
ICANN76 | CF – Future of ICANN and the Next President CEO

Tuesday, March 14, 2023 – 13:15 to 14:45 CUN

ANDREA GLANDON:

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TRIPTI SINHA:

Thank you. Good afternoon and welcome to our first Board listening session on the future ICANN CEO. As we announced earlier this month, the Board has established a CEO search committee, which is being led by Chris Chapman as chair and Sarah Deutsch as vice chair. A quick note, the listening sessions include the entire Board and the search process will be conducted by the search committee. In other words, the winnowing down of applicants to a list of viable

candidates is done by the search committee. The entire Board will attend all listening sessions. As the ICANN Board chair, I will be a member of the committee as well.

So I thought I'd go over some committee process steps. So the goal of the committee is to identify a pool of viable candidates for the CEO position, to recommend to the full Board for consideration. The committee's mandate is restricted to searching for viable candidates only. In other words, the full Board will make a decision on who the next president and CEO will be and not the search committee.

The committee is seeking input from the ICANN community through a series of listening sessions, and this is the first such session. There will be additional listening sessions with the ICANN constituency groups, former Board members, regional Internet registries, ICANN Org, the ICANN executive team and others in the Internet ecosystem.

Your input will help the committee to determine what attributes, skills and experience are most important in the next CEO. The committee will use this input to create a candidate profile which will be published before ICANN 77 and presented during that meeting with an invitation to provide further input. In addition, the Board will be launching an RFP to identify an executive search firm. We

anticipate that the process will culminate in the Board naming a new CEO by the end of this year, possibly next year, early next year.

So the goals for this particular session and others are the committee, the Board, would like to hear your thoughts on where ICANN is headed as an organization. As I said during my opening ceremony remarks, we are on the threshold of another inflection point and we face all kinds of new pressures. I talked about the nation states taking a harder look at the Internet ecosystem, legislation and regulation around data privacy and security and, of course, technologies that are evolving in our space that may impact and collide with the DNS and identifier system.

These are just a few pressures that I mentioned. So we want to hear your thoughts about what tomorrow looks like, how do these pressures shape our future? The answers to these questions will help us determine what type of person should lead ICANN into the future, what background, skills and experience will they need to be successful. So this is truly a listening session. We want to hear from you. We don't want to talk to you. We like talking to you, but today we listen to you.

To best help the committee in its search, your input should be forward-looking. We don't want to use our time together to review past CEOs or discuss potential candidates for the position. As a key

component of ICANN's multi-stakeholder decision-making model, you have an important role to play in shaping ICANN's future.

So on behalf of the committee and the entire Board, we thank you for being here and for participating in this critical discussion. Also a quick note, Sally, as interim President and CEO, will recuse herself from sitting with us at the podium. So with that, I'd like to now turn the session over to Chris Chapman, Board member and chair of the search committee. Chris.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you, Chair, and let me add my welcome to Tripti's. I, along with CK and Sajid were the NomCom new representatives to the Board. We came on in late September, and we are the fresh eyes and newbies, if you like, for the purposes of adding those fresh perspectives. We're joined by, on the search committee, the chair, who, whilst ex officio, will have a very strong and has already had a very strong influence on the shaping of the initial stages, along with the deputy chair of the search committee, Sarah Deutsch. And finally, on the committee is Katrina, León and Becky.

So we've got a really terrific subcommittee of the Board. It's very well balanced. Gender wise, it's four men and four women. It's experienced ICANN campaigners. It has fresh eyes. It's a nice representation of the various constituencies. It's geographically dispersed. It's just a nice balance.

As Tripti mentioned, however, the search committee will really do the hard yards, if you like, between about late June and maybe October. But these listening sessions over the next few months—and there will be many, they'll be iterative, they'll be targeted, they'll be to the community generally on other occasions—that's going to be for the full Board. So the full Board will be involved right throughout these listening sessions, and then again in the vital period, hopefully, on our current program from October to, say, November, with a view to making an appointment towards the end of the year.

So I'm delighted and thrilled to be appointed chair, but I also realize it's a great responsibility. Just quickly by way of my own background, I'm from Sydney, Australia. I am a lapsed lawyer, if you like. Became legal counsel of the Seven Network Broadcasting, became managing director of the Seven Network, CEO of a telco broadband start-up with Optus, CEO of the Olympic Stadium, so I've got some major infrastructure background, became managing director of a infrastructure investment fund in Australia, and then more latterly spent 10 years as the chairman of the Australian Communications and Media Authority, simply to say I had an extended period as a regulator. And finally, in recent times I remained president of the IIC, the International Institute of Communications. Stepping down from that in October, so maybe whoever we appoint as president of ICANN can take on that role as well.

The chair has emphasized on a number of occasions that this is an inflection point for ICANN, and it would be ludicrous for us to just charge ahead without really taking stock of what that means. Inflection point in that sense is not a pejorative or negative concept. I've actually only been on the Board for five months, but I'm feeling a real positivity. Every one of these Board members is extremely committed to the mission. I see nothing but great cooperation and input around the Board, been very impressed by the caliber of staff within ICANN Org, and I've initially enjoyed my time within the community. So I think ICANN is in a very good space to really address and move through what that inflection point means, and of course Sally, as the interim president and CEO, has provided wonderful continuity to date.

That inflection point therefore is a recognition that there is strong external influences bearing down on ICANN, and that's essentially the essence of what we want to hear about today. Do you agree that we're at an inflection point? What does that mean? How do you think we should be addressing it? How do we pre-empt it? And logically, we look for a CEO president who has the weighting within the skill sets to really address that to take us through the next phase of the ICANN growth.

