
ICANN76 | CF – Q&A with ICANN Org Executive Team
Monday, March 13, 2023 – 10:30 to 12:00 CUN

ALEX DANS:

I'm pleased to welcome you all to the Q&A session with ICANN's executive team. My name is Alex Dans and I'm the communication director for the Americas. This is a unique opportunity to have a truly interactive session, a dialogue with ICANN's executive team about projects and initiatives we're working on in ICANN org and to answer your questions. There are three ways to ask questions or make comments during this session. If you are attending the event in person, simply go to the microphone and wait for your turn to make your comments. Please remember to keep your comments brief and respectful to those attending online and in person.

If you are attending virtually, you can submit a written question or comment into the Zoom Q&A pod. Answers may be in the form of typed responses in the pod or I will read your question out loud and the question will be answered. You can also raise your hand online to join the queue to voice your question.

You can find the raise hand icon at the bottom of your screen. Selecting it will automatically add you into the speaker queue. Your microphone will remain muted until it's your turn to speak. We'll then unmute you on your end, which will trigger a note to be sent to your screen requesting that you also unmute your mic. This lets you know that it's your turn to speak. When your name is called, that's your queue to

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

speak and please make sure that your mic is unmuted and speak slowly and clearly. Please do not put questions for the executives' team directly into the chat. We'll only be answering verbal questions or those placed in the Q&A pod.

Real-time interpretation is available for this session in Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, and Portuguese. ICANN is providing interpretation within the Zoom application. Simply select your language and we suggest that even if English is your preferred language, select English so that you can immediately hear questions that are interpreted from another language. If you need to download the Zoom application to access interpretation, information on how to use this feature is available on the ICANN76 meeting page.

Please remember that all participants must adhere to the expected standards of behaviors, which you can read at the link on the screen, and be aware of the ICANN anti-harassment policy. Now, Sally Newell Cohen, ICANN Senior Vice President of Global Communication and Language Services, will explain the format of this session. Thank you. Over to you, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you, Alex. And for the record, I'm Sally Newell Cohen. Welcome. Welcome to Cancun and welcome to the executive team Q&A. I know I speak for the entire executive team when I say that we look forward to this session and getting the opportunity to have a dialogue with you. So, we're going to, we've held this session many times in the past, but we're going to try something new today. And we're doing that because we've listened to you, we've heard you, and we've gotten the feedback that we

need more time for questions. So, we're going to spend a lot of time on questions today, at least an hour for them.

But what we're going to do first is this is our first session with Sally Costerton as our interim president and CEO. So, I'm going to take a few minutes to ask her a couple of specific questions, and then we'll move into the Q&A. But before we begin that, I'd like to ask each executive to introduce themselves. So, David Olive, please.

DAVID OLIVE: Good morning. My name is David Olive. I head the policy development support team at ICANN.

GINA VILLAVICENCIO: Good morning. My name is Gina Villavicencio. I'm the head of global human resources at ICANN, in addition to our security operations, our facilities, and in the interim for our meetings team operations. Thank you.

THERESA SWINEHART: Hi, I'm Theresa Swinehart. I oversee the global domains and strategy division, so GDS.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Hi, my name is Ashwin Rangan. I head the engineering and IT function in ICANN.

JOHN JEFFREY: Hello, I'm John Jeffrey, ICANN's general counsel and secretary for the board.

SALLY COSTERTON: Hello, I'm Sally Costerton, and I'm interim CEO and president of ICANN.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Xavier Calvez, planning and chief financial officer.

MANDY CARVER: Mandy Carver, global government and IGO engagement.

JAMIE HEDLUND: Jamie Hedlund, I head up our contractual compliance team and US government engagement.

JOHN CRAIN: John Crain, ICANN's chief technology officer. I'm heading up the office of the CTO and overseeing the IANA functions.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Great, thank you all. So Sally, this is a good opportunity for us to ask you a few questions. So you were named interim president and CEO in December, so you're really close to the 90-day mark now, believe it or not. It probably went faster than you expected. But what are some of your observations in that time?

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Sally. Yes, we are both Sally. It does get confusing. We do get each other's emails from time to time. Yes, it has gone very quickly. I can't believe we've got that far this fast. I would make just a couple of observations. Firstly, the board and TRIPSI in particular, as I said in my opening comments, they've been extremely supportive of me and through me of the organization through this transition period. And I appreciate that, and I feel very confident. We've just come out of a board workshop, and I've seen that in action over the past 90 days and here since we've been in Cancun. And I think that that's something we should gain a lot of confidence, a lot of strength from, and it makes a big difference.

Now, also, this group here on the platform with me and many people in the room here who I work closely with, this is an extraordinary team. I mean, talented colleagues, a great executive team. And many of you may know that many of us have been here together for a long time, so we know each other. We've done many things together. We've solved problems together. We trust each other. I'm very lucky to have that, to be in this role with that sort of support and those friendships and that expertise. It's special, and it makes a huge difference. And then more broadly, in the organization, we have an extraordinary group of people in this organization.

I was saying to somebody at dinner last night, what happens when you move out of an operational role, as I have, and into an interim role, is you kind of don't realize what you don't know. And people sort of suddenly come and ask you, do you think you could just tell me what

you think about this thing? And you think, I'm right. So I have no idea what I think about this thing because I've only just gone into this role. But now people want to know. And that's the nature of being an interim.

But where I'm so lucky is that I already know who is the person who does know. And there they are. And I have total confidence that those people, A, know, and B, I know who they are already, if that makes sense. So that is an extraordinarily -- I think it's a very unusual situation, but it's a very good situation for me and for the organization, I think. There's also been a lot of positivity. I want to really congratulate the organization, the board, the staff as we go through periods of transition, there's been great calm, great positivity, great resilience. And I think that's not just relevant now, but as we move forward, it gives us a great platform to work from.

And finally, I just wanted to take one opportunity, one specific call out. As we mentioned in our opening speech comments, we were supposed to come to Cancun twice before. And the meeting team, who run our events for us here, and many of them well, and they've been here with ICANN and with us for a long time, and they're very trusted colleagues. The meetings team, the security team, they've had to pivot twice to get us back here to Cancun during a pandemic when it was extremely unclear what our choices would be. And I just wanted to call that out because they make doing this look really easy, and it really isn't. And they've been particularly resilient.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Agreed. If we could just take a moment, actually, to thank the team that has done this. I think that would be really great. So, one of the things

that you've talked a lot about, and I think everything you've said is so true, is that it was an incredibly busy time that this transition happened, and there has been tremendous positivity and support to get us to the place we are. But if you think about, one of the things you've talked about a lot is continuity, and your focus on continuity for staff, continuity for the entire organization. Reflecting on these 90 days and what you have learned during this time, what for you is priority one?

SALLY COSTERTON: That's the question, if you just do one thing, what would it be?

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Yeah.

