
ICANN78 | AGM – 25th Anniversary Session
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VIDEO: [video of ICANN history]

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome back Sally Costerton, interim President and CEO of ICANN.

SALLY COSTERTON: Hello again. Doesn't that video make you feel proud? It makes me feel proud. I'd like to welcome you to this special celebratory session. Now, this is an experiment. We've never done a session quite like this before, so bear with us. I think it's going to be absolutely fine. But if we get the odd glitch, I know that you'll cheer us on. I've got six special guests joining me this morning, people who've been part of the ICANN story from almost from day one, and others who have been instrumental in ICANN's history and continue to lead the way today.

Now, this is how we're going to run the session. We're going to begin by talking about how it all began. Then we'll delve into one of ICANN's most important milestones, the IANA transition, and talk about why that was such a significant achievement and what it means for the world's Internet users today and into the future. We'll talk about what's ahead, the opportunities, such as making the Internet more accessible to the next billion users through digital inclusivity. And we'll talk about

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some of the challenges to our model of Internet governance and how we can work together to overcome the obstacles in front of us. Finally, and importantly, (and I promise I will manage the time to make this happen), we will have an open mic session for about 15 minutes to hear your stories about the past memories you have or what you think might lie ahead for ICANN's future.

Now, before I introduce our speakers, I'm going to copy Chris. Is there anybody here to stand up if you were here at the beginning of ICANN?

We recognize you. Wow, that's quite emotional actually. How fantastic is that? We are so looking forward, all of you. Now, everybody who just stood up, you've got no excuse not to come to the microphone and share a story about the beginning.

So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to introduce the speakers. I'm going to ask them to come and join me on stage. And I'm going to start with Dr. Steve Crocker. Now, as many of you know, Steve is an Internet pioneer. Welcome, Steve. Would you like to take a seat?

STEVE CROCKER:

Sure.

SALLY COSTERTON:

And we've got you sitting, I think, here. So for those of you (and I don't think it's going to be many of you who don't know), Steve is an Internet pioneer and computer scientist. He is specialized in network protocols, computer security and formal methods. He helped to develop the initial protocols for the ARPANET and created the Request for Comments

series of notes through which protocol designs are documented and shared.

At ICANN, Dr. Crocker was the founding chair of the Security and Stability Advisory Committee, which we call SSAC, and a member of the ICANN Board of Directors from 2003 to 2017. He was Chair of the Board and oversaw ICANN through its transition from operating under the oversight of the US Department of Commerce to an independent multi-stakeholder organization operating on behalf of the global community. Welcome, Steve.

Next, I would like to welcome on stage Mirjam. Mirjam Kuhne. Please join us. Mirjam. Nice to have you with us. Please, would you like to take a seat? And we are over here, I think. Here you go, Mirjam. Okay. Mirjam is Chair of the RIPE Community, of which she has been a member for almost 30 years. She has a deep knowledge of the Internet community and regularly collaborates with stakeholders from various sectors, including technical security, academia and government.

Over the years, Mirjam has worked as a senior community builder and a director of external relations at the RIPE NCC. Earlier, she worked at the Internet Society as a Senior Programme Manager, where one of her tasks was the organization and coordination of technical workshops all over the world. Mirjam also served as chair of the IETF education team for over ten years and is currently a member of the IETF LLC Board of Directors. She obtained a master's of computer science at the Technical University, Berlin, Germany, and lives in Amsterdam with her husband. Welcome, Mirjam.

So now I'd like to ask to join me on the stage Anil Kumar. Welcome Anil. Nice to have you with us. Would you like to take a seat? Anil is active in the ICANN community. He is currently the Chair of the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, Vice-Chair of the IDN ccTLD Working Group Four, and Vice-Chair of the Internet Governance Liaison Committee. Anil also served as Chair for the India Internet Governance Forum in 2022 and 2021.

Outside of ICANN, he is currently the Chief Operating Officer in the Common Services Center, or CSC, which delivered government services to remote locations across India. Anil was the CEO of the National Internet eXchange of India NIXI, and has more than 43 years' experience in the broadband Internet and telecom field. Welcome, Anil.

Next, I'd like to invite to join me on this stage Reema Moussa. Congratulations, Reema. You've got some fans in here. Reema, nice to have you with us. Please take a seat. Reema is a jurist doctorate candidate at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law, concentrating on cybersecurity privacy, AI, Internet governance, trust and safety. Wow, that's a lot.

During a study program abroad at the University of Geneva, she launched her career in technology at the United Nations International Telecommunication Union. She currently serves as Vice-President and West Coast Regional Chair of the Internet Law and Policy Foundry, where she is Senior Fellow. And she is also the host and executive producer of the Tech Policy Grind podcast. She's a member of the Young Lawyers advisory panel for the Privacy and Information Security Committee of the American Bar Association's antitrust section. Whoa.