It would be equally easy for the Board to just turn out a job description tomorrow. There are precedents for it. We've done it before in 2015, 2011. I'm sure we did it before that. And in one of those pro forma job specs, you'd look for a management, operation

experience, perhaps global or diplomatic experience. You'd have a look at the leadership skills and style. You'd obviously look at their personal attributes and aptitude, and then finally you'd need an understanding of three things. The Internet technology, domain name industry, and Internet governance ecosystem.

Easily written, that represents 80% of what we need. The other 20% is the most important 20%, and that's the unknown. We on the Board would have an assessment now of what that might mean and where the various weightings amongst those characteristics might be. We want to hold up to the light that view, and that view will be informed by what the community tells us over the next four or five months.

As the chair indicated, this is not about reflections on past presidents or past performance. This is forward looking. This is taking that concept of the inflection point and hearing what you think that means for the future of ICANN. I think on that note, that's all I really wanted to say by way of a preamble. I just wanted to underscore my observations that the ICANN Board and the ICANN Org are on a roll. My impressions are very positive to date. It's been daunting, but I've enjoyed the experience immensely, delighted with the search committee and really underscoring the point that this will involve the whole of the Board in this initial listening period, which will be both targeted and across the community and then in the ultimate selection process. So I think on that note, we might turn it to the floor.

Sorry. Maybe if you could just put your hand up. We know Tripti, we know Sarah, Katrina, León, Becky, CK and Sajid. So that's the search subcommittee. What we're going to do is we've got no doubt inquiries, observations coming in from around the community and we've got no one yet at the central microphone. If there are observations you'd like to make in the context of what we've just outlined, delighted if you come forward and we'll try and alternate between online and from the floor. I haven't seen anyone at the microphone yet, so we might take the first call from the Zoom. Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON:

Thank you. This is from Rubens Kuhl. "While I am kind of new at ICANN, 42 Dakar was my first meeting, the feeling so far is that the sins of the last CEO determined the search criteria for the new CEO, like in someone that isn't like that. So I'm glad that this activity is more of a what we need exercise."

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you. I didn't catch your name at the beginning of that, but that is absolutely pertinent to what we want to do today. So that's a nice scene setter. Thank you very much. Coming to the microphone.

MICHAEL PALAGE:

Thank you. Michael Palage. I first want to thank the Board for engaging in this dialogue. This is something that has been done by previous Boards, so I'm glad that you're continuing and perhaps even making this more engaging. So that's a positive. I also would agree with you, Chris—I am now participating in my 75th ICANN meeting, and I would agree that this has been one of the more positive vibes. So that is a good thing.

The one thing I would like to perhaps challenge you and Tripti on is about just forward looking. To me, the past is prologue. So I think we need to learn from the past. So as we look forward that we actually kind of now that get that right. And perhaps my perspective, there's a small group of us here that have had the ability to work with all six ICANN CEOs. The one thing I would encourage every Board member to do is as part of the ICANN project, every ICANN CEO did a video interview. This is something that Brad White and Steve Crocker advanced. Those videos are incredibly insightful. Each CEO gives their perspective of what they were expecting coming, in the challenges they did. So I would really encourage, spend two and a half hours, go through those five videos. Really will be helpful.

Let's see. So one of the things that I would like to focus on is a trend that I've seen in some of the past CEOs that tend to be more commercial driven and more centric. And again, we're not going to name many names. But I think that potentially loses focus of some

of the original CEOs. The first two CEOs, Mike Roberts and Stuart Lynn, they both came from the academic world. And I think that's something that's really important because from the academic world, they had to deal with many diverse viewpoints. And some of the early ICANN meetings, and I've been talking to some people about that, they were incredibly challenging. There we go, under two minutes, sorry.

What's important about what these CEOs did, my first year on the ICANN Board, \$6.8 million. That is all ICANN had to do in doing its mission. And to put that in perspective, HR budget this year is \$5.7 million. So ICANN has grown incredibly. And it's a good thing. Doing good things, not going to criticize that. But if you look at the academic world, they really have incredible skill sets to bring diverse people together and try to work. And that was really where the original, I think, Internet was started from. And again, we're pointing to Tripti because where does our current Board chair come from but the academic world? So that would be my point. Please have the people look at the academic world. They really have a good track record as ICANN CEOs. Don't forget about that. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thanks, Mike. That's a very positive start. We'll take the next microphone.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Sébastien Bachollet, I am currently Chair of EURALO, but I am just talking on my behalf. Thank you for having this discussion here. The future of ICANN is linked with the evolution of its organization. You say the Board, the ICANN Board has officially began the process to search for and select ICANN next president and chief executive officer. Yes, that is what is in the bylaw. But it is maybe not too late to study some possible changes. I suggest thinking outside of the box. And for that, I would like to put the following three questions on the table. And of course, hoping that the answer can be developed collectively.

Are we looking for the leadership of ICANN or of ICANN Org? That means staff. To lead ICANN, do we stay with one single person as president and CEO, or do we set up a collegiate management with two people, one president, one CEO, with three people, whatever we decide? My last question is, who is the voice or [inaudible] voice of ICANN? It's something, for me, very important.

ICANN is in a good position to open this reflection with possible outcome in a few months, but with no hurry, as we have a new leadership of the Board, hopefully for the next two years, a very good interim president and CEO, a renewed group of leaders from the community. Thank you to have listened to my thinking. It is primarily to the Board, but also to the leaders of the various community groups and to the staff leaders. Thank you very much.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for those observations, suggestions, questions. If we were to simply say, thank you, they're noted, that's not meant disrespectfully. It might seem a glib Australian way of saying thank you, but the purpose of today is to listen. Logically and sensibly, we won't be responding with answers today, but you're framing it as a rhetorical question. It's well-structured. It's well-founded. We understand. Often, not controversial, but challenging questions make us rethink and give us cause for pause and hold up our current views to the light for reassessment. So I thank you for that, and you can be rest assured that these are exactly the sort of conversations that are currently going on.