SALLY COSTERTON: Well, I think continuity is easy to say, but it's tough to do. And continuity is what people experience. It's an outcome, if you like. And for me, it is ensuring that the team, the staff, have the direction, the resources that they need to maintain a productive, positive, and collaborative relationship with each other, with the board, and the community. And that we make sure, between us, that everybody feels that they get what they need in order to get their job done. Because what they're doing is supporting this community to achieve those goals and to resist those challenges that we talked about in the opening ceremony. So, that's number one. Empowerment, let's call it that. We had to pick one word.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: It's a good word that I think the staff also would appreciate. It's a really good point though about keeping the work going on the projects, because you inherited the projects, you inherited the CEO goals. And we're not going to go through all of them today, obviously, because we want to make time for questions. But what are the goals that are the most top of mind for you right now?

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. That's a very important question. I think that's clear in my mind, and I think hopefully we've made it clear with the organization and the executives are working hard on these. I think that, in no particular order, but the most important as a group are, I think, promoting universal acceptance and the internationalized domain name programs. This is really critical. And we're partnering with the Universal Acceptance Steering Group to coordinate and promote UA Day. As we said, we're going to be in Delhi on the 28th of March. And everyone in the room may not know, but I am amazed and thrilled that there are 50 other events, five zero, happening all over the world. 50 events, I think, in 40 countries, something like that. And that is, I think amazing. And a lot of that has been done with you.

And specifically, I think with the at-large community who have come together to really help to mobilize groups in different countries. And it shows the power of our model, that when we work together, we can do this extraordinary thing. And they represent a unique opportunity. I hope it's not unique, but it's the first time we've done it, to really mobilize the wider internet community around what it's going to take to achieve a more inclusive internet that supports the broad range of

languages and scripts. So that's one. We talked about combating domain name DNS abuse. This will never stop being on our focus. And we must do everything we can to put the right things in place that can make a difference.

Developing the Registration Data Access Protocol, or RDAP, and the new system. This is important as well. We're just at the beginning of this, and we're raring to go. I said to somebody the other day, as far as the staff are concerned, we're like greyhounds. We're ready to leave the traps. And actually, on this project, we're leaving the traps, and we're racing down the tracks. So that's important. It's going to make a big difference.

And it's taken a long time for the community to get to the stage where we can do this. And we're very responsible. We recognize the importance of getting that delivery done. Implementing the grant program. I've been personally involved with this for many years, right the way through the process of the community work. It's very close to my heart, to my team's staff and his team. We're now in implementation mode on that project as well. And that is a fascinating, extraordinary opportunity for ICANN to make a really big impact.

And that legacy of the first round, the last piece, if you like, of the first round. And what can that achieve? What's the potential for that? And then the final one I would just mention, obviously, last but not the least, implementing the next round plan for the next round of gTLDs. And it will fall very much to the organization to work under the direction of the board in terms of what needs to get done by when, in order that we can make sure that we get to where we need to get to.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you. It's an important list. But all of those projects and all of this work speaks to the maturity of ICANN and the multi-stakeholder model itself. But what in your perspective will take it from just progressing to thriving? If you think about what is the behaviors?

SALLY COSTERTON: It's a really nice word, progressing to thriving. Well, honestly, I think it's diversity in all its aspects, through our community, our board, our staff, and not just geographical diversity, but diversity of backgrounds, diversity in age, diversity in lifestyles, in opinions, in points of view. And that also means we have to be flexible. We can't always assume the way we've done things at ICANN since we were born 25 years ago. It needs to evolve too, because new people will come to our world and they don't necessarily do things exactly the way we do. And we need to be flexible enough to adapt to those requirements. But do it in a way where we're safe, where we protect the things that are critical, where all participants feel they can be heard, and that their contributions are valued.

So practical things like translation facilities, which your team oversee, literally if those don't work, we can't be heard, we can't participate. So it's not just sort of sentiment, it's practical things, it's resources. If our remote participation systems don't work properly, people can't be heard. So we have to pull all those together to make sure that that is real. And we also have to support each other and hold each other accountable. So being in an environment of mutual respect and support.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Sally. Thank you for indulging those questions. So now we're going to open the floor up to you. There are two ways, again, just as a reminder, two ways you can ask your questions. It's either by coming up to the mic, or by raising your hand in the Zoom, or typing your questions in three ways, typing your question in the Q&A. Please don't put your questions in the chat, because we won't be looking there. And also, if you're in the room, and you want to speak, please come up to the mic rather than raising your hand, exactly, because we're going to be going back and forth between them. So, Sébastien.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: First of all, thank you for giving me the floor in French, but I will switch in English because I would like to address to Sally Costerton. I think it's better to engage with her language and not with mine. Even if the interpretation is a very good tool and people are very good, I think it's better to be one on one. I wanted to comment first, I think we are very lucky, not just the board, not just the staff, but also the community to have you. It's very important that we know you, and we know that you will do the good things for the organization. And I am sure that we will still improve our relationship between the community and you and your team.

But I think it's a very good way forward. We are not losing something in having you in this position. Therefore, thank you for taking this position and thank you for your work. I guess you have already worked with the board, you have worked with some leaders of the community. It's the first time you will meet the community in general during this meeting. How you feel about that and how we can help you, how the community

can help you in your new role will be useful to know and I guess we can help you. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Sébastien. That was very kind of you. Okay, we'll go back to English. Thank you for your support. It's much appreciated. And that really is the answer to your question. I am so fortunate, many friends and lengthy relationships here in our community and it's been marvelous seeing you joining us here today. And I've seen people just this morning that I haven't seen since before the pandemic. And it reminds me of what a vibrant, caring group of people we are.

So the answer to your question is, please keep talking to us. Please keep working on finding solutions. Don't give up when it's tough. If it feels difficult to move things forward, come and tell us. We're here to help. We have an extraordinary team of staff who are committed to the mission and they want to support the community to move things forward. So thank you for that. But let's keep that advantage of us, some of us knowing me and us knowing each other. This is a great opportunity for us to keep moving. We can trust each other to move forward. So keep talking to us and keep asking for help when you need it.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you. Alex, we'll go to an online question if you have one, please.

ALEX DANS: Yes. So we have a question from Maxim Alzoba in the Q&A pod. Have ICANN add any losses in Silicon Valley bank incident?

SALLY COSTERTON: Yes, Xavier. Thank you.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: It's for your question.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you, Maxim, for the question. For everyone who may not know what Maxim is asking about is there's a bank called the Silicon Valley Bank. It's a small but also reasonably big bank in the United States. And that bank funds a number of startups and significant organizations, notably in the tech industry. There was a relatively sudden event last week where that bank basically collapsed.

And since then, we are paying attention, of course, to the impact of that. It's relatively new still. So a lot is in development. But we have checked with our investment managers who directly manage the investments that the organization has. And so far, there's no expected impact at all because we have no assets with that bank.

