varied program of engagement activities that can be accessed remotely. These have included webinars on a range of topics: Capacity development sessions, regional working sessions to ensure important regional issues continue to be addressed, and significant work on aligning regional plans with ICANN's five-year strategic plan.

Working closely with our ICANN Org colleagues, we are expanding ideas and formats that ensure we can continue to support the full range of the community's work remotely. This includes attracting and onboarding newcomers, which creates unique challenges in a remote-only format.

An important part of this is exploring returning to face-to-face meetings, from small groups right up to large international events. Incorporating feedback from SO/AC leaders, the ICANN board, and the org, we've put together a draft incremental approach for discussion and input from the community. It outlines a four-phased approach for returning to face-to-face ICANN meetings. Each phase suggests an enhanced remote participation experience, providing a more robust

option for those not able to attend in person. The strategy emphasizes partnership and collaboration between the ICANN community, the board, and the org.

The org will initiate necessary measures to minimize risk associated with face-to-face meetings. These will include, but are not limited to, physical distancing, which requires maintaining required physical distancing; practicing good hygiene, such as wearing a face covering, a mask, to wash your hands, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces; self-quarantine for anybody who feels unwell or sick and has been told to isolate in quarantine, you should stay at home; and finally higher-risk individuals, who will need to consider their own personal safety while attending face-to-face meetings.

We look forward to the discussion.

I will now hand over to Jamie.

JAMIE HEDLUND: Thank you, Sally.

I'm Jamie Hedlund, senior vice president, contractual compliance and consumer safeguards. I'm also the managing director for ICANN's Washington, D.C., office.

In compliance, our role is to ensure that registries and registrars implement the community's policies and other contractual commitments. We carry out this role by addressing complaints against registries and registrars, 20- to 30,000, on average, per year;

conducting audits to verify that the contracted parties are adhering to their commitments; and publishing reports on these activities for community to review.

Today, there are three specific efforts under way that I'd like to describe in more detail.

First, we are migrating to a new Salesforce-based ticketing system called NSP Compliance. The new system will offer complainants intuitive, smart forms with click-through menus to select more narrowly defined complaint types. It will enable more efficient communication between compliance, reporters, and the contracted parties. It will also allow compliance to gather and publish more granular data on the complaints that we receive and how we resolve them.

In collaboration with engineering and I.T. we conducted a beta program with contracted parties that actually closed today. I am pleased to report that we are on track to go live in mid-August.

Second, the Montreal GAC communique contained advice on complaint forms and reporting related to access for access to nonpublic registration data.

Because there is no complaint form for temporary specification violations, we posted instructions on how to submit these types of complaints under our current ticketing system. We also ensured that the new smart forms in NSP Compliance would allow complainants to report specific types of temp spec violations. Finally, we are now

reporting the volume and handling of temp spec-related complaints on our monthly dashboard.

And third, we completed an audit last year of the registry operators' compliance with applicable DNS security threat obligations.

We will launch a similar audit on accredited registrars as soon as it is reasonable to do so, taking into account the global impact of COVID-19.

As we did with the registry audit, we will publish the questions that we will ask of the registrars, as well as a final report on the findings of the audit.

Thank you for listening.

John Jeffrey, I believe you are next.

JOHN JEFFREY: Yes. Thank you, Jamie.

Everyone probably knows by now, but I'm the general counsel and secretary to the ICANN board. I've been in my role for nearly 17 years. And my primary function, of course, is to provide general legal support to the organization, along with the 14 lawyers and four support persons that function within the legal group. We provide services and advice to the organization, to the board, and to the community, including litigation and accountability mechanisms support, legal contracting services, a wide swath of support functions to all the

departments within ICANN, to the executive team, to IANA, and to the CEO's office.

In addition, starting the 1st of July, on Susanna's departure, board operations will move back under my supervision. I should say they will really continue to function in support of the board primarily, and I will facilitate and help them do that. And that will align closely to my role as the board secretary in the role that I perform to the board.

Also, in addition to that, we support the Nominating Committee, so we have a staff that supports and provides resources to the Nominating Committee. And lastly, we have the complaints officer, Krista Papac, that reports to me.