I might take a next question from the microphone, and then we'll come back to the Zoom.

EDUARDO DIAZ:

Thank you. My name is Eduardo Diaz. I come from the At-Large organization, and I participated as part of the Internet Society of Puerto Rico. Answering these three questions here, I think ICANN, looking forward, the world is going to become more complex in the Internet context. You will see a lot of forces for fragmenting the Internet based on geopolitical decisions or what have you.

Applications like blockchain, crypto, artificial intelligence, applications like that are very important to understand them. So the individual that you're looking for, please, make sure he or she understands what these applications are, and at least have a knowledge, because those are starting coming in, and I believe those applications and those things will somehow affect ICANN one way or another. I cannot say. But you should be aware of that.

And knowing that, knowing about possible Internet fragmentation—somebody mentioned about being a person that is diplomatic in their approach. It's very important, and obviously to have a very good knowledge about financials and things like that are important. But on the technical side, you should be aware of that. I know there are people in ICANN that can help in that too. Thank you so much.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. In another forum yesterday, a question was raised about the number of women, a broader candidate of women for the role. And whilst we might sit back and say that's a given, it was a reminder that that sort of reminder that was given from the floor to us yesterday leads to discussions whilst we're here as a Board, and it was very helpful the suggestion yesterday.

I say that because these so far are all really interesting ideas, and obviously it's being recorded. But there is a website, our website will be probably going live tonight, and so we're going to encourage you

to put these into the—so we'll obviously be publicizing that, but it's CEOsearch2023@ICANN.org, and that will be live from tonight. So over the next couple of months, I would encourage you to all fully utilize that facility because these are very interesting, constructive observations. I'll come next to the Zoom call.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. Jorge in the Zoom room, you may give your comment.

JORGE CANCIO: Hello, everyone. This is Jorge Cancio, Swiss Government, speaking more personally in this case, but I guess reflecting what our position would be. I very much agree with many things that Tripti mentioned yesterday in the opening speech. I think we are living in an interconnected and ever more interdependent digital world, and it might sound paradoxical, but the many conflicts and the fears of fragmentation are felt so deeply because we are so interdependent. I think one thing goes with the other, and the Internet is expanding, especially in the global south.

So what I think the new CEO and president should be is somebody that is able to embody that diversity, that global diversity, that is able [seize] or to develop a global legitimacy. And for this, I think basic skills, essential skills, are dialogue and dialogue and again dialogue and strong diplomatic and communication skills. So I think these would be very important elements, and of course there's

always a good team to support such a CEO, COO, and others that can complement those skills. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you very much. You landed that perfectly on two minutes. Coming to the microphone.

MARK DATYSGELD: This is Mark Datysgeld, GNSO Council, but speaking in my personal capacity. Thank you, Board, for holding this session. I do believe it's very important. And to answer the question of whether this is an inflection point, I believe so. This is the first time that we've had a credible alternative to domain name resolution pretty much emerging. We are seeing these different systems being assembled by the day. Most of them have proven to be scams, but we don't need all of them to succeed. We need one alternative domain name resolution system to work and then we have ourselves a competitor in a scale that we didn't really need to have faced before. This is really about the continuity of the DNS and how we see that looking forward.

So, whoever comes in as the next CEO needs to be aware of the potential—I'm not saying this will happen, but there is a potential that we'll be looking at more than what we are right now. We'll be looking at actual competition instead of just the many legal challenges and adaptations that we'll have to make. There might be

another factor. We will be maybe dealing with one or multiple competitors. So, in that sense, it would need to be someone who's attuned to those possibilities, somebody who would look into that and would be able to look into what the DNS has to offer other than its tradition.

We have robust conflict resolution mechanisms. We have a global community. We have a lot of different processes that we keep improving and that's our strength over the systems. How do we keep that relevant? How do we keep this up to date and we keep being the most credible system on the Internet pretty much? How do we maintain that in face of new challenges? So, my personal request would be somebody that at least considers that to be a priority of some sort. Thank you very much.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you. Very well expressed. Another perfect landing. We'll go to remote next.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. We have a comment from Adebunmi Akinbo. You may open your line.

ADEBUNMI AKINBO: Okay. Adebunmi Akinbo for the record. I'm CEO of DNS Africa, media and communications. I meant to be saying I'm sitting in my chair in

my office and I see a great passion to listen. I've been fortunate in the past to interview the CEO of ICANN and I have noticed that most times those who don't have all the answers often give us the best in the community. So considering that, we must also be looking at different—I already know you would be looking at the geographies, providing strategic oversight, understanding diverse community policies is all being covered by you already.

However, I would also look at a leader that [inaudible] pays attention to new challenges and may not have all the answers. I believe strongly that diplomacy is needed. The gap between the continents is getting smaller by the day. On that note, I think one person that would have a strong voice would be our best choice in the coming future for ICANN. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. There's a recurring theme here about being visionary, having the ability to take in new technologies. And something you've interestingly said there, not pretending that you have all the answers but being able to be led as well, which personally I think is a very important ingredient. So thank you for that contribution. Bruce.

BRUCE TONKIN:

Thank you, Chris. My name's Bruce Tonkin. I bring another Australian accent to translate into English. You opened the session,

Chris, by saying, do we agree that we've reached an inflection point? And I do believe there is an inflection point here, both not just for ICANN but the Internet governance system generally. And I think that's because the Internet and its naming and identifier system have become critical to digital economies in most parts of the world. And now we're seeing governments very proactively feeling they need to regulate that environment. And they're creating new rules on a time scale of about a year, from inception to actual implementation of those rule changes, which is about, in our cycle, about three ICANN meetings. And so they're now working much faster than we are. We're also seeing a hodgepodge because these pieces of regulation around the world, we're no longer having sort of global interoperable Internet standards, but a whole series of different rules and regulations in every country that we're trying to navigate.