Breathe. And if all that weren't enough, I am very proud to say that Reema is also an ICANN Fellow.

I also have the pleasure of introducing to you Alejandro Pisanty. And I feel many of you will already know Alejandro. He doesn't need an introduction. Welcome. Alejandro was a member of the ICANN Board of Directors from 1999 to 2006. He's a professor in the School of Chemistry at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He has been Director, Journal of Academic Computing Services and the Coordinator of Open and Distance University at UNAM, where he oversaw supercomputing Internet expansion and the introduction of advanced technologies such as virtual reality and PKI infrastructure for digital signatures, as well as UNAM-CERT, the first cert in the country. Alejandro has been Chair of the Internet Society of Mexico, a member of the Board of Directors of ICANN, and the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society. His work concerns Internet governance, cybersecurity policy, distance education, and national and regional digital strategies. He has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016 for LACNIC for his contributions to the development of the Internet in Latin America and the Caribbean, and has been inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame in 2021.

Last but certainly not least, Lawrence or Larry Strickling is the is the former Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the US Department of Commerce from June 2009 until January 2017, where he served as the administrator of the NTIA, as we call it, the National Telecoms and Information Administration. In that position (I'm standing in front of Steve; that's not a good look in that position) he

championed the IANA Stewardship transition from the US. Government to the multi-stakeholder Internet community.

After leaving NTIA, Larry designed and directed the Collaborative Governance Project at the Internet Society and has worked as a consultant on broadband issues for McKinsey's federal and state government clients in the private sector. Larry has held senior executive positions in telecommunications, including serving as Vice-President, Public Policy, at regional Bell operating company Ameritech Corp, and as a litigation partner at the Chicago law firm of Kirkland & Ellis.

Okay, welcome. Now, so I'm going to start with ICANN's early days. And right at the beginning there's Alejandro. Alejandro, you've been involved in ICANN since 1999, which is almost the beginning. Tell me about those early days, and specifically I'd like to know what was the hardest part of those first two years? Tell us a bit about how the community came together.

ALEJANDRO PISANTY:

Thank you. First, thanks for the invitation. Thanks for the ICANN team that made it possible. This is really a gift to be able to be here with all of you. A small number of us (and “us” means a small number of people in Latin America) were involved in either bringing in the Internet. That was the first generation, actually very young people and people like myself who were users. I was actually a user of the ARPANET in 1977 or '79 in a workshop on computer methods for quantum chemistry. So I'm sorry I haven't kept the printouts of that workshop. They would be historical.

So we saw the power of networks for many reasons. And one of the things we saw was that we were running circles around our government. We were able to introduce things on the Internet, communications to other countries, extending the tradition of communications, international communications of academia through this network. And when we saw that something like ICANN was going to be established, we jumped at the chance of shaping it instead of having it shaped in the first world, in the industrialized countries. And by the large mean, the image at the time was more like IBM than anything that came later. So there was this huge ambition and drive to do this.

That's how we jumped into this. And that's also. Long before the word “multistakeholder” was in vogue. We were just sitting there and not waiting for permission from our governments to take part into this, trying to get them involved. No one would care. We could absolutely get no one in Latin American governments, almost no one, to care. Very few did. So that's where we started getting involved in ICANN. And that's what we defend up to now. Even with GDC and all these other processes, you have to have the community and the knowledge involved.

What was hard in the first years? ICANN continues to be, but ICANN particularly was, under very strong attack. It was a classic cycle. I can always refer you to the tobacco industry. First there's nothing happening, then there's nothing evil happening. Then, well, yes, there may be something evil happening, but it's not our fault. There's many other causes. And at some point the industry realizes that there's going to be some rules being set, and then they jump at making the rules as slack as possible. And when the rules setter is established, then they'll

try to make it weak or to [inaudible] what we went through. Again, 17 think tanks based in DC. People from ICANN went to the addresses and there was nothing there.

Finally, when ICANN was established, the next step that was very hard was litigation against ICANN trying to bleed us white or to occupy our time with litigation and to make us afraid of litigation and so paralyzed.

It was hard to bring together the whole community. We had several paradoxical situations. I'll be brief about this. It was like, this ICANN outfit is stealing the Internet from America, whereas [in] the rest of the world the Internet is run by an obscure California corporation. And we had all these vice grips coming from both sides. Those were very hard.

And at the same time, we had to establish an organization that was functional and that was able to keep the trains running on time. And that's one of the huge messages that still goes on. I'll stop there.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Alejandro. So what you're describing is a period of excitement, but also threat, and lots of different kinds of threat coming from different places.