In the recent months, our role, of course, has been complicated, as everyone's has, by the COVID issues. And we have supported strongly the ACMT function inside of ICANN and the various functions to continue to operate in our new environment.

With that, I will pass over to David Olive.

DAVID OLIVE: --

GORAN MARBY: David, we can't --

JOHN JEFFREY: David, are you there?

DAVID OLIVE: Thank you. Thank you, John.

I'm David Olive. And I head the support team who facilitates the work of the three global policy development organizations at ICANN, the Address Supporting Organization, the country code name supporting organization, and the generic name supporting organization. And the four advisory committees, representing the at large community, the governmental advisory, the root server systems, and the security and stability advisory.

ICANN develops policy and refines policy and advice recommendations that ensure the security, stability, and resilience of the global Internet, and the ICANN organization's proud to facilitate this work and to support the core consensus-driven activities of our community.

Of course, much of the ICANN work is already accomplished in -- accustomed to conducting its work virtually. And during this particular trying time, that means a little more emails to explain and share information, a little more Zoom time, and Zoom rooms to maintain. But that is important as the policy development processes and other high-level ICANN projects rely on this interaction to advance our discussions and to build consensus.

In talking to the leaders of these groups, we have noted that there has been little decrease in the volume of work as they prepare for ICANN68. Some of the groups, of course, are adjusting their time lines,

with an emphasis on priority work under the current situations. And yet some groups are actually increasing their online activities in preparation for ICANN68.

So it is impressive to see the ICANN community recognizing the need to continue important work and the collaboration they have demonstrated in preparing for the first-ever policy forum, about to begin.

The forum, as you know, will feature sessions exploring the domain name system abuse and malicious registration, the domain name system and the Internet of things, and how to advance our work during this pandemic time.

ICANN68 is the fifth policy forum, but the first to be remote and supported entirely remotely by the staff and the teams.

Another highlight will be the language interpretation services that we'll hear a little more about.

The Internet functions for everyone, because everyone is invited to help make it work. ICANN68 can be an example of how the ICANN community brings together people from various regions, from various languages, and from different time zones, to show that the Internet can work for all, not just a few.

And I thank you, and you turn it over to Ashwin Rangan, who helps keep us all online.

Ash, please.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Thank you, David.

I'm Ashwin Rangan. I serve as the SVP for engineering and I.T. for ICANN.

My team serve as a service plank for almost every function in ICANN, and in every location where we have a presence. We have team members located in a dozen different locations globally.

My teams are responsible for software engineering, with spoke solutions for use by the community and the board. And we also provide the typical, traditional back-office I.T. systems and support services.

In January, the COVID-19 situation was very fluid. Information was not easily available, and the scenario was changing fast. By early February, our team started to prepare for what could become the new normal. For us, this meant thinking about the possibility of an all-remote meeting for ICANN67 and the possibility of everyone having to work from not the office.

The pandemic was racing in different places at different paces. And we started to wonder and plan.

On the 19th of February, as you may recall, the ICANN board decided to offer ICANN67 as a remote participation, virtual-only meeting.

In the next two, three weeks, we implemented a fully redundant meetings network in the L.A. headquarters.

Early in March, we assembled our gear and our typical meetings technical support team in the L.A. office, and we successfully hosted ICANN67, which was the first-ever virtual meeting.

It was a ground-breaking event for us. And to our surprise, it received wide local news coverage as well, thanks to a business section lead article which was authored in the Los Angeles Times.

In mid-March, when shelter-in-place orders were issued, our team members took home their I.T. tools and were quickly able to be back in business. Indirectly, this was a welcome opportunity to test ICANN Org's disaster recovery and business continuity plans.

In the last several years, we have standardized systems and tools across all of our functions and geographies in ICANN. The majority of our services run in the cloud, so to speak. And we use the same make of PCs and mobile phones, with the same global service providers. We employ pretty much the same access methods globally. Leveraging all of these, within a couple of weeks of sheltering in place, from an I.T. perspective, our teams were working from wherever, as usual.

From an engineering perspective, where new I.T.-enabled fit-for-purpose services are custom-crafted with software, sheltering in place has slowed down our deliveries just a bit. Software engineering relies heavily on collaboration and constant calibration, with cooperation between those who want new services to be created and the engineering teams. This aspect has proven challenging, given the COVID realities, so that collaboration now is more planned than fluid and spontaneous.