And I think where the Internet governance system needs to be is we've built this model, a very powerful, multi-stakeholder system. We've been encouraging and developing that. But it's necessary but not sufficient. Sometimes when I come to an ICANN meeting, I feel like I'm actually in a book club. And in fact, there's a series of book clubs, and we're basically all discussing the same four or five books. One book is the new gTLD book. Another book is the WHOIS book. Third book would be improvements to security and stability. And the fourth book would be improvements to DNS.

And each of the various groups are talking about more or less the same book. And we're bringing our perspectives. But our role is not to be the book club. Our role is to actually create the next book. So instead of being a book club and just discussing it, you actually have to make tangible improvements for the benefit of the community. So I think the new CEO needs to both embrace the multi-stakeholder system as a core principle but be capable of delivery improvements to the community.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thanks, Bruce. From one Australian to another. Very eloquently put. We might come to the next online, and then I'll come to you, madam. Sorry.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you so much. We have a hand up from Betty Fausta. You may make your comment,

BETTY FAUSTA: Hello, everyone. I was thinking the new CEO must have a good knowledge of geopolitics and a worldview that takes into consideration the wealthier countries, which is often the case, but also the poorer countries, the ones that are still struggling to develop. At every meeting and at every technical working group, we have the UN languages interpreted, right? And we know that one of the issues one of the participants mentioned is the fragmentation

of the Internet and what can happen when some of our end users are left out. So we need to pay attention to that to make sure our end users stay united in order for us to have an Internet that is as united and thriving as possible.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you, Betty. It's always important to have that reminder, and you've made that. And if you could follow up with a contribution online, that would be marvelous. I'll come to the microphone here. Thank you.

LORI SCHULMAN:

Thank you very much. My name is Lori Schulman, and I'm speaking strictly in my personal capacity. I'm going to quickly go through my top of head answers to some of these questions. Yes, we're at an inflection point. There's no question, and there's no looking back. And I think it's very important that that's what we focus on. No looking back. We only have to look forward. What does tomorrow look like for ICANN? As very eloquently stated by others, we've got external pressures, governmental pressure, regulations. We're not sure where they're going, how they understand. We have alternate roots. We have alternate technologies, all external. So there's political and technological external threats.

I would not ignore that there's also internal threats. And I think the CEO needs to be fully equipped to manage those threats as well. It's been my belief, and I've been very vocal about it for the last six

years, seven years, that this, what I consider a false narrative about org, Board, and community needs to be fixed. We all have a role in one ICANN. We are not fighting with each other. We should be working with each other. We should be balancing our interests. It's about checks and balances.

And my feeling is that moving forward, there's a deep understanding that no one's against anyone. Everyone's facilitating work. And the idea is to push the work forward. And I have not had that feeling as a member of the community. I think it's very, very dangerous. I think it's important to understand the role of the Board, the fiduciary role of the Board and the strategic importance of the Board. But it's equally important to understand what's within operational limits and what's within what I would call participatory limits within the community. But we're all part of the bylaws. We all have our role at ICANN.

So I would definitely recommend, in terms of the skills of the CEO, that we really—you mentioned three big buckets, understand the technology, understand domains, understand diplomacy. I would argue and put heavier weight on the diplomacy. You can have technical advisors. You can get up to speed on domain names if you have to. But being diplomatic is something inherent, practiced, learned. And if I were on the committee, I would focus on diplomacy. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Lori, thank you very much. Very passionately put. And, again, I think that would play well to a follow-up submission, particularly your perspectives on this false narrative. So thank you for that. Chris.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Hi, everyone. Chris Disspain. What does tomorrow look like for ICANN? Well, we sort of know what tomorrow looks like. There's stuff out there. We can see probably as far as the horizon, but we can't see beyond it. How do external pressures threaten our future? ICANN's always been subject to external pressures. From the very beginning, there were pressures on legitimacy. Do we have the right to exist? There are now similar pressures. There are pressures in respect to the multi-stakeholder model itself. And there are pressures from competing technologies and a whole heap of other things.

How will these dynamics shape the skills of ICANN's next CEO? Well, I think what we need is someone who can empower a team, the team or new members of the team, to deal with all of the disparate problems, pressures that are out there, because no one person can deal with all of those.

We need somebody with some visionary skills to be able to see as far as the horizon and to think outside of the managerial box. But above all else, I think what we need is someone who is an expert in,

incredibly well practiced in, communication and engagement. And my fear is if we don't get that, then instead of being at an inflection point, we'll be at an inflection cul-de-sac and we'll end up back where we started. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thanks, Chris. That's just underscoring yet another one of the key skill sets that will be required. We'll go online next. Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. Comment from Anne Aikman-Scalese. Would the Board consider putting out a survey tool to the community and to even a wider audience, including surveys and input from individuals closely involved with the entities that may consider that the ICANN model is not working?

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that question/suggestion. As I indicated at the outset, as did the chair, this is not a session where we'll give you instant reactions. We'll take on Board all of the comments today, all of the submissions, observations, commentary that will come through the email facility, and it will give us a lot of material to digest and pour over, and we'll make progressive decisions over the course of the next few months. But we understand the thrust of the question/suggestion. Thank you.

BERNARDO BEIRIZ:

hello. My name is Bernardo. I'm from the NextGen program. I've heard about the sustainability of ICANN and its future, and I think that it's important for the next CEO, as you are looking for today, to have this look for not only the youth programs like the NextGen and, well, the fellowship, which is not so youth necessarily, but to have this engagement for the future of ICANN. It also passes through the recruitment of new members for this community to keep going forward. I would like to reinforce the point that was made towards the engagement with regions such as the Global South and the importance of ICANN to have its presence in countries and showing how it can get people from those regions.