So, Steve, turning to you, I mean, you were the founding chair of SSAC, as I said earlier, and you came into ICANN just after Alejandro's been in this early stages. So that period of threat, that period of fear—was it still there when you came in and you started SSAC? And tell us a little bit about how that began to take shape and it began to grow in confidence in those early days.

STEVE CROCKER:

So that's the right question. I'll come down in just a second. I want to expand the context just slightly and put a couple of other dates on the table. We had an amazing review of the key events both within our community and within ICANN and the external events that were happening in technology and so forth.

The first date I want to share is 30 years before the founding of ICANN, 1968. Jon Postel, Vint Cerf, and I were all graduate students at UCLA, where the first node on the ARPANET was being put together. And so that brought us into this era of technology and with that, kind of in an unplanned way, the need for how to interact with our counterparts in other sites and develop the processes (we didn't try to use fancy words like that) of how to cooperate with the others, how to communicate, how to reach decisions and so forth. And we gravitated toward a very lightweight, informal, non-bureaucratic process. That got fixed over time, but that's the way we started.

Fast forward 30 years. ICANN formed. Jon Postel had taken over the RFCs and ran them beautifully for the whole 30 years between the time that I started it and then turned it over to him. I spent a little bit of time in the government at ARPA funding research and then was off doing other things, mostly related to computer and network security.

One of those days where you remember exactly where you were when you heard is when I got a phone call from Vint that Jon had passed away in October 1998. ICANN was in the process of being formed. A short time later, there was an organization. There was not an organizational meeting, but an early public meeting of the first Board of ICANN, Esther

Dyson. This was in Cambridge, Massachusetts, so it was just after, I think, the previous meeting. I was kind of curious. I'd not been directly participating, but I'd been following it from a distance. And at the end of the meeting, I went up to Esther and said, if you need any help, I'd be glad to offer. She ignored me, and we got past that.

The next big event, which was world shattering and had a dramatic impact on ICANN as well as everybody else, was 9/11, 2001. The World Trade Center came down, with the planes going into it, causing a shockwave across the entire world. And many, many organizations, including ICANN, started to ask the question, "Gosh, security is important. What should we be doing?"

Very shortly after that, in November 1998, ICANN held a symposium to lay out what it thought the security issues were. A number of people came. I was not directly involved at the time, but a short while later, I got a call from Vint again. He was Chair of the Board, and he said, "We're going to start a security advisory committee, and if you could come and just sort of get it started, six months will do." "Sure." And I knew that that was an underestimate, so I expanded it and made what I thought was a reasonable guess of two years. Yeah. But that's what brought me directly into ICANN and this whole process.

And after we had SSAC going for a while, going smoothly. Well, I'll tell you one of the special things about SSAC. A bunch of very, very good people were recruited, and then I was asked to chair it. So it's a little odd in some sense to be brought in when a team is already assembled. So the first thing I did was I went and had private one on one conversations with each of the people who'd been selected. I figured,

if I'm going to lead, I got to get to know them and so forth. And one particular theme emerged from these completely separate conversations, which was, we don't know about this ICANN political stuff, but security is important, so I'm willing to do it, but I don't want to get involved in this political stuff.

And then a year into it, there was a bylaws change and the advisory committees were given a seat in the Boardroom as non-voting liaisons. So we had to go find somebody. Nobody wanted to do that. So I wound up doing both, chairing the committee and being the liaison to the Board. That put me inside the Boardroom.

And the dynamics there are really, really interesting because one thinks that a non-voting position is kind of irrelevant, perhaps, particularly under Vint's tenure. But I think, continuing on, that the vote is the last and in essence, the least important. In almost all cases, even that takes place. What takes place is the discussion, is the interplay, the sorting out of ideas, and the constant competition for time and attention on all of the various.

So after a while I said, SSAC is going along nicely. How do I gracefully and with some level of dignity, get out of it? And then I got an idea and said, if I move over from being a non-voting liaison on the Board to a voting position on the Board, then I'll be forced off. The Board takes only three three-year terms, and then they wave you off.

That's my ICANN story.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Well, that's wonderful. And I don't know if that's a recommendation as to why you should apply for the Board. I'm going to leave the audience to think about that. I love that. I thought, if I get on, I can get off. Interesting idea.

Mirjam, you were involved in the early days. It seems extraordinary to me that you were, but you were and you contributed, as Stephen has been talking [as well as] Alejandro with the White and the Green papers in 1997. Of course, they were ICANN's foundational documents. And you were involved in developing the supporting organizations, particularly the ASO.

And as a woman in the Internet space, then, tell us a bit about that side of it coming from your community and at the beginning sort of reflecting what you've heard a little bit. It'd be very interesting to get your view on forming the ASO, and what was your biggest challenge.