Nonetheless, over the last three months, two highly anticipated projects reached significant milestones. The new icann.org website, crafted under the label ITI, was soft-launched in mid-May. And as Jamie reported, the compliance functionality in the naming services portal was launched to a group of beta testers in early June and concluded that test just today.

In the traditional I.T. services space, during the last 90 days, we've successfully located, tested, and placed in service a new remote simultaneously interpretation tool. We've been working very closely with Zoom's product teams. And as a result of that, several improvements have now been made available to us which have been deployed in anticipation of ICANN68.

ICANN68 will be showcasing not only these features and capabilities, but, more importantly, this will be the first remotely administered and managed remote meeting for us, which, to us yet again, is a first.

To do all of this, we've evolved new rhythms and rituals to keep our teams together. And they remain focused on objectives to be achieved, some of which have very critical time triggers, like preparing for ICANN68 as an example.

And so far, I'm pleased to report that our team members and their loved ones are well and they seem to be working well together.

Over to my colleague, Theresa Swinehart.

Theresa.

THERESA SWINEHART: Great, Ash. Thank you.

Thanks. Everybody can hear me okay. Yes, I think so.

Good. I'm Theresa Swinehart, and as you're aware per the recent announcements, responsible now for GDD and MSSI.

And with that, I wanted to cover two areas on this call. One is the integration of GDD and parts of MSSI, and what we've been doing in the virtual time and the work that's been continuing under way.

So first, on the integration of the Global Domains Division and the Multistakeholder Strategy and Strategic Initiatives teams, in looking at how to leverage the synergies around those different areas of work. As many of you are aware, historically, MSSI has been responsible for strategic planning, strategic initiatives, such as GDPR and the multistakeholder model evolution, and then also the reviews, the execution and implementation of reviews, both specific and organizational.

With this integration, we are now looking at the responsibilities from MSSI into GDD will include strategic initiatives. And those are emerging issues relating to stakeholders and contracted parties such as the coordination of the GDPR work, or any other initiatives of that sort.

And then the running and operation of reviews itself, not the implementation of the recommendations.

As you'd heard earlier, the planning function, so the strategic planning function and strategic initiative -- strategic trends work and implementation of review recommendations will go over to my colleague, Xavier.

GDD's responsibilities include, of course, the relations in working with the robust and respected domain name industry. And over the years, GDD's structure has also evolved and seen positive outcomes. And these include the combining of the registry and registrar services and account manager teams. And that strengthens the interaction with the contracted parties. And that is now consistent and with more of a holistic view towards the industry.

The other area has been the combining of the registry and registrar operations teams, which we now call the service delivery team. And this has allowed us to streamline internal delivery responses to tickets and services and allowed for greater cross training and backup support.

So with the integration of the parts of MSSI's responsibilities into GDD, we also see an opportunity of areas of synergies and streamlining of work and responsibilities both within those areas of work and then, of course, Xavier with his planning and implementation-related work.

Of course, during the COVID time and working virtually, we've not stopped. In fact, work has continued quite rapidly. And I just wanted to touch on a few things.

Within the GTLD and account services, the team has been working very hard to maintain and enhance the relations with the registries and registrars and really to ensure that we're looking after each other as people as well as businesses.

The team has also continued to work on implementing EPDP phase one, including the data processing arrangements, but in parallel, continuing discussions on contract amendments for RDAP.

And just yesterday, we also published the waves.3 of the Domain Name Marketplace Indicators on ICANN's new Open Data Platform. And I really encourage everybody to go and look at that useful data.

Within the service delivery support group, the work has continued to provide services to the contracted parties, ICANN community in terms of, and the domain name registrants. And the service levels have continued to be met throughout the time of being virtual.

We've also undertaken some work in the areas of internationalized domain names and the universal acceptance, and supporting working around the community-led Universal Acceptance Steering Group to promote UA readiness, and in the area of IDNs, the integration of the work done by the Chinese and Bangla script communities in the next version of the root zone label-generation rules.

There's also proposals for 20 of the 28 scripts identified that are now final.