Of course, the ripple effects of the collapse of that bank could then lead to more collapse of organizations like clients, for example. That's not known at the moment and we'll continue to monitor that. But at this stage, we have received confirmation that we do not have any assets

that are directly held with that bank or impacted by that bank at the moment. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Ash, would you like to add to that?

ASHWIN RANGAN: Yeah, thank you. So we've also been doing an analysis of vendors from whom we procure services and products to see whether they have exposure because of Silicon Valley Bank and the collapse that's occurring. And in the headlines, so far, we don't see any ripple effects on what's going on. So keeping our fingers crossed, there is a plan from the administration to help out those vendors who may be adversely impacted. That plan gets rolled out starting today, Monday, in the United States. So it's very much something in progress and we're watching it very carefully. Thank you.

ALEX DANS: And the next person in line, please.

CHING CHOW: Thank you very much. My name is Ching Chow. So this is a funding also related question. So the previous one is good. So I come before you as the formal co-chair of the CCWG auction proceeds, which many of you actually helped out the good community work. So this funding related questions for you as a senior staff is that maybe you can just shine a light of how this implementation plan going. Basic question would be, when

does anyone in this room or outside of this room will be able to apply or to start to think about the application of this fund. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Ching. Xavier.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you, Ching. It's nice seeing you again. As Ching said, several of us participated to the CCWG on auction proceeds that worked for several years under Ching's leadership with Eric Caban. So the grant program, which also Sally spoke about earlier, is in development. The board approved the recommendations from the CCWG last year.

Immediately, we developed a project plan to create a grant program and launch the first opportunity for applications. And so this program is in development at the moment. We're working on putting in place the infrastructure that will allow to manage applications from receiving them to evaluating them to granting the funds. And of course, after the granting of the funds to monitor how the funds are used.

So that will be at a very high level, the whole process. And the current plan that we have, project plan that we have is using a milestone of first application window opening towards the March 2024. So about a year from now, during which we're going to put in place all that infrastructure as well as of course have an awareness campaign happening before that application window so that the broadest possible audience can know about the program and then potentially just decide to apply. So this is progressing well.

There's a team within the organization who is focused on that day in day out. There was meetings yesterday about it with the team, there are meetings today and tomorrow. So we're working actively on it and we're really excited with that perspective and it's going well so far. So looking forward to that with everyone. Thank you.

ALEX DANS: Thank you, Xavier. The next person in line, Mason.

MASON COLE: Good morning. My name is Mason Cole. I'm chair of the business constituency. I'd like to follow up on a letter that the BC, the IPC and the ALAC sent to ICANN leadership in January, specifically relating to contract negotiations on DNS abuse. So we're encouraged by the contract negotiations and the corresponding progress. But while these negotiations are a positive development, we note that they differ from the 2013 precedent where the community was consulted before the contract negotiations began. Will there be an opportunity for the community to weigh in on these contract negotiations before they're completed? And if not, why not?

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Mason. Theresa, I'm going to ask you to go first and if any of my other colleagues would like to add, please feel free.

THERESA SWINEHART: Sure, I'm happy to. So the discussions have been going well, it's a good opportunity. As you're probably aware, as part of the process, that will also go out for public consultation. So you'll have an opportunity during that time frame as well. And there's been communications prior with regards to the scope of those discussions. So that will be an excellent opportunity during the public consultation process as well.

MASON COLE: Will that be the only opportunity for the community to weigh in during the public comment?

THERESA SWINEHART: During the public comment process, yes. And I'd just like to add, this is just one building block in the overarching DNS abuse-related conversations. I think also, as you're aware from the different communications, there's also looking at then future policy development process around this. So this is just one of the ingredients in the overall toolbox around DNS abuse. So it's one important aspect of it, but there's multiple things. Thanks. I don't know if any of my colleagues would like to weigh in on that as well.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Mason, and thank you for the letter as well. It's appreciated

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: We're going to go next to an online question. Alex, if you could read the next question.

ALEX DANS: Yes, the next question is from Adebunmi Akinbo, DNS Africa. DNS Africa benefited from the ICANN DNSSEC facilitator support given last year. With ICANN's tremendous investment in Africa, will more training be supported around DNS abuse?

SALLY COSTERTON: John?

JOHN CRAIN: Happy to take that, and thank you for the question. Within my group, we have a series of -- or a group of individuals that are heavily involved in technical engagement and training. So if there is a need from the community for such training, we will work with you to figure out the purpose of that training and what it looks like, and we're happy to have that discussion. So please come talk to me, and let's figure out what kind of training it is you want. DNS abuse is actually quite a wide spectrum of topics, so let's have that discussion and see if there's a match there and see if we can help not just you in Africa, but also in other areas learn more about the DNS abuse issues. Thank you.

ALEX DANS: Thank you. Michael.

MICHAEL PALAGE: Thank you. Michael Palage. Three quick questions. Number one, has ICANN updated the org chart? When I was going to the ICANN website,

I'm still coming up with the old org chart, with Goron, so maybe I can't find it, but it would really be helpful if you could expire that. 90 days in, it would be good to see Sally as the interim CEO. The second question goes to Gina. Gina, when and I'm going to be respectful and not try to pronounce your last name, because I would butcher it, guaranteed. So Gina, in looking at the draft operating financial plans 2014, 24 to 2018, on page 227, global human resources lists 23 FTE.

And the reason that kind of jumped out at me is on page 164, contractual compliance only has 24. So I was like, HR compliance, same head count. And I was doing some research, SHRM, other resources, and it generally says that you should have between, say, 1.4 to two HR per every 100 people. So 400, I'm just, my question to you, after I get my last one is, and I'll give you time to think about this, what is the right number, and why does that number seem so large for ICANN? It just, again, really jumped out at me, particularly in reference to ICANN compliance, only having 24 HTE. And the final question I have is on page 196 of that same report, there were 27 FTEs listed for global communication and language services. So who do those 27 FTE report to or through? So those are my three questions, thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Michael. I'm going to summarize the questions, and then tell me if I've summarized it correctly. The first one was, are we going to update the org chart? Yes?

MICHAEL PALAGE:

Yes.

SALLY COSTERTON: The second one was about what is ICANN's view, Gina's view, ICANN's view, about the relevant, the right amount of headcount to have in the HR function in relation to the size of the organization and the spread. And the third one was a specific question about the communications team. I'm going to go to you first, Gina, because I think that you're probably right to answer the first two. And then if anybody else wants to contribute, then just let me know.

GINA VILLAVICENCIO: Thank you Sally. Thank you for your question, and for not butchering my last name. So on your first question regarding the org charts, yes, those are updated to the public website with every change. I think when we responded to your DDP request, you were accessing an old link. So those had been updated, you just didn't have the correct link, so we're happy to provide that to you. We do update those regularly, and in such a change such as this, so Sally is listed and Göran is no longer listed on the org chart that's publicly facing. We do those monthly.