Referring to the question about the book club, I also think it's important to have some diversity in the books that are read in these clubs, although still in ICANN's mandate, not getting out of its mission as it's reinforced here.

But in general, I would like to say that this inflection point not only passes through a moment of redefining—I think it passes through redefining how it engages with its community, because, as you may see, we still have, as we would call, founding members here, but we need new people that will make this community going. So I think it's important to have someone that will not challenge the continuity of programs that look into engaging with people and giving support to

programs such as ICANN Wiki, which importance is sometimes overlooked. But anyway, thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that. Just to reiterate, we're hoping that the CEO search website will be live tonight, and that'll have the address for the email to submit commentary progressively over the next few months. So thank you. We'll stay with the microphone.

BRETT CARR: Hi, I'm Brett Carr. The global pandemic has changed the way that the world works in many different ways, where we work from, how we collaborate, and what's needed because of that have changed dramatically since 2019. This, of course, means the world is dramatically more reliant on the Internet than it was, and that's only going to increase.

I think we need to strongly embrace those changes and lead the world on how we work in the future, both from a community and ICANN Org perspective. So a candidate for the role should embrace those strategies that support that way of thinking.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you, Brett, for that exhortation, and it's certainly one to hold up there as a strong aspirational intent. Thank you. Stay with the microphone, and then we'll go to the next Zoom.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much. Pierre Bonis, CEO of AFNIC.fr, ccTLD. Thank you to give us this opportunity to comment. Two points, very quickly. The first one is about leadership. We are talking about leadership or management qualities, and that's what Sébastien said, having a CEO that is a CEO of ICANN Org, but we also need the leadership towards the community, because with this multi-stakeholder model, sometimes we all, stakeholders, need a leader to remind us that time is of the essence, that we like to talk, but maybe we should deliver, and this is also something that the CEO can do and can try to do with the communities and the stakeholders. The second point that I would like to raise is about the international, multi-stakeholder, inclusive reality of ICANN. These qualities exist, but we have to remind ourselves that ICANN is also an organization that is incorporated in the U.S., which means that the CEO should have, in my point of view, a very good understanding on how it works in the U.S., and a capacity to represent and sometimes defend ICANN in front of U.S. authorities. Thank you very much.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that, and very clearly and well put. Thank you. We'll go to Zoom. Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. Roberto Gaetano. You may make your comment.

ROBERTO GAETANO: Thank you. This is Roberto Gaetano. I'm a longtime participant to ICANN. I have listened to all the comments before, although I agree with most of the contributions of the former speaker, I would like to raise one point that might be forgotten when we look for the profile of the new CEO.

The point is that the Internet is going through a change, actually through many changes, but in particular one is that the users are more and more using, communicating via social networks, social media, rather than websites, interested in websites. So while the domain name system will still remain pertinent and important, and the technical coordination of all the parameters is still something that will always be of importance, I personally believe that the importance of the top-level domains, including the next round of delegation of new TLDs, will in time lose importance.

This will have a huge impact on ICANN, both as Org and as a community. There are also some changes that we must take care of in terms of the funding mechanism of ICANN if the delegation of new TLDs, and generally the creation of new domains, is not going to go on at the rate that we have experienced in the past.

So while I think it's important that the new CEO is somebody who fully understands these changes and possibly comes from experiences that are outside, still on the Internet, but outside the

traditional footprint of ICANN. Thank you. Sorry for having exceeded my time.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that. It was a very sobering contribution and just was a new perspective. So we thank you for that. And again, if you could follow up through the email facility on the website, that would be terrific. I'm going to do a couple from the floor here next. Nigel.

NIGEL HICKSON: Thank you very much. And thank you for the Board and the Org for putting on this session. I think it's incredibly important. I'm no expert at all. I just speak from my own experience, both being a community member and on the ICANN staff for eight years. But I'm not saying that's unique in any sense at all.

Yes, we are at an inflection point. And as Tripti said in her speech yesterday morning, which I think was one of the most eloquent speeches and important speeches I've heard at ICANN for a long time, inflection points come and go. But this one is quite a significant one in the lead up to the WSIS+20 review and other global political issues that affect the whole Internet governance agenda.

We had inflection points back in 2012 at the ITU conference. We had inflection points just prior to Net Mundial in 2014. But ICANN weathered those storms. They became more effective, more

efficient, more outgoing. The IANA transition was an example of how one could deal with an incredibly difficult problem with a multi-stakeholder model. So, yes, I'm confident that ICANN will get over these inflection points again.

What do we need from the next CEO? Well, as people have said, we need someone that can engage. We need someone that can inspire. We need someone that can go out on the road, so to speak, and convince people of the importance of ICANN. And that last sentence on the screen defines it all in terms of the change, in terms of the embracing change and embracing the whole multi-stakeholder community.

But above all this, above being an excellent communicator, someone that will engage, we need someone that's kind, that's good with their staff. And we've been very fortunate in our CEOs that we've had that before. And let's have it in the future. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Beautifully synthesized, Nigel. Thank you for that. We'll just do one more from the floor. Jordan.

JORDAN CARTER: Hi, everyone. My name is Jordan Carter. I come to the mic just speaking personally, but from a ccTLD background and my ICANN

participation. The inflection point is bigger than a technology one. There's a bigger geopolitical shift going on in the world, and some have called it the age of the poly-crises, as it were. ICANN sits in that technology milieu that is affected by that as well.