On the policy, research, and data services, we've continued to provide the subject matter support and engagement with open policy

development process, including the gTLD subsequent procedures Sub-Pro and the rights protection mechanisms, the RPMs.

And we've continued with the Implementation Review Team work for EPDP phase one recommendations.

The MSSI team has also been continuing its work virtually with the community. The strategic outlook and trend sessions went completely virtual. And it was really remarkable, with the community input and the org input.

The review teams continued their work virtually and seamlessly. And we really appreciate that work.

The work around the MSM evolution, we had an excellent community discussion around that input in the budget and operational planning process. And that material is now out for public comment.

And the work progress towards the board actions on review recommendations and community implementation teams are continuing their work resulting from the organizational reviews.

So it's been a busy period. Those are just touching on a few areas while we've been virtual.

And now I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Gina.

GINA VILLAVICENCIO: Thank you. Theresa.

My name is Gina Villavicencio, and I'm the senior vice president of global human resources.

I hold responsibility for areas that focus on human resources. Our facilities management, and most recently, with the transition of Susanna, the Security Operations Team for ICANN.

These three departments work closely in ensuring the health, safety, and security of our staff, making it a top priority to enable them to do their best work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced what a new normal is for our everyday lives, and not just for ICANN, but for the family, friends, and colleagues we have around the world.

This is a lot to balance. I'm sure we can all appreciate the need to feel more connected to each other in times like these.

Much of our focus over the past several months has been to ensure our colleagues have what they need to be successful in working from home, in addition to prioritizing their own mental health and well-being.

We also continue to work to ensure that we're attracting, developing, and retaining the appropriate talent to support both the strategic and operating plans. In addition, we also continue our work with the Board Working Group on Anti-harassment on crafting training that raises more awareness on the community anti-harassment policy and the expected standards of behavior.

As we work to support the FY21 priorities, our team will ensure that our ICANN facilities are properly maintained, safe and secure, and operating smoothly for our staff and all of our operational needs when we ultimately transition back into our physical offices and face-to-face meetings resume.

COVID-19 has, indeed, caused us to live and work in unique times. And I'm proud of the support that the staff and the community alike are showing to each other. We will definitely get through this together.

Thank you for your time. Now I'll hand it back over to Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much, Gina.

Again, I'm Sally Newell Cohen, the SVP of global communications.

The global Comms function is made up of two departments: Language services and communications.

Since the board made its decision to make ICANN67 a remote meeting, the language services meeting has focused its efforts on providing high-quality interpretation in a 100% remote environment. While we were only able to offer Spanish and French during ICANN67, for this meeting and for ICANN 69, interpretation will be available in all six languages.

Language services, together with the meetings team and engineering and I.T. evaluated several platforms before selecting the platform that

many of you are using now. They rigorously tested the platform technically and with the 40-plus interpretation specialists that are locate around the globe. We're now exploring the possibility of incorporating the platform for other public meetings and eventually reducing travel costs and expanding the services we can provide. During this time, we've also continued to provide transcription and realtime translation for a variety of meetings to support the community's work.

And the communications team supports regional offices, all ICANN Org functions, the board, and the community, through content development, graphic design, media relations, social media, and more.

As a result of the pandemic, in addition to planned activities, we've focused our efforts on revising content and graphics for the first-ever remote ICANN meeting and the subsequent virtual meetings. We supported the Global Stakeholder Engagement Team's efforts to conduct virtual engagement sessions. We conducted internal communications to provide information and support to our staff during the stay-at-home orders. And also, we leveraged the traditional media to create awareness in the community and beyond to inform about ICANN's efforts to mitigate DNS abuse and some of the other work we were doing that was COVID-related.

As Ash mentioned, during this time, we also launched a preview of the ITI website. And I encourage you to visit, preview .icann.org, and give us feedback. We thank the community for the feedback we've

received already. It's been instrumental in improvement of the different features on the site.

With Susanna's departure, we are also taking on the responsibility for the Open Data Platform.

And, again, I invite you to give us feedback on the improved access to raw data. We posted new information yesterday. So -- and we'll continue to do so.

And those are the primary areas that Comms and language services has focused on. So this includes our updates.

I'd like to thank all of the executives for sharing their insights and the updates on the work they're most focused on.

So now it's time to continue the dialogue by taking your questions.