In addition to your question on headcount, I think with my functional team, there are many departments that make that up. So that number of FTEs is not just global human resources, but it also includes our facilities space staff. So for all of our facilities globally, those are also included in there. I'm happy that you've leveraged the SHRM website, it's a good metric. It's not a one size fits all though, when it comes to the complexity and the nature of where our staff are based, in order to ensure that we have every aspect of their engagement with ICANN covered.

But I do take your point, it's a good point. I don't know if Xavier wants to add anything more to that. On the question regarding the global communications, it's the same thing. Language services is also a department built into there, but Sally Newell Cohen would be the functional executive responsible for the global communications headcount. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Xavier.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you. Just to add to Michael's question and Gina's answer, and Michael's question is helpful to try to understand the whys behind the size of any organization or any function in the organizations. And Michael used an external reference to ICANN that provides some metrics. And there are other type of metrics that can be used from other sources for the same purpose. I'll just take a couple example of why we have sometimes different sizes functions than may come across in industry averages. It's true for HR when we have the structure that we have for a 400 people organization, we are a complex structure. Many organizations of 400 people do not have offices across the world, for example.

And that obviously triggers an infrastructure of support that is more significant. I'll take another example, a little bit selfishly in finance. We have in finance probably more people than the average 400 people organization as well. Among the factors as to why is that everything we do is public. When you produce public information, you have a need for

quality control, for support, for verifications, for competencies that are different than the very private organization who is much more limited in its context. We have several reporting, statutory reporting across the world, for example. So that simply speaks to complexity beyond size and size, particularly as it relates to ICANN, is not the sole factor for driving the resource needs for functions.

Last example, procurement. Again, a selfish example. I oversee procurement. We have more procurement resources in the organization, we have three, then probably a lot of organizations of our size, but guess what? We do a lot more RFPs, for example, than is economically justified. Why? We do it for transparency. We do it for accountability. And not everyone organizations has a similar type of needs or environment in which they operate. And that's why some of our functions are probably larger than industry averages or for our size of organization. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you for that clarification. And just in case nobody, because it might've got lost in the cross discussion, the languages and communication team reports to Sally here on my right. So I just wanted to make sure in case anybody didn't know that. Thank you very much. And finally, I would just say that we will publish the link to the updated org chart in the newsletter so that it's easy or wherever Sally chooses, but to make sure anyone who's in the room in this discussion, if you want to have a look at it, we'll make sure where to find it. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thanks very much. Alex, we're going to go to an online, please.

ALEX DANS: I have a question from Kapil Goyal. Greetings from India. I'm a fellow ICANN75, and I would like to ask from the ICANN Learn ecosystem perspective, when is ICANN going to update, upgrade the Learn course curriculum by considering emerging disruptive technologies? I will offer my candidature and help ICANN in this regard. As an academician, I think it's highly valuable for students and learners. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you very much. Great question, subject close to my heart. It's one of the departments I directly oversee. The answer is we are constantly looking at how to build and develop ICANN Learn. It has expanded dramatically during the pandemic, which I could not be more excited about. It's helping play a much increasingly important role in supporting what I said about diversity. It's one of our key tools. Thank you so much for volunteering to help us. I will ask the team that oversee the program to contact you directly, but if other people also in the group attending the meeting in the room or online have particular things that they would like to share on ideas they have for ICANN Learn, please let us know.

And I think I've just actually caught the eye of Betsy Andrews, who's just there waving her arm. So she, sorry, the lady who asked the question is online. So I apologize, you won't be able to see Betsy, but she's here waving her arm and she really exists. And I'm very happy. I know Betsy is always keen to understand what people need and how can we evolve.

And one of my commitments as interim president and CEO is to make sure that these kinds of platforms are supported and resourced effectively and because we know how much difference they can make. So thank you so much for the question.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you. The next person in the line, please.

BILL JURAS: My name is Bill Juras. I think this is a question for Mr. Jeffery, but feel free to tell me somebody else should answer it. This regards the internationalization of domain names and DNS abuse. Let me know right up front, I'm going to be giving a specific example, but by no means the only issue. Out of the several hundred languages that use the Latin alphabet, there are a handful that include a character called I with acute. That is the dot above the I has been replaced by an acute accent. Under the recommendations for second level domain names, which is just finished taking public comments and is now reviewing them, those two are not considered variants. That is, ICANN is saying, "We think people can tell the difference."

So if somebody wants to register ICANN.org where the I is replaced by an I with an acute, that's okay. Which might be irritating for us, but in the larger scope of things, it's not a major issue. On the other hand, suppose somebody decides to do the same thing with city.com, which is the Citibank website, and uses that to capture a bunch of account numbers and passwords. And when they have enough, moves a lot of money out. The United States legal system being how it is, I could see a

class action suit. They're not going to sue Citibank. Citibank didn't set up that website. The DNS abusers who did set it up are probably not available. So they worked their way back and say, "All right, who allowed this to happen?" Well, we'll go sue Verisign. And Verisign says, "Not unreasonably, well, we don't have a staff of linguistic experts. We took the recommendation from ICANN." And ICANN says, "Well, yes, our expert said that that's different."

Good luck convincing a jury of my fellow Californians to that, but it's an argument. Except that panel of experts didn't say that, because we were asked when the document was written, and we said, "Well, for top level domain names, which is what we had started from, we figured, no, they don't need to be variants. The manual review will catch any problems."

But of course, for second level domain names, there is no manual review. And so we said, "Drop the threshold." And so things like that would not be an issue. So my question to you is, did anybody from the IDN project come to you? Because I'm not a lawyer, but I could see somebody saying, that's gross negligence on ICANN's part. Your expert said those should be variants, and you didn't do it. So did anybody ask you?

SALLY COSTERTON:

That is a great question. And as you can see, we are just debating up here is exactly how to combine our collective knowledge to give you the best answer we can. So I'm going to get us this John Jeffrey to start, and I'm going to ask Theresa and also John Crain to comment. And off you go, John.

JOHN JEFFREY:

Well, I'll start with thank you for the detailed question and explanation of it. I think you just taught me something, and that's what I love about coming to ICANN meetings, because you get the opportunity to talk to people at ICANN meetings, because you get the opportunity to learn something every time. What I'll also say is, interesting theory on a lawsuit and something I'll pay attention to, but I haven't been approached about it, and I don't know the details of that. I think there are probably better experts than me to talk about the details of that particular aspect, so I'll look to my colleagues for that.

SALLY COSTERTON:

So I will start out, and we may need to come back to you with some further answers. But appreciate the issues that are underway, and one of the aspects is that we'll also go back to the panel with some additional questions around that. There's also the opportunity to add to the work that's being guided by the script community as well. So I think we have multiple areas that we can look to make sure that this is addressed, but we're certainly aware of the issue, and we're going to go back to the panel to get some additional info. So if I miss some parts of it, we can go offline with some of my colleagues and get you the additional details. And I think another colleague was going to weigh in.