So I think that alongside that, the Internet's impact on societies is now kind of fully realized, right? This isn't nice to have infrastructure anymore. It's at the foundation of society and how it works in almost every respect. So governments are fully involved.

So I think one of the external pressures is the relationship, not just with the Internet community, but also with governments and policymaking in the tech environment more broadly than perhaps we've sometimes been willing to admit in our community and in the way we talk about governments in particular.

So I think the two things that the next CEO will need to focus on is both helping ICANN to deliver the things it does, the various policy and technology outputs that it does, but also to strengthen our linkages with that community and to join with other Internet community organizations to be really effective players in the broader technology and geopolitical debate so that we can glue this multi-stakeholder approach in rather than see it become peripheral and then wither away and replaced by other arrangements.

And some of the skills they'll need is to know how to be collaborative and communicative. I think one attribute that they'll need is to not be particularly strongly ego-driven. I think that's important because that's at the foundation of whether you can genuinely bring coalitions together and work with other people.

I want to offer one quick comment that I think there's a question missing there as well. The top two questions are about the environment. But the other question is, what is our strategy to respond to tomorrow, to where we want to go, and to those pressures? Because depending on the strategy the organization takes, that should also drive the skills. We have processes through strategy scanning that help us to understand the pressures and maybe how the environment is changing. But I wonder whether a strategic plan that was pulled together in 2020 and '21 for a five-year term—I think that's the current plan, I might have the years wrong—might need a bit of a look before you really finally determine the skills. Thanks.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. And you're right. Implicit in this, although not made explicit, is that strategy piece. So I'm glad you drew that out and thank you for that contribution. We'll go online next.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. I'll read a question from Dave Kissondoyal. The future CEO has to be someone who has to take the right decision at the right time. When he is split between the interests of the organization he is leading and the interest of the community, his decision will impact one or the other. For transparency, he should communicate why he took such decision.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that contribution. It's very succinct. You are on the cusp of raising a much broader issue there and I'd encourage you to, perhaps through the contribution in an email, tease out what you mean by that split and why you're seeing it that way and how you think it could resolve. So, interesting question. Thank you very much. Come to the floor.

JORDYN BUCHANAN: Thank you. My name is Jordyn Buchanan from Google, but speaking in my personal capacity. I'm a fairly longtime participant in this process. I went to my first ICANN meeting over 20 years ago. And while I haven't stood at this mic for over five years, took a little break to do some other things for a while, I look around and I feel very comfortable in this space because, honestly, not much has changed in the last five years. That's partly true, just the faces, and it's great that we have this sense of community and people that I think have been so collaborative in working together, but it's not so great when

I look at the substantive progress that has been made, or rather that hasn't been made, over the past few years, or really over the past decade or so.

And you can look at, I think, a number of examples of this. The last sort of major work item I was involved with at ICANN was the Competition and Consumer Choice Review. I looked at the status of that review, which completed over five years ago. Four out of 21 items that the Board agreed needed to be addressed, not by the community but by ICANN itself, have been completed at this point. Four out of 21 in over five years. That's part of a broader malaise, I think, with regards to the broader new gTLD program, where originally the standing policy was we were going to have another round within a year. Now we're over a decade later and we still aren't there.

Another sort of fine example of that would be the IGO process, where the community completed its work and the Board adopted the policy on IGO protections in 2019, approximately four years ago, and it still has not been implemented by staff. This, consistently across the Board, I think, we see examples of where we're just not living up to the vision of ICANN as being an entity that could be more responsive and more rapid at looking at technological changes in the government.

In fact, the only big change I see over the past decade is the response to WHOIS data protections, and that's only because the EU adopted a policy. ICANN is responding to government instead of leading the way. We need to fundamentally reshape the velocity of this organization if it has any utility outside of these walls. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. Thank you for putting it assertively. One of the reasons I concentrated on my initial impressions is that... and one of the reasons why the chairman has explicitly, publicly indicated this inflection point is that there are many frustrations, recognized, acknowledged, and you've just outlined some of them in a very passionate way. And I think there is a strong recognition that not only the externalities but the community frustrations, and there's a real realization internally within the Board that there have got to be more efficient, effective, and timely deliverables. So it's landed well. Thank you. I'll come next online, and then I'll come back to the microphone. Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON:

Thank you. Gopal Tadepalli, you may state your comment.

GOPAL TADEPALLI:

Thank you very much. It's well past midnight in India. I'm an unaffiliated individual member of Asia Pacific RALO. At the inflection

point, how do we bolster the ethics-first approach in an interdisciplinary context? Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Could we just... I didn't capture that. Do you think we might ask the gentleman to repeat his question? I'm sorry if everyone else did, but I just didn't quite catch it all.

ANDREA GLANDON: Gopal, please.

GOPAL TADEPALLI: My apologies for being a bit faster. At the inflection point, how do we bolster the ethics-first approach in an interdisciplinary context? May I take the liberty of adding that law can come later.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that. We will let that sit within the record. We will follow it up with you directly so that we get a better understanding of what you're alluding to. Not ignoring it, I'm saying explicitly that we'll come back to you because we just quite didn't capture that all. I'm going to come to the microphone.

FARZANEH BADI: Hi, my name is Farzaneh Badii, Noncommercial Stakeholder Group. I think that the future of ICANN, if ICANN can have any future, rests

in its ability to bring change in a much faster way. It took ICANN 24 years to have a CEO who is female, and that's an interim CEO, and so I don't think ICANN can really take credit for having a female CEO. So for the search committee, I would like to suggest that you make a conscious effort to recruit qualified women who are out there, and there are many of them, and maybe find out the ways that you can incentivize their participation in the recruiting process. Again, hearing that there were no skilled candidates or qualified candidates that were female is not an acceptable answer. We need to know the reason why it took us 24 years to have a female CEO, and we need to act upon it. Maybe women are just not interested to lead this organization, but we need to know the reason, and it's unacceptable to hear again and again and again that there were no qualified women, or they didn't apply. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. You made the similar point yesterday, and I can assure you that you were very effective in your communication, and it's been the subject of some discussion since. In fact, Sarah and I have had a very long discussion about it, and clearly it'll go to... You've raised the consciousness about the RFI with respect to the executive search committee we appoint, matters like that, to take into account the matters you've raised. Sarah, do you want to add to that?