MIRJAM KUHNE:

Hi. Thanks for the question, Sally, and thanks for having me on this panel. It's a great honor and I'm glad to be here. I won't go quite as back as long as Steve has just mentioned (the '60s) but actually, in the '80s, a few people came together, in '89 exactly, to kind of base on the foundation that had been built already by Steve and Jon and Vint and others. And so there were some early adopters of the Internet protocol here in Europe. And they started to come together to discuss how to use these early networks and to use that new protocol. And they realized that they need to coordinate certain technical aspects of that new communications protocol.

And so they formed what's called RIPE, which was a loose, open forum for network operators to coordinate certain parts of the network and how to connect their networks to each other, and who has what IP address and where can I find you if something goes wrong, how to register the IP addresses, how to register contact information, and things like that. And that forum still exists today. It's still an open forum. It's not a legal entity. It's like the ICANN community, but then mostly focused on IP addressing. So this was '89.

And in '92 they formed the RIPE NCC (Network Coordination Center), which was kind of the secretariat for the RIPE community to help them conduct their meetings and register.

And then shortly after that, the RIPE NCC also became the first IP registry, the Regional Internet Registry, because they already existed. They had trust. You mentioned trust earlier in your speech. I really appreciated that, and I think that's really essential also today. And you can still see that through trust. These network operators, for instance, even though most of them are competitors, can rely on each other and help each other out in terms of crisis like the pandemic, as you mentioned. So I thought that's really important.

And so the RIPE NCC, because they already existed, became the first RIR, with close collaboration, actually with Jon Postel, at the time, with IANA at the time. And Jon always had one important message. He always wanted to have the communities involved. He wanted to make sure the communities actually agreed with a certain organization to, for instance, become a ccTLD or become an RIR. He wouldn't just kind of decide top down. He would make sure people would work, would be

happy to work with that organization. And so in '92 RIPE NCC started became an RIR.

Then in later '93 I think the APNIC was established; in '96, ARIN. And then at the time when ICANN came around and what you mentioned (the preparations for the supporting organizations), these RIRs that already existed at the time and the numbers communities that already existed had already their structures and their decision making processes and their consensus building processes.

So we felt it was important at the time to use those existing structures and to use those organizations to then form the ASO because we already knew each other, we trusted each other. They had their own decision making processes in their countries. And that's why you have now also the Address Council formed by each region, by each RIR, some communities basically, based on the decisions that they feel comfortable with and the processes that they have developed themselves so they can trust that system.

So that's kind of how the ASO came about. I noticed earlier that the ASO is still the only supporting organization that still has its original name, and that's still there from the beginning until today. Everything else kind of changed in the meantime.

But, yeah, maybe a few words to your second question. Like you said ("as a woman"), that's true. I mean, I studied computer science, and I was one of the few women at the time, but I was really lucky throughout my career to have great mentors. And often you only realize this in retrospect (that you have people who support you throughout your career), and so I would really like to encourage also the new generation

and people who come new, like, for instance, Reema here. And I'm already impressed by the career that you have already and all these things that Sally read out about you. And it's so important for us, the kind of older generation, to hand over our knowledge and also that community spirit. I think we need to really distill this into the new generation and make sure that the Internet can continue the way it is.

So, yeah, don't be shy. Be present in the future of the Internet and maybe find a good mentor that can help you along and support you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Well, thank you, Mirjam. And I think, speaking as a woman working in the Internet space, I think I certainly see you as a very inspiring role model. And I know that the more women we see in ... And there are far more of them than they used to be, and it's wonderful to see that. And like any group, we see more people that look and feel like us, that give us inspiration. And we'll come back to that a little bit, too, because it affects ... I'm going to talk to Anil a little bit about how we make sure that we're more inclusive in a minute.

But before I do that, I'm going to turn now to the transition, as we call it in ICANN, to the oversight transition. And I'm going to turn to you first, Larry. In 2016, as we've said several times this morning, ICANN achieved one of its most hard-won successes when stewardship of the IANA functions was transferred from the US. Government to the global community. Now, you were instrumental in this process. But as I was saying to you when we were having coffee before this, one of the things that I often talk about when I do meetings, especially with governments and people that don't know ICANN, is a lot of people now at ICANN

might think that it looked like it was always going to happen and maybe even that it was easy. But you were instrumental. So tell us a bit about what it was really like, and perhaps more importantly, why was it necessary?

LARRY STRICKLING:

Well, thank you, Sally, and thank you for inviting me out here to dust off all these old memories and talk about the IANA transition and what it means for ICANN today.

So, first off, in terms of whether it was always going to happen on that, I think it's pretty clear it was always expected to happen. I mean, it wasn't as if in 2014, when we announced the process and got that underway under the auspices of ICANN [...] We were simply following up on a commitment that had been made in the original documents creating the idea of ICANN back in 1998, where it said that the US will get it off the ground, it'll be a temporary transition, and we ought to be done in a couple of years. And in fact, September, I think, of 2000 was listed in the documents as the expected time by which the US would transition itself out of any stewardship role with ICANN. That didn't happen. And when we get to 2014, we've then had 14 years of experience.