BILL JURAS:

Before we go, I should, in fairness, say that I have been in communication with Sarmad Hussain and the rest of the people about

that issue, and it isn't a closed book yet, but I was more interested in did we get legal advice. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Thank you so much. I think there's more on this, clearly. But we'll keep talking. Thank you so much for raising it. I think you've made us all really think, which is a good thing. As John said, we learn a lot in these sessions.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Before we go to the next question, I wanted to make sure, this goes back to Michael Palage's question, there is an updated org chart, the management org chart can be found on our website under resources if you're looking for that. Most up to date. Thank you for that. The next person in line, please.

MARK DATYSGELD:

Good morning. This is Mark Datysgeld speaking, GNSO Council, but right now, I'm speaking as a Universal Acceptance community member. So as you know this community has been through a long grind to get where we are right now. It's been many years of volunteer work, and through the collective work of many people, we've managed to raise the profile of this issue. And right now, we stand at a very interesting point where we finally have a lot of technical assets, a lot of technical resources that we didn't have before. We have studied what programming languages look like with Universal Acceptance, what software libraries, what the implementation of UA looks like. It's been many years of work,

especially through the pandemic for us to get there. But the thing is, we will need help pushing those resources out. We are a small community of maybe 30 very active people.

And we have great ICANN staff supporting us. Thank you so much for giving us very good ICANN staff, but we need the org in this case, because we have code ready samples now for people to implement directly into their software code basis. It's good stuff that we didn't have before. So I would potentially, as one of the community members, like to invite Sally in between these meetings and members of the ICANN staff who are interested in this possibility for us to be able to present this work to you.

Show what we have accomplished and try to talk to you about how we can socialize this in ICANN engagement events, during ICANN presentations, and the different things that ICANN carries out all over the world that we can reach. Maybe this is something that ICANN will be amenable to help us spread, because I think it's pretty good stuff, to be honest. Like our community has done some great work. So this is more of an open invitation. And I would really like to know if at least you would like to follow up and set something up with us.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you so much. And I do want to take this opportunity in front of the whole community to thank you and everybody that has worked on this initiative so hard and for so long in a volunteer capacity. It's extraordinary. And as I said we have so many events going on over the world because of that effort. And we owe you a real -- we owe you

thanks, but we are in your debt. So absolutely, I would like to do that. Thank you for the offer. We will certainly take you up on it.

Sally and I are deep now. You'll be pleased to know in planning with Theresa's team, working with Samad's team and with the regional engagement heads on how do we practically start to mobilize to do exactly what you're saying, to make sure that all the hard work that the group has done and your colleagues and volunteers have done now sees, it moves forward to the next stage.

So please, let's work together. I would love to set up that meeting. I think it's a priority. The timing it's a very immediate issue. We need to take advantage of the awareness that is going to be raised around this in the next couple of months. So I really look forward to that. And thank you so much for coming up to the microphone and sharing that. I really appreciate it.

MARK DATYSGELD: Thank you very much, Sally.

SALLY COSTERTON: You're very welcome.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you. We're going to go to an online question now, Alex.

ALEX DANS: Yes, the following question is from Chanel McPherson. I am happy to meet with the executive team. Greetings from Jamaica. Congratulations Sally Costerton to your newly appointed role as interim president and CEO. The question is, how does ICANN plan to keep up with emerging technologies and the changing needs of the internet community in the coming years?

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you so much for the question. I'm going to go to John Crain.

JOHN CRAIN: Thank you very much. Interesting question. I don't know if people have noticed that the internet ecosystem is rather complicated and forever changing. So we have many technologists within the ICANN staff and of course within the community. And many of us track varying elements of what is happening out there. So, we are actively involved, not just my team, but across the technical groups within ICANN in the internet engineering task force. We follow other protocol development forums, but we also follow the technology in general. And while ICANN's remit may be on the identifiers, so we're often looking for how does this affect their identifier systems, many things actually affect that when you wouldn't even think about it.

So we actually have staff that are actively engaged all the time looking for new and emerging technologies. And then you will also see that we occasionally put out documents about these technologies. And if you have an interest in that area, please come talk to myself or to Ashwin or any of our other technology leaders in the staff. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, John.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Thanks, Sally. Thanks for the question. From a practitioner's perspective within the engineering function, we are constantly looking at available technologies for different things that we do. It's, as John said, evolving fast, and we keep on top of it by using reputed services like Gartner to help inform us about the choices that are available in the market and making choices depending on what we're hearing from them and our own testing paths that we use to ascertain whether indeed what's being promised is getting realized. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Great, thank you. The next person in line, please.

FABRICIO VAYRA: Thank you, Sally. Please. Thank you very much. Fabricio Vayra from Perkins Coie. I'm also an IPC member. Before I get into my question, I wanted to thank you all for both having the session and sitting up on stage and answering questions ad hoc this way. I know it's not easy. I know it can be tense. I'm hoping everyone here in this room can join me in giving you a quick round of applause for doing this. It really means a lot for the community, I think. So my question, NIS2, the European directive, has come into effect. There are some provisions there that directly implicate things like who is that we've been working on for years, privacy proxy, reseller agreements, and it's something I think

ICANN would need to focus on and do something about to address fairly immediately.

And I would love to hear from anyone up there or a number of you, what is it that ICANN has already done to start addressing and reacting to NIS2 and what will it be doing forward, in particular what it would do to sort of embrace the community in resolving some of the conflicts that are now present.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Important question. I'm going to start with Mandy. And then if any of my colleagues would like to add, please let me know.

MANDY CARVER:

Thank you. So what we have done with NIS2 was an active dialogue to explain the potential impact if resolvers were continued to be included in that piece of legislation. And for those of you who don't know, the European Union has a co-legislative process. So you have the member states, you have the members of the European Union and you have the members of the European Parliament, and you also have the European Commission. So there are many moving parts. The NIS2 is a directive, which means that now all of the member states of the European Union need to pass implementation legislation.

So this will be a very active process because there is the potential for 27 different and conflicting pieces of implementation. So this is an active space that we are working on and working with. We're always happy to have suggestions, feedback, and contributions to that space. But it is a

-- Watch the space. I think member states have 18 months in order to complete the process. So I can't really tell you what it's going to look like now, just that we're aware and actively engaged.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you for the question. And as Mandy says, this is a good example of -- This is a dynamic process. So please keep talking to us. Please keep engaging with Mandy or with me. We can make sure you can talk to the right people in the organization that are directly involved. But this is a changing landscape. And this is a good example of where we have to work together and keep each other informed to make sure that we keep up, we stay engaged, and we prevent -- we actively work together to try and make sure that we protect ICANN's ability to deliver its mission. So thank you for raising it. It's a really important topic.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you. The next person in line, please.