SARAH DEUTSCH: Yes. I just want to thank you again for making this comment. It really resonates with us on the Board. You see a group of people here who... We're diverse in many ways, but the gender parity issue is something we want to encourage. We want to encourage diversity for female candidates and for all kinds of diversity. So thank you again for resonating with us and for making such a strong point today. We really appreciate it.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: We've got about 30, 40 minutes to go. We're on a roll. I think there are two comments online that we want to read perhaps next, and then we'll take two microphones. So just bear with me one moment.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. We have a comment from Gadsway Kubi. "Hello, everyone. I am Gadsway Kubi, an information technology support specialist connecting from Ghana. Looking at the comments so far, I second to the fact that the next president must have a good and strong leadership and communication skills. Thank you."

We have another comment from [Mahmoud Khalif.] "Comment one. Can we envision in the hiring process the involvement of the community leaders or through the NomCom, specifically an interview or presentation of shortlisted candidates? Comment two. Could we also think of a COO position with the future CEO being tasked to identify the adequate profile and candidates? Thank you."

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

We recognize the substance of those two comments. COO role is one we discuss, and I think the chair yesterday and again today indicated that we will develop a job specification, role specification, and publish that before late June for DC, and that will be part of the community discussion. So that's open to more intense review before that, but that's where we're at at the moment. So comments are well made. We're going to come to the microphone where we've got quite a few, so we'll take a couple there for the moment. Thank you.

WERNER STAUB:

My name is Werner Staub. I work for CORE Association, but I speak in a personal capacity right now. We need leadership in ICANN that helps us overcome one of the natural problems, and that is we all become complacent. We have become complacent as a group over the years, and I've seen a number of examples of that. One of them is that we fail to integrate innovations that come on the Internet from other areas. One key area where we totally fail to even react is identity systems, trust systems. There has been enormous amount of work all over the place, and we have kept behaving as if identifiers did not exist, looking to fax numbers maybe as a way of handling data. We would talk about data and not talk about identifiers.

There's many communities also that have something to bring, and we've always had an attitude of saying, no, you should come to our organization. You should come and subject yourself to our procedures. We don't have to go outside to do something. So I think that the new CEO should be not Superman in that male sense specifically of the word. No, it should be the person who helps us overcome our trends to just look at our own productions, our own ideas.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. That's a new and interesting perspective. I was so engrossed in enjoying the feedback that I perhaps indicated that there was too much time, 30 to 40 minutes. We're actually probably going to close the queue now. So if you're at the back of the queue, you're still on. I'm going to come to the microphone for the next one. Thank you.

JAVIER RÚA-JOVET:

My name is Javier [inaudible] for North America, NomCom appointed. But I speak in my personal capacity. And my comment is from a really, really personal capacity and personal perspective. I am a resident of a non-sovereign territory, Puerto Rico. So in this inflection point, which I see an inflection point between two governance models, multilateralism versus multistakeholderism, my wish is that the next CEO of ICANN and that ICANN itself as a governance model, that the next CEO is not only a defender of the

multistakeholder model, a defender of its expansion as a governance model, period. Why do I say that?

From my perspective, particularly as a resident of a non-sovereign territory, is that in ICANN, in the multistakeholder environment that we have here, there are no barriers to entry for perspectives like mine. There are spaces in the multilateral governance model where we can creep in in non-sovereign territories, but it's an exception. It's a club of states talking to each other and allowing other little bits of other people commenting. But here in ICANN, prior to being a ccNSO councilor, which, of course, Puerto Rico has its own CC and its own identity in that context, before, I was an ALAC member, and in the At-Large community, Puerto Rico is also recognized as a particular thing within North America. And I'm fairly certain that within the GAC, if Puerto Rico wanted to be a member, it could as a distinct economy. So a CEO that is a real champion of the multistakeholder model for people like me. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you. Thank you. For that exhortation. The flip side of complacency, linking back to that earlier question, is that we need to be more proactive and adopt a more positive posture as an organization. So thank you for making that point. Next, on the microphone.

ALI HADJI MMADI:

Thank you very much. My name is Ali Hadji from Comoros, and I am a member of the ccNSO. ICANN is a unique community, and although we have certain differences, we manage to move forward based on consensus because we're all driven towards a common objective, which is to strengthen the Internet. To me, the CEO should be able to preserve that spirit. ICANN is an open institution, which currently allows people like me, Ali Hadji, to come to the microphone to express my views and to contribute, not as a spectator, but as a member of a community. I hope the CEO will also defend that spirit and uphold that values by listening to our contributions and by taking into consideration wherever they come from, a CEO that can adhere to the idea of approaching the community in every region.

In the near future, a new gTLD program will be launched, a new series. So I hope the new CEO will defend the geo names of countries that are not powerful, as is the case of Comoros, with its three characters that are currently being used for profit. ICANN uses different communication channels. There are IDNs and universal acceptance, which would allow machines to help us. So I hope the next CEO will be able to speak different languages so as to facilitate communication with the community. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that. A leader whose style and intellect allows them to be a true global ambassador and to be able to speak to all parts of the community. Beautifully said. Thank you. We might just take one comment and then come to the rest of the microphone, and then time will have expired. That comment, please.