I believe we've received two presubmitted questions, so we're going to begin with these.

James, if you would please read the first question.

James?

JAMES COLE: Hi. Thank you.

So the first question: What does the org mean by Singapore clusters as referenced in the FY21 budget document? The clarification

provided was not clear enough in the response to comments requesting clarification.

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: I believe, Ash, you're going to take this question?

ASH RANGAN: Thank you, Sally.

As you know, root servers are a critical component in the technical infrastructure that makes the Internet behave the way it does. ICANN, as an organization, manages one of the lettered root servers, which used to be called the L root and is now called the ICANN managed root server or IMRS, for short.

There are two kinds of servers that we deploy, one called a single, which fits into a slot in a rack. The other is an entire rack of these servers, which, together, operate as a root server. That is called a cluster.

The board approved the implementation of a cluster of this nature, and based on the increased traffic that we see coming to and from Asia, we decided to locate it in Singapore.

We are currently in the process of implementing this particular ICANN managed root server instance, which is a large rack of servers. And we expect to go live with this in the coming several weeks.

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much, Ash.

We now have the second presubmitted question. James, if you could read this.

JAMES COLE: Sure. Question two. Thank you for your brave decision about .ORG. Now, what about .AMAZON and public service words like docteur, E-U, or doctor?

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, James.

Theresa, I think this question is for you.

GORAN MARBY: Actually, I think I'm supposed to answer it.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Ah. Thank you.

GORAN MARBY: This is Goran Marby.

I wouldn't call the .ORG a brave decision or anything. It was a decision we made, and if you read the resolution, was made on the

rules set by ICANN and the ICANN community. And we applied for that. We used those.

When it comes to the rest of the question, .AMAZON is delegated to the corporation Amazon, the corporation Amazon. And if you want to learn a little bit more about -- it's not -- it's a little bit unusual in its delegation because we also built in some caveats around it. But if you want to know more, we can present you with a link about what is happening with the .AMAZON.

We also asked a question about doctor and docteur, for instance. And if I remember correctly .DOCTOR is delegated to Donuts, I think. And it's dealt into the system. And maybe that's really the interesting question, is that the ICANN community, through its policy works, is the one who decides about the rule sets, how to handle names like that, which kind of name it is, how it's going to be dealt with, how it's not going to be misused, and that.

And I know that the Sub-Pro, the next round, is continuously talking about this. But they're all rules being set by the community for that.

So thank you very much for the question.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran.

We have no raised hands, so we're going to continue with the questions that are in the Q&A pod.

So, James, please, the next question.

JAMES COLE:	This question comes from Dmitrii Shchurov. His question is: When will the New gTLD Program start?
SALLY NEWELL COHEN:	Okay. I believe this question is for Theresa Swinehart.
THERESA SWINEHART:	It is, yes. Thanks. So the timing is really based on the Sub-Pro work and the policy that's coming in from the community, plus, of course, the development and implementation. And in the meantime, we're also engaging with the PDP work to support the preparations. And once we receive the policy recommendations from the community, the board will review those and consider them, and then we'll work with the community on the implementation. So there's a few dependencies there, but we do look forward to the completion of the community's work on this.
SALLY NEWELL COHEN:	Thanks very much, Theresa. Okay. We'll continue with the next question. James, if you would please read.

JAMES COLE:	This question comes from Wolf-Ulrich Knoben. Given the fact that all ICANN meetings in 2020 are held as virtual meetings, what is the related financial impact on the annual plan and budget.
SALLY NEWELL COHEN:	Thanks, James.
	Xavier, please, if you could answer this one.
XAVIER CALVEZ:	Of course. Thank you, Sally.
	Thank you, Wolf-Ulrich for this question.
	And for everyone's understanding, Wolf-Ulrich is pointing out to the fact that our three ICANN meetings in -- during the calendar year 2020 will effectively be virtual.
	So to give you a general idea, an ICANN meeting, on average, costs approximately, when it's face to face and virtual at the same time, with remote participation, approximately, on average, $4 million, U.S. dollars.
	The recent ICANN67, which was held virtually, but we had already engaged a number of costs for that meeting already, cost us approximately one and a half to $2 million.
	We are expecting that this policy forum, ICANN68, will cost us around one to one and a half million dollars, so a little bit less, because we didn't have to engage any travel.