RIMA MUSA:

Hi there. I'm Rima Musa. I'm currently a fellow, and I'm a law student at the University of Southern California. So my question is, given the increasing interconnectedness and complexity of technology and the internet in not just technical circles, but really every aspect of daily life, what's your take on sort of the need for more interdisciplinary communication, interdisciplinary collaboration, both within ICANN staff ranks and sort of evangelizing that throughout the wider ICANN community as well?

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. What an interesting question. Now, you won't know this because we've never met, been till now, but you've touched on something very passionate that I'm very passionate about, which is absolutely about how do we learn from each other? This is what you're saying, isn't it? How do we, if you like, physically embody the spirit of interconnectedness of the internet to make ourselves smarter and better able to be more resilient and better able to do the things we need to do? That's really what your question is. Just checking that's what you meant. Yes, good.

I think that's such a good question. There are so many ways in which we can do that. We are 400 people, slightly more than 400 people in this room. 400 people in the staff. This is much bigger than it was when I started, but it's not so big that we can't -- we need to make sure that we don't have silos inside the organization. And increasingly, most of our work, almost all our work, actually, we discussed this in our executive team meeting this week. It's what we call cross-functional, interdisciplinary. It's the same idea. And what that means is we need strong frameworks to allow people with different skill sets and different knowledge bases to work together in harmony so that we don't get dislocation.

And inside the organization for several years now, we've been evolving a really strong project management framework. We've done a great deal of training. We have standardized frameworks and tools. We're increasingly using those, particularly through David's team. And I'm going to ask David to just give one comment, David, over here at the end,

because the work we've been doing, I think, with some of your groups on some of the new tools is designed to do, is to help us to work on things in common. So some of that is about frameworks. Some of it is about skill and training. And some of it is about knowledge, actually having, being able to see everything that's going on in the whole of ICANN, or that's quite ambitious, all at once, because that way we understand how it all fits together. It's my experience in this area is that context really matters.

We all have the same shared mission, and that's a great driver that takes us forward, but then we have to get practical. How do we actually -- what is it we're trying to do? How does that balance? So David, could I also ask for your insight on some of the work you're doing, because you're really carrying this forward into the community as well.

DAVID OLIVE:

And in terms of communication and information sharing, that is a big challenge, especially when we're dealing with our communities who are developing policy or advice. And these are iterative steps in the process of comment, further inputs, reflection, and then coming back in a working group to refine a recommendation or a proposal. So we have tried to use the project management framework for the teams who are supporting the groups who develop policy or make advice. And we established a system for tracking the projects that they're working on, showing the milestones, showing what needs to be done, giving a timeline to indicate when it might be completed with the demands put upon, of course, most of our volunteers. This is trying to visualize for

them the path of the work, plan the work, and organize it in a more effective manner.

You see this, if you look to our site on the generic name supporting organization, the GNSO was a pilot to get this done through their council who manages the policy development process for them. And this provides a quick snapshot of where they are at every step of the process. We're doing that for the other groups as well, and this will be rolled out over time. But again, look at the GNSO site to see how that could communicate to the people who are working and the people who are interested in finding out when that work will be done and who has to take it and implement it or the board has to look at it.

And this is kind of the tracking that is there for your look. And to that extent, we also are concerned about how best to explain this in a simple and easy to understand format. And to that extent, we try to have synopses or summaries of the complex tasks and topics that we're dealing with. These are some of the efforts we're using, both technology and people, to put it into a usable format to understand, track, and act upon.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you. Great question. Alex, can we go to an online question, please?

ALEX DANS: Yes, thank you. We have a hand raised from Internet Society Nigeria chapter, so I will allow you to speak. Please unmute your mic.

SALLY COSTERTON: We can't hear you if you're speaking.

ALEX DANS: So now, we will go to the next question in the line. Thank you.

NAMRA NASEER: Hello, I am Namra Naseer. I am a returning ICANN fellow, and my question is addressed to the whole panel. I really want to know how is ICANN at present ensuring that Internet remains a global resource and it is not subjected to national and regional control? Is there an active dialogue going on with stakeholders, especially competitors, and especially during this whole leadership transition phase? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. So, I'm just catching up with the screen to make sure I understand the question. So you're saying, how do we ensure the Internet remains a global resource and is not subject to regional or national control, especially as we go through this transition phase? You mean the ICANN transition phase? Okay. I think I'm going to go to you first, Mandy, on this one, because this is really to do with the day-to-day of this.

We all get involved in this, just to be very clear. When I made my opening speech, and Tripti also made the same observation in her speech, this is one of the areas where there is real active threat to ICANN. I mean, let's not pretend it isn't. It is. And you're very sensible and helpful to raise it

in this environment. So really, what you're saying is, what are we doing to mitigate that risk, isn't it? And we're doing a great deal, and I'm going to start with Mandy, and then if anyone else on the group, on the panel, would like to contribute, then we'll do that too. Mandy.

MANDY CARVER:

Thank you. Thank you, Sally, and thank you for the question. As Sally has said, this is an active and real space. There are those who are intentionally questioning the multi stakeholder model or the ability of ICANN to do what it's doing. There are those who perhaps, through other motivations, unintentionally are having that same impact. I'm sure many of you are aware of the WSIS+ 20 review process that is underway.

Many of the arguments that are being made in that space against the multi stakeholder model, the narrative about the model not producing, are not new. Those are the arguments being made at the very beginning. They were the arguments made at the 10-year review. So part of what we're doing is trying to change that narrative, directly addressing, when those statements are made, what has been delivered, the security, stability, interoperability of the internet.

If you just look at what happened during COVID, internet use, it scaled, nothing broke. This works. There's a separate set of challenges when you're talking about something like NIST2, where the potential for fragmentation comes literally from localized legislation. This is an ongoing advocacy and education process, communication process. The previous questioner talked about interdisciplinary communication.

Everybody here, everybody here has to engage in that. Most of us are doing things like explaining technical things to policymakers and explaining policy and legislative process to technical people. We all have to play that translator, interpreter, and advocate role. It's multifocal, so I can't give you a simple answer about, oh, well, if we just publish this or change that.

It is also important to note that one of the strengths, one of the vulnerabilities of the multi-stakeholder model is its permeability. We do everything in a transparent manner. That means that we can engage many more people and we hope to bring many more people into the process. It also renders us vulnerable to those who are opposed to what we do, because it's all right out there when it comes to counter-programming or making efforts.

I will put in two plugs. One, you know that there is a plenary that will be. Wednesday? We're Thursday, but there's a community plenary about the multi-stakeholder model and participation. That's when? Tuesday. Please look at your interactive schedule. Those folks know, clearly not us. But then on Thursday, and I apologize for the change in the calendar, the regular geopolitical update presentation will be standing between you and the wrap-up cocktail.

So apologies that that's where we're scheduled. And again, it's only an hour. We do want to also be as interactive as possible. Last thing, if you go to the description of that session, you will see there's an email address. Anybody who wants to bring up questions in advance so we can be better able to address them, and we will try and keep the presentation constrained enough to be able to take questions as well.