ANDREA GLANDON: Thank you. We have a comment from Tracy Hackshaw. The new CEO must appreciate, not only in words, but in concrete actions, that the real inflection point is that the next wave of Internet users will emerge from those who are currently unconnected, whether meaningfully or literally. These include, but are not limited to, SIDS and LDCSes. As such, the qualities, sensitivities, and emotional intelligence of the ICANN CEO must be able to take the hard decisions to refocus efforts on ensuring that the newly connected do so safely, securely, and without prejudice.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for that comment. Very useful, timely reminder that it's not only the traditional hard skills that we're looking for in terms of experience, background, but the soft skills, the emotional intelligence, the ability to really connect with people and to be empathetic. Beautifully put. Thank you. Coming to the microphone, my friend.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Good afternoon. My name is Benjamin Akimoyeje and I'm from the NCUC, Non-Commercial User Constituency. So I think the future of ICANN and the multi-stakeholder governance model depends on its ability to defend the equal participation of all the stakeholders. And I think at this point, ICANN, the new CEO, should be someone who is very sensitive to the equal and empowered participation of the non-commercials. I mean, knowing fully well the goodwill that ICANN drives by being interested in the social wellbeing, social goodwill for the stakeholders. And I think this is a critical criteria that should be considered when looking at the new CEO. Someone who is sensitive to make sure that those who are not driven by profit or big business are also participating actively. And that will show that we're really a multi-stakeholder community. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you again. Just a reiteration of those soft skills needed. Thank you.

CINDYNEIA CANTANHEDE: Hello. I'm Cindyneia Cantanhede. I'm a fellow and I'm also a lawyer from Brazil. And I would like to highlight the importance of the regional offices at ICANN to mobilize new participation. Especially when we are talking of groups who are not represented here, such as the indigenous and also quilombos, as well as institutions who are already leaders at the Internet but are not familiar with the

ICANN ecosystem. So I believe this is an opportunity to enhance the participation of the regional office and make more approaches so we can have ICANN being more representative, not only in the conferences, but also in each country who are dealing with the DNS issues and other related themes at ICANN. Thank you.

CHRIS CHAPMAN: Thank you for underscoring that. It's a variation on a theme, but very well put

ASHLEY LA BOLLE: Hi, my name is Ashley La Bolle, and I'm with Tucows. It's interesting being a part of this conversation, and I want to say thank you for having it because I think it's really important. I see a lot of the same kind of issues coming across the industry when you talk to people. It feels like one-off issues, but it's really a wider trend, and that is we have 20- to 25-year-old systems and structures that made sense 20 to 25 years ago, but maybe don't make sense now. So what we see is we identify issues in the community and we talk about it, and then it bubbles up to governments, and then the governments do something about it, and then we have to go and try to find an approach that works with these new laws that are coming into place.

So if I'm looking at a skill for the new CEO, I'd love to see somebody who is really curious about the other changes happening in

alternate roots or in other technologies like AI, and I would love to see somebody who is really looking out to embrace those changes and bring them into the community and help us understand how we can drive innovation. So if we're looking for something in the CEO that I think is different than what I see in a lot of the industry right now, it's somebody who really has innovation on their mind. I feel like innovation isn't a word I hear a lot here. We talk a lot about efficiency and speed and a lot of kind of the buzzwords, but I feel like we haven't been in an industry that's about innovation and really growth that I think we could be. I think it's a real opportunity for us. So that requires cultural change. That requires maybe a change in the way that we get together and meet, where we dedicate time towards innovation and bringing in the things that are happening on the outside and make sure that we're aware of them and we're thinking about them and we're looking for opportunities. So if we can find a CEO who's able to drive that kind of change in an organization and in a membership and really look for opportunities to innovate, I think we would do ourselves a lot of favors going forward.

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Thank you for that. I'm going to bastardize an expression, but anyone can get you from A to B, but curiosity and imagination can take you anywhere. So thank you and well put. I think we've got one or two comments online. We'll just close that out. Then I'll ask the

chair to provide a final perspective and wrap it up. A couple of comments. Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON:

Thank you. Comment from Pari Esfandiari. "Many interesting points are already made. I want to emphasize that Internet's role has been transformed from a technology to a geopolitical concept. And as much as ICANN may wish, it also has been dragged into the mix. I do believe there is a need for proactive role by ICANN to defend the multi-stakeholder model and the borderless Internet architecture. The CEO president needs to have not only a good grasp of intersection of Internet and geopolitics and be willing to engage and be proactive rather than reactive, which has been the case in the past."

CHRIS CHAPMAN:

Okay. That's the final comment. Thank you. And very well read. We've put the email address in the chat for this session. Thank you, everybody, for participation. That was exactly what we had hoped for. It's the start of a conversation. There's a lot of different aspects covered there. It was put with great conviction, passion, with the occasional bit of frustration, totally understandable. Impressive performance. Thank you very much. Tripti.

TRIPTI SINHA:

Thank you, Chris. Chris summarized this very well. Thank you so much for respecting our rules of engagement. This is exactly what we wanted. We've listened. We're synthesizing the information. This is the first of many, many more sessions to come. We will also have the other modality, as Chris just said. If you are unable to attend a future listening session, you can still send your comments through the website, which will be stood up this evening.

And I did want to make one final comment. I don't know if Farzaneh is still in the room, but she did bring up the issue of female representation in leadership yesterday and today. And I did want to point out that the search committee is 50% women. And being a woman, I can tell you from past experience, oftentimes women are overlooked because we're not at the table. The search committee has 50% women. And rest assured, our eyes will be on that, and we will ensure that we are doing everything we can to search for highly qualified women for this position. And on that note, I hope that we will see you at the next listening session, and please share this information with your colleagues who were unable to attend, that there will be many, many more opportunities. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]