And then the question, I guess, that you're asking is, so why then? If you didn't get it done when you were supposed to two years later? What, all of a sudden, if anything, changed to bring that to the table in 2014? And I think there were a couple of things. I mean, first off, as I said, we always knew that this was expected, this was part of the plan. But I think there were a couple of trends that were emerging, both internal at ICANN and

more external in terms of global politics, that I think really brought this issue to the fore.

Internationally, we had seen, and we're starting to see, that while the multistakeholder approach had been certainly endorsed in international meetings in the early 2000s, particularly the WSIS meetings, you still had a group of nations that felt that they ought to be in charge of ICANN and the Internet resources. And there was always this issue out there in discussion about whether or not ICANN basically ought to be turned over to an international multilateral organization, governments only, such as the International Telecommunication Union or otherwise, and let governments run it. This was something that the United States had opposed from the start, feeling that, on the approach set up in 1998, which was a multistakeholder approach (and ICANN was operating as a multistakeholder organization right up until 2014), we needed to protect that and enhance that and strengthen that.

In late 2012, as some of you veterans here [know] (I know Olivier is here, and he was right in the thick of it, as well as others of you), the World Conference on international telecommunications took place in Dubai. And that was a conference, a very fractured conference, that had been called to basically look at the old telecommunications regulations for how international telephone calls move between countries. But it took on a much bigger set of issues as some governments started to propose the idea of having governments exercise more control over the key Internet resources, including ICANN. And indeed, about probably a majority of the countries in the meeting signaled support. For such a model.

And we came back from that conference, and I think certainly in the United States, we were shaken by that and said, “Hey, we've got a lot of work to do. We believe in this model. We think it is the pathway to great economic growth and wealth creation in countries. But it's clear that that message isn't getting through. And we need to start working more with countries, especially those in the developing world, who are just at the early stages of the Internet age in their countries, to get them to understand what's at stake and why we think the multi stakeholder approach is the one that will actually yield the greatest benefits to governments and to the citizens in these developing countries.”

And so, as part of that, we took a look then at what could the US do to really make a demonstration of why we were so supportive of the multistakeholder approach? And the one thing that was there that was very symbolic was, let's get the US out of the stewardship role that we were playing at that time, which didn't involve any day to day management of ICANN. That was largely misunderstood by a lot of people. They thought the United States actually managed ICANN. And we didn't do that. We played a primarily clerical role at that time. Yet the public perception was that the US had this inordinate amount of influence over the day to day operations of ICANN. And we felt that if we went forward and said, “We're going to step out of this. We're going to complete the transition that was promised in 1998. What better commitment to the multistakeholder approach than to step up and say voluntarily, ‘We're going to do this. We're going to complete this’”? ...

And what that put into motion then was what turned out to be a two-year process. When it started, we thought it would be a one year process brought under the auspices of ICANN, but largely run by

stakeholders who came together and worked for what turned out to be a two-year period. And I pulled out the statistics. It was over 600 meetings, 26,000 working hours, tens of thousands of messages exchanged. And we won't get into this in any detail, but it also ended up costing millions of dollars in legal fees as the various parties explored some of the options.

So that kind of led to a very long and complicated period of time by which the community sat down to work out the parameters of the transition and what it would be. We had only put out four fairly general guidelines in terms of what we felt the transition had to accomplish, and we asked for a plan to be presented back to us. Now, we asked for that plan to come back in about a year, because at that point in time, the IANA functions contract between the US government and ICANN was set to expire in September of 2015. We ended up having to extend that contract a year to September 2016 in order to give the community enough time to complete its work.

I will say that the third factor in bringing this all forward was also our sense in March of 2014 that ICANN was now prepared to oversee and organize and help shepherd through a true multistakeholder process to come up with a transition plan. Veterans of ICANN from that period and before will remember lots of concerns about the accountability and transparency of ICANN itself and its Board of Directors and its staff and how it operated. But there had already been a lot of work done in the two or three years (really the four years) prior to 2014 through the accountability and transparency review teams that had been set up as part of the affirmation of commitments in 2009 where we could see that ICANN was really getting and putting into place processes to really

address the concerns of the community in terms of the accountability and transparency.

Now, of course, that ended up being a very large part of the discussion during the transition planning itself between 2014 and 2016. But at least we had a sense that ICANN was on a good track, on a good trendline, in terms of improving itself, in terms of conducting the multistakeholder process. And that gave us extra confidence in 2014 that this was a good time, an apt time, to go ahead with the transition.

But it was very much driven, I think, by, more than anything else, what was happening globally among other nations, and the need to educate and convince the other countries in the world that this was the model that would most benefit them as they were seeking to nurture and grow their Internet economies.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Larry, thank you. And you've talked on many different important points there.