But you have raised the main issue that my entire team globally and all the global stakeholder engagement regional guys dealing with their capitals, the legal department, the OCTO folks doing trainings. This is the primary thing that we are all engaged in.

NAMRA NASEER: Thank you so much.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, Mandy. And I think if we want to talk more about this as the meeting goes on, it's such a critical topic. Please feel free to come and talk to us if it's useful for us to join any of your community discussions and meetings. Please let us know. And that includes our technical team, which John leads, because of course a lot of the communication to technical people about policy issues and policy people about technical issues is being done by John and Mandy in partnership. So I'm going to move on now in the interest of time, but please do be aware that it's literally a multi-disciplinary process inside the organization.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you for that. We only have 22 minutes left and lots of people in line and lots of questions in the queue, so we're going to close the queue now, just so you know. And let's go to an online question. Alex, if you would, please.

ALEX DANS: Yes, we have a question from Amir Bahadori. I need to know how do you plan to resolve the issues for sanctioned countries that have a right in ICANN and because of political decision, they have lost their rights?

SALLY COSTERTON: Alex, we're just checking we've got the question. I need to know how you plan to resolve the issues for sanctioned countries that have a right in ICANN because of political decisions have lost their rights? That's the question?

JOHN JEFFREY: So I'm actually interested in the question because we want to have more information if people believe that they're not being able to participate in ICANN's process because they are sanctioned. That's something we actually want to understand. Where we have issues of sanctions in a variety of places in the world, we actively act to make sure that we are able to have participation from people in all of those countries and actively participating in the forums. And so we look very carefully at the licenses and other things that are available to us to ensure that we have as much participation as possible. So, if there is information that relates to a difficulty of somebody participating or a loss of rights, then that would be something that we would very much like to have brought to our attention so that we can understand it better and act to address it.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you, John. So if people need help with this, let us know. We want to have that raised to our awareness. It's a great question.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Next person in line, please.

JAVIER RÚA-JOVET: Thank you. [Foreign Language - 01:08:59] Good morning. I'm Javier Rúa-Jovet, I'm an ccNSO councilor from Puerto Rico, but here in my personal capacity as part of a group of stakeholders concerned about the ecological impact of our activities. And firstly, to thank the ICANN org team for meeting with us. Xavier met with us in the KL meeting just to start the conversation on where we are about ICANN's ecological footprint, our activities, what we're thinking, what we're doing, where we're at, from the impact of travel to the impact of servers to everything in between. And so, again, first to thank Xavier and the team that talked to us. And we want to continue this conversation.

There's a bottom-up approach to this and a top-down approach also that meet up in the middle. And maybe the question is and the request is maybe if Xavier can give a sense of where the thinking is from the planning perspective, things that are being done or publications in this narrative and problematic.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. A very important question. And what I can say, because we've been discussing it over the weekend, actually, so we have very fresh sort of discussion on this, as you might expect. We are in big data gathering phase about this, including all working, all the partners we work with in trying to understand more about what our ecological

footprint actually is. Because you have to start with understanding, well, what's the problem we're trying to solve? It's a good engineering principle. But with that, Xavier, I'll turn to you.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

Thank you, Sally. Thank you, Javier. And Javier was just mentioning a meeting and a few people who gathered in KL with Javier and others. And Raoul Plummer was one of the persons as well. And we've had discussions about how important this is and what can be done about it in the ICANN context. And I think that the question that Raoul had raised during the public forum of last ICANN's meeting was helpful to see also how important this is across the entire community. And there was a lot of support for that. Of course, then the next question is, what can we do? And as Sally was indicating, this was a topic that's been also discussed during the board workshop. And there's a number of board members involved in those discussions.

The simple fact that you raised this question now is exactly helping to raise awareness, raise interest further, as we had discussed in KL. So thank you for doing that. I think that this is helping creating momentum of support for the idea of not only understanding, but also doing something about this. I think that in the ICANN context, we need to be able to, as Sally was saying, gather a certain amount of information and also then be able to determine a path forward on measuring our impact, and then be able to determine what solutions we think we can find as a community to address the issue to our own scale. We're not going to solve it for the world, but everyone who does something participates to the solution, as opposed to only participating to the problem.

So I think that, that sentiment and the awareness that you and a few others have raised is helpful, needs to continue. And there's more conversations that are happening. But I think that I like the image of when the tide lifts up, everyone gets raised at the same time. I think that this is what's happening with this topic, and that more conversations, more ideas, and more support will continuously help all of us be able to get some focus on this and get some actions done. So thank you again for raising it.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Alex. If we could go to the next online question, please.

ALEX DANS: Yes, we have a question from Priti Kamara from India, fellow virtual school on Internet governance. ICANN definitely have a huge repository of courses. However, I personally feel there should be more engagement with students and learners. I would like to volunteer along with my colleague, Prof. Kapil Goyal, to engage stakeholders, students, faculty, and community at large for Next Billion Citizens.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. We gratefully accept your offer. And I'm looking back at Betsy in the room. So this is the same issue we talked about earlier on, more help from our Indian colleagues and community members, and expanding our learning courses and engaging the students. Very welcome. Thank you very much for the offer of help. We will follow up with you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: The next person in line, please.

HAFIZ FAROOQ: Thank you very much. I am Hafiz Farooq. I am network and security architect from Saudi Aramco. So my question is about cybersecurity, if Ashwin or John can comment on this. So nowadays, most of the companies have a very comprehensive cybersecurity incident response plan in case of any cybersecurity incident. So ICANN as an organization does have any cybersecurity incident response to respond to any attack or a cybersecurity incident on their own infrastructure or any stakeholder itself. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. Critical question. And Ash, to you.

ASHWIN RANGAN: Thank you for the question. Yes, indeed, we have very well documented procedures so that whenever there is a threat, we examine the threat. And if indeed there is an incident, we take care of it with levels of escalation, etcetera, etcetera. It could be threats going all the way up to where it's a cyber-threat with the kinetic threat at the same time. So we examine all angles. We limit our activities though to our remit, as in we try to protect our assets, which are placed in service for the community to use and for our own staff. But we don't extend it outward and go to other partner locations, so to speak. That's not something that's a part of our remit. Thank you. But we are in a position to help in terms of

educating, not necessarily to extend our own resources in that regard.
Thank you.

HAFIZ FAROOQ: Thank you very much for the answer.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Alex, if we could go to one more online question, please.

ALEX DANS: Yes, the next question is from Ugen Maharjan. What has been the role of ICANN in statistical analysis forecasts to reduce intentional DNS abuse and also the strategy to reduce DNS abuse?

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you for the question. John.