So there is a relatively significant savings versus what we were planning for to hold these meetings virtually.

So thank you, Wolf-Ulrich for the question.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much, Xavier.

I believe the next question may be for you as well. James, if you would read that.

JAMES COLE: Yeah, that's correct. This question comes from Jonathan Zuck, and it is for Xavier.

Obviously, COVID has had more of an impact on expenditures than revenue, and suggests that money is being saved with these virtual meetings. There are, however, costs being borne by community members, faster Internet, finding quiet places to participate in the middle of the night, et cetera. So it might make sense to look at how some of the expenses normally encountered during face-to-face meetings might be applied to those who are normally sponsored travelers.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you, Jonathan, for this point and this question.

So Jonathan is pointing out to the fact that -- which we just discussed with Wolf-Ulrich's question -- about the ICANN meeting's lower costs. And effectively we have lower costs, as we just discussed.

Just a point about revenue or our funding. Jonathan is pointing to the fact that we -- we are seeing currently, over the past few weeks, that our funding remains steady so far. I simply want to caution everyone that we don't really know what the future will bear. And certainly the ongoing economic impacts on the world of this pandemic are difficult to measure ahead of us, and therefore we want to remain very cautious about our funding.

Having said that, Jonathan is explaining to everyone that ICANN supports travelers, or a number of travelers, to help them participate to the face-to-face meetings and has not so far provided support for -- specific support to individuals for remote participation. So this is, obviously, a new situation for ICANN, and therefore a new situation from purely a support standpoint.

And your suggestion, Jonathan, is one that we need to consider, that we've also discussed internally. And to that effect, I will ask Sally Costerton to complement this -- the answer to your question.

Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Xavier.

And thank you for the question, Jonathan.

We are examining this as we speak. At part of the consultation process of the future meetings, which I talked about in my comments, we have already had this topic raised by a few members of the community and the board and the org.

So Xavier and I will convene a discussion with some of our colleagues in the immediate aftermath of ICANN68 to look at potential options, pros and cons, and try and come back within a reasonable time to the community with some suggestions and a point of view about how we might respond to the question.

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much, Sally and Xavier.

I believe we have one last question.

And, James, if you could please read that.

JAMES COLE: This question is again from Wolf-Ulrich Knoben.

I appreciate very much all the efforts taken by ICANN Org to keep the interpretation and transcription service at a high standard since I have to rely myself, from time to time, on transcripts.

There were several confusing or non-understandable results in the recent past, in particular when it comes to transcribing acronyms and the related context (indiscernible) may have been used to.

My request is to -- whether the service could be improved in this respect by better educating the service staff you engage.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks, James.

I think that question is for me.

Thank you for the question, Wolf. It's something that's very important to us in language services to continually improve the level of translations and the quality of the translations.

We do continually educate the interpretation team and provide opportunities, we have glossaries we use, too.

One of the things that creates a challenge is the fast pace. And certainly there are times when typos occur, particularly with realtime transcription.

So do know that we are always seeking ways to continually educate the staff and the interpretation specialists.

But I take your question to heart.

So thank you for that.

I believe we have exhausted all of the questions.

James, is that correct? And there's no hands raised?

JAMES COLE: That is correct.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay. Let me turn to Goran and ask if you have any closing comments you'd like to make.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you very much for -- thank you very much for participating in this call. It's been -- there's been a lot of interest for this call and I hope it's answered some of the questions.

I'd also like to really take this opportunity to thank you for all the outreach you're doing, all the engagement you're doing, and that you have continued to work during this period. You haven't missed a beat and it's quite impressive. You are engaged, active, contributing, and you're doing it. And you're doing it for a good cause. You're doing it for the Internet itself.

So I'd just like to take this opportunity to say thank you very much to all of you, and I am looking forward to the best ICANN meeting ever.

Bye, my friends.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran.

And thank you, all, for participating.

We invite you to take a short survey because we'd really like to get your feedback and your thoughts and your comments on this session and if there's ways you believe we can improve it.

You'll see in front of you the link to access the survey.

So many thanks, again, to all of you. Thank you to the executive team. And have a wonderful rest of your day.

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