And I want to go to Anil now as we look forward a bit more into the future, because this question we've talked about already this morning about the multistakeholder nature that you talked about, how critical it was, the participation of so many people in the discussions about the transition made it sustainable.

And Anil, as we look forward, you are the, as I said, the Chair of the Universal Acceptance Steering Committee, and it's ten years since the first gTLDs were delegated and they were international domain names, by coincidence. So perhaps almost more than anybody at ICANN, you

have a perspective on what is it going to take to increase that inclusivity, particularly in India and in Asia, as we move forward, because what we've created now has to grow and expand so that that participation continues to be relevant for the Internet users of the world.

So what do you think is the most important thing that ICANN needs to focus on for that multilingual Internet, that digital inclusivity, based on your experience as we go forward?

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you Sally. I'll start with two or three incidents which woken me up. One incident was in 2009 when one farmer in the field he was going and he was hit by a motor car and he was bleeding. In rural areas, the distances are far, far away. Some boy was moving in that direction and he saw that bleeding, but he could not do anything because he was not a doctor and he was not connected. But somehow he was carrying a mobile phone, and that had Internet. He was able to connect to the local hospital, and the aid was able to come to that farmer. And thanks to the Internet, the farmer was saved.

The second woken-up incident was when COVID hit all of us. And I was reading interviews of girls from a state in India called Jharkhand where the child was weeping. That was because we have mobile in hand, we have Internet. We are able to continue our education even when the whole world is set up.

So those things bring to you that there is a basic need of Internet which connect society, which connect humanity, which connect multilingual people, which connect cultures.

And let us look into an aspect when we go to a doctor and when we explain about what is happening inside your body, you don't explain in a borrowed language. You explain in your own term where the pain is there.

Ladies and gentlemen, more than 60% of the world population where we are sitting do not converse in English. Although we say that 7.1 billion people are using the Internet or having mobile (5.3 billion people are using the Internet) are they really using the Internet? How many are really using the real treasure of the Internet inside?

So that is the need of a multilingual Internet and connecting those which are unconnected. Although we are sitting here celebrating the 25th Silver Jubilee celebration of ICANN (wonderful; the Internet has given lot of things to us and I think it has become part and parcel of our life like food, shelter and clothes) still our society is divided when we are not able to connect those people.

So Sally, this is a solid requirement that multilingual Internet is the need of the [inaudible]. And we believe in the UASG that the next one billion Internet users are going to join us from the non-English speaking community.

Now, on what we see and what Sally has asked that what ICANN can do to bring those 1 billion people, to bring the multilingual Internet in this, we believe that there are few motivators who can bridge this gap.

One is government. It's very important that governments across the world should make policies, should propagate, and should facilitate bringing IDN and emails in local languages.

The second, Sally, which I personally feel and UASG also feel that there are certain big tech organizations which we were talking since this morning ... Google was born, Twitter was born, Facebook was born, Apple was born as part of the revolution. And thanks to ICANN, they are born. They are big because of the efforts of the whole community which are here. Are these big people who are connecting everybody in the world today, like Google, Apple, Facebook, adopting a multilingual Internet? I think this is an important aspect and important message: the multilingual Internet should go to those platforms which are connecting most of the people. And the same story goes in India also.

And the third important thing is I think the important people who are delivering Internet to the people are ISPs, registrars, and registries. Let us look into it. Have they converted themselves or their system as a universal acceptance adopted system?

And I think these are the areas which are very, very important, in addition to pressure from the public. If the awareness goes to this level that they start pushing pressure on us that brings a multilingual Internet to us instead of only English, I think we all will wake up and we should be able to push it.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Anil, that's a wonderful rallying cry. And we work together on this a lot and we will continue as a community to put this very high on our list of priorities.

And so, Reema, turning to you and thinking more or so about the future, one kind of inclusivity is language and script. And as you said, as we

bring a billion new Internet users online in the next few years, language is going to be key. But it's not just language with diversity. And I'm fascinated by ... You've had an extraordinary career and we're all talking about earlier how much you've done in such a short time. But I know some people would say kind of breaking into ICANN might seem a little bit difficult. So I hope we make it easier as time goes on. But I'd love you to tell us a bit more about what sparked your interest in ICANN and what keeps you coming back.

REEMA MOUSSA:

Sure. So first I want to say thank you so much for the invitation to be here. Thank you to ICANN. And it's great to see in the audience fellows from our time together in Cancun. I was a fellow at ICANN 76 just a couple of months ago, earlier this year. And it's great to be here with all of you.

I guess, to sort of rewind. I first got into this field generally because I think really for people of my generation, our lives were marked by three large large-scale processes; of course, the development and scaling of the Internet as we know it today. My life has always had the Internet in it. Globalization, I think, is the second that stands out as very salient, and concern around human rights and how, in the wake of globalization and advances in technology, our society is coming to terms with the challenges that that can present for human rights and civilization as a whole.

And so I was interested initially when I was thinking about what to do with my life in human rights. So that is why I went to Geneva to study abroad during my undergraduate studies. That's what led me to the

International Telecommunication Union, where really the intersection of global development, globalization, human rights, and technology all came together for me.

And now, being in law school, I focus largely on cybersecurity and privacy, which are principles that are sort of central to ICANN's future, in my view. And so I got involved with ICANN, much like most other things I've gotten involved with just through hearing about it through a friend, through a colleague, at the Internet Law and Policy Foundry. I'd always been sort of aware of ICANN. It was started just a couple months after I was born. So I guess, in a sense, I've been around since the beginning. But it was great to get involved as a Fellow earlier this year.

And to answer your second question of why I'm sort of sticking around, I think the ICANN community is really special. And from my time as a Fellow, I made incredible connections with people, people who I now consider friends, some of them in the audience. One of them I just stayed with in her home in Brazil. So it's incredible the care that people in this community have for each other. And it's very apparent to me, even sitting in the audience before coming up here, how many friendships there are within this crowd.

So I think that that notion of collaboration and genuine care for people from different cultures, different perspectives, who represent different constituencies, is really vital for not just ICANN's work, but really any sort of global collaboration processes to make our world a better place.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Reema, wonderful to hear, and you've touched on something that I believe passionately, and I think this is something we all share at ICANN. You use the word “care” and “kindness” and “friendship.” I think we don't talk about enough about those things sometimes at ICANN. We enjoy them, we all benefit from them. And I've always thought they're a critical part of what makes the multistakeholder process as powerful as it is, because we care about each other, we trust each other as people, as well as trusting in the processes. And I'm so happy to hear you say that so many years on, after our 25 years. You sound as passionate about that now as I'm sure Alejandro was, and Mirjam was right at the beginning.

So I want to thank our panelists, and now I'm going to switch to an open mic. Now, we started a bit late, so we're going to give 15 minutes for the open mic. So we're definitely not cutting that short. I promise we wouldn't. And the lights are shining slightly in my eyes, but I think I can see at the front of the queue.

Sebastien, please.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET:

Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much. I'm going to ask you to listen to the interpretation if you do not speak French. So thank you so much for this important presentation and this exchange there.

A few months ago, I read on the Internet that ICANN was created on September 18, 1998, and incorporated on September 30, 1998. That's the reason why, on September 18, with my colleagues in the different regions of users, we did organize a special session, video session, with

those who were part of the creation of ICANN. About ten of them were present. And it's online. You can go and listen to that presentation. That was quite fascinating. And everybody talked about the future of ICANN, and this is really worth it.

What I wanted to say as well is that regarding time passing by (25 years), we have two points recreating at the Board level, end user position (that was the case at one point) and NETmundial. You remember the NETmundial meetings? That was great to understand better what the Internet was all about and the governance of the Internet.

I wanted to thank Steve Crocker, who was Chair at SSAC, Chair of the Board. But he was telling us about meeting, every year, partners, SSAC partners. And when he was a Board member, he would meet us, he would talk to us, and he was encouraging us. Thank you so very much, Steve.

And there is an elephant in the room as well. We need to talk about the IANA transition and thank Fadi Chehade. Thank you very much.

SALLY COSTERTON:

You're online and you want to ask a question. Please put your hand up in the Zoom Room. And my colleague over here, Alex, you'll just let me know when we've got an online question here. If you could introduce yourself at the mic and keep your comments quite short, that would make sure we maximize the amount of people that can contribute, please.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Thank you. My name is Jeff Neuman. I was at the very first ICANN meeting, which was not in Berlin, but as Steve said, it was actually in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on November 14, 1998.

We're hearing a lot here which is appropriate to hear about ICANN's successes, and there have been many. But the scary truth is that successes can only happen because of the many failures. And that's okay, right? It's okay to trip and fall before you walk. And so we need to remember that there's no shame in recognizing where we may have fallen short, because ultimately it's helped us to get where we are.

And yes, ICANN is everything that the panelists have said. But I thought, as someone at the bottom, the true bottom up (I started out at the bottom; I still am at the bottom, still consider myself at the bottom) I'd give a little bit of what ICANN and ICANN meetings are to me and to others. So we heard there's 2000 attendees or more—2800. We're not going to see hundreds of those people because ICANN meetings are different for every person. ICANN is a place, of course, where Internet policy is discussed and developed, but it's also a place where business gets done for registries, registrars, and third-party providers of many services. It's a place to learn about economic and geopolitical issues, of course, but it's also a place where those that are thinking about entering industry can come and learn from those that are already participating in the industry. It's a place to talk to like-minded people across the globe that share common issues, interests, concerns, and desires. And it's also a place to meet and talk to people who have different views, very different to your own, but to understand the potential, intended or unintended consequences of certain actions or inactions. It's a place where you can find your next job or your next

career. It's also a place where you find lifelong friends, and some have even found their lifelong spouse.

So, yes, ICANN is all about the political issues and the multistakeholder model and everything, all those big buzzwords. But the reality is that ICANN is so much more than what everyone sees up on stage, and a lot of it happens behind the scenes. And then if someone were to ask me what is ICANN going to be like in the next 25 years, the only answer that I have is, well, we'll have to find out.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Jeff.

Okay, I'm just conscious of time, so please could you keep your comments fairly short and focused on the anniversary? Thank you so much.

Alex, let me know if we've got anyone in the room. Yes, we do.

ALEX DANS:

We have a question from Faheem Soomro. "How does ICANN envision the future of the Internet in the next 25 years? And what strategies and initiatives are in place to address the evolving needs and challenges of this dynamic ecosystem?"

SALLY COSTERTON:

Wow. Okay. That's a whole session in its own right. I'm going to suggest, if it's possible (thank you very much for the question) that that's a great question for the public forum, which is later this week. Because it's such

a big question, I think that this isn't the best forum this week to address it, if that's okay.

So could I ask you to make sure, Alex, that we have this question back in the public forum so that we have time to answer it properly?

Please, can I go to the next question?

MICHAEL PALAGE:

I was a participant at ICANN2 in Berlin at the Hotel Adelaide, and the memory I would like to share is that the DNSO General Assembly that was held at that meeting required attendees to pay \$50. So it is positive that no one here had to pay to come into this venue to speak. So that's a positive and is a testament to ICANN's increased financial stability.

The one thing, again ... Jeff and others have said ICANN has done a lot of good. The one note that I would like to make is that I have seen over the past 25 years the composition of the multistakeholder model change. And to Jeff's point, there's a lot of people doing business here. And I think it's important that as we look to the next 25 years, there are safeguards put in place to prevent ICANN from becoming a trade association and more that broad, inclusive multistakeholder. Thank you. I think I was under two minutes.

SALLY COSTERTON:

There we go .You were wonderful. That was very quick.

Yes, please?

DAVID MARGLIN:

Hi. I was also at the first meeting in Cambridge. Indeed, I was there on behalf of the Berkman Center, now the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, which helped host the meeting. As a young law school student, we put that together. And what strikes me is that from the beginning, ICANN was looking to the future, even if the horizon was very short (“a couple years and this will be done”), but also thinking about the Internet as the Internet and society, always thinking about it with that idea of it's not just policy, it's not just numbers and names and the assignment of these things, but it is how the Internet affects society. And that has continued through to this day. Now, our time horizons that we look to are greater in the future, but we are still very much an organization that I'm, one, proud to be a part of for these many years and, two, that looks forward to the future more often than it does looking back to the past.

So this is nice and it's still a pleasure to be here and I hope 25 years from now I'm getting up at this microphone (I may need to be wheeled up) to speak to my memories of both this meeting and 25 years ago in Cambridge.

SALLY COSTERTON:

We hope so too.

Now, for housekeeping, what I'm going to suggest is the following: that we run the queue for another ten minutes. So probably what that means in the room is that we shut the queue now. Hopefully we have enough time in ten minutes to get through the queue we have and anybody that comes up online okay, at the moment.

Okay, let's keep going. Please?

ROBERTO GAETANO:

Hi. I was participating before the formation of ICANN and I think that this is an important period. The year that led to the formation of ICANN is something that should be remembered because that was a very formative year for me. I mean, I was brought in the process by a member of RIPE, the late Siegfried Langenbach, and I remember that there were competing proposals to become the coordinator of the Internet. For instance, there was the proposal of the ITU who said, basically, this is something that belongs to the intergovernmental organization and has to be a sort of intergovernmental process. There were other positions, the need for bringing in especially the business community. We were talking at that time that multistakeholder-ism has not become popular as a buzzword and we were talking more as public private partnership.

And what I remember of that year is the fact that in spite of the fact that we were on very different initial positions, I was in the beginning a member of the IAHC who was supporting the team where also the ITU was participating but rapidly realized that the IFWP process had better possibility for success because it was able to bring to the table everybody.

So for that process, we were all working under the sense of urgency. It was urgent to establish this coordination of the Internet functions. And unfortunately, the passing away of Jon Postel proved that we were right. I cannot think what would have happened if ICANN was not ready the moment that the key person of the Internet was no longer able to manage it.

SALLY COSTERTON: Oh yes.

ROBERTO GAETANO