JOHN CRAIN: Thank you, Ugen, for that question. So ICANN has quite a lot of resources spent on research, and you might meet some of our researchers here. When it comes to DNS abuse, as an organization, well, obviously there are many things happening that are outside the research area, but in the research area, we're really looking to increase the understanding of what is happening and the kind of science that can be used to measure these things. So we are looking at things like predictive analysis, we're looking at using machine learning. There are

many different tracks where we are looking to improve the knowledge base. But we're not alone in this.

There is a quite extensive and broad community of those dealing with all the various cybersecurity issues, not just DNS abuse. And we do tend to participate in many of those quite actively. If you think of Morg, which is messaging malware, etcetera, or you think of the Anti-Phishing Working Group, somebody just asked about incident response, we are a member of CERT, because as we said, we actually have a CERT, and we interact with those communities. So we see our role, from a research perspective, really on increasing the science and collaborating with others in the community to see how we can affect the ecosystem.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, John. The next question in line, please.

RODERICK EDENBE: Thank you very much for this opportunity. Allow me to speak in French. This is my question. First of all, my name is Roderick Edenbe. I am a fellow for ICANN 76, and at the same time, I work at the Pan-African Institution called Pan-Africa, and it gathers 40 countries. There was a consultation that was started towards the digital agreement that will be concluded soon. I don't know at the level of the ICANN community how things are being organized in order for the different stakeholders, the different institutions might be able to contribute at the level of those consultations, whether it is at the level of the governments, civil society, private sector, and so forth. This is the first half of my question.

Secondly, I work at Smart Africa. We are becoming more aware of the challenges of Internet governance, and we are starting to discuss this and integrate it in the different projects that we are doing in Africa. I was very interested during the opening ceremony to hear that there was a will for ICANN to have an impact in Africa. I would like to know what we can do. Don't represent Smart Africa necessarily here, but at the same time, I think that we should be able to contribute to the implementation of your projects.

One more thing to conclude. Smart Africa set up just two years ago a pilot project focused on Internet governance. It was validated by the members of the board, the heads of states, and that's what I wanted to mention. Thank you so much.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Well, that gives me a fantastic opportunity to say what a well-timed question. I couldn't be happier that you are starting in your last point. Smart Africa are longstanding partners of ICANN in Africa and our Africa team led by Pierre Dandjinou. I don't know if Pierre is in the room. He is. Pierre is over here. So if you guys don't know each other, please connect. I sort of think you might do. We have had a longstanding partnership with Smart Africa and we value it tremendously. It has extraordinary resources and influence in Africa.

And I think to your third point, this is really exactly what the Coalition for Digital Africa is designed to do, is to bring together like-minded technical organizations or organizations with technical projects that are involved in different parts of the Internet ecosystem. Internet governance is certainly one of them. But for example, we have just partnered with

ISOC on exchanges. We put our own IMRS, our own root server letter cluster into Nairobi. This is about Internet infrastructure. This is about speed and resilience. But it's a broad agenda for the Coalition. The goal is to bring together and to use ICANN's convening power to deliver in the public interest and that public interest being bringing more African Internet users into the Internet space.

So I can assure you that we would love to see you actively bringing your project and other projects into the Coalition. And Pierre is leading the Coalition as well as leading our engagement in Africa. So I really do thank you. And that would include participation in the discussions that you talked about in the first part of your question. And so please, I would encourage you to work as closely together as you can. I really look forward to us working more closely together inside the Coalition. Thank you so much.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER:

Okay, thank you very much. Just to precise that, I start to the working with Pierre Dandjinou in some topics. I think that is great. Thank you very much.

XAVIER CALVEZ:

I just wanted to thank you simply for asking your question in French using the services of the interpreters. It is a good thing because Sebastian didn't have to do it this time, but I'm sure he'll do it again. But anyway, thank you for asking the question in French.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Next in line, please. And this is, unfortunately, we are running right out of time. So I think this is the last question. We'll see if we can sneak the last one in that one. Go ahead.

HONG FU: Good day, everyone. I'm Hong Fu from Net-Chinese an ICANN Accredited Registrar based in Taiwan. I'll be speaking in my personal capacity. I wholeheartedly adore the diversity of second new gTLD that ICANN support. But I have a question regarding the applicant support program that ICANN has proposed. In order to have a functional and really useful support program, it is costly. And ICANN also proposed fee reduction for the underserved region countries when they apply for a TLD, right? How does ICANN guarantee the financial sustainability of the second round with so much cost inside? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you for the question. I think probably best to go to you first, Theresa, and then maybe Xavier.

THERESA SWINEHART: Thank you. It's a very good question and certainly something that we are taking a look at in the context of the next round and all the work that's going into that and the discussions around the applicant support program itself. And I might turn it over to my colleague Xavier as well.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you. Quickly, this is an important point as part of the planning of any program like a new gTLD round to ensure that from an organizational standpoint, there is adequate funding and that we manage risks associated with such a large program. As you probably know, we would normally incur a number of costs ahead of collecting fees and that creates a risk for the organization. That's part of the planning that we will do. We will make sure we address that risk and ensure that we have adequate funding in front of the ability to mitigate that risk. So that's definitely a consideration we take into account. Thank you for raising it.

HONG FU: Thank you for reply. Can I just make an additional remark? Is there anything you can -- any information you can provide on where the current planning is to the general public? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. We will, not right now, but we'll make sure as part of the discussions during the week, many will be on this topic, that we will make that available as soon as we can. Thank you for the question.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: We have two minutes left for the last person. Thank you. Go ahead.

LAWRENCE ROBERTS: Thank you. My name is Lawrence Olawale-Roberts. I happen to be the vice chair for the business constituency, but at this point I'm speaking as

an alumni of the fellowship program. So it appears that the space for newcomers within the ecosystem is shrinking. I say this because one point or one place that has served as a rallying point for newcomers that has played a very active role in terms of outreach and a place where we engage is the ICANN information booths. And with every meeting, it looks like very little activity goes on at that space.

My question is, is there anything being done? I know that this is one place that alumni of the fellowship program had contributed in the past towards keeping up, but again, a lot of us are engaged in the different constituencies and maybe might not be able to play a very active role at that space, but it will be interesting to hear what the plans are to help keep the information booth engaged, especially since it's a place where a lot of us drop outreach materials for our constituencies. Because of time, I also want to say that there was a lot of excitement that also greeted the little cards that we got in the welcome packs, thanks to ICANN Wiki. And I'm just curious to know if we are going to be seeing support from ICANN for that project going forward. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you very much for the question. Yes, is the short answer. The information booth is important and I understand exactly what you're describing. It's a place at an ICANN meeting where the fellows can gather and the newcomers can gather. And I would very much like to get your feedback separately about how we can improve that. We need to do everything we can to make that a live, engaging space. So thank you so much for the feedback and I would love to follow up with you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Well, with that, thank you all. We answered all the questions in the pod and all the people in line. So thank you all for the thoughtful questions and spending this time with us. Have a great rest of the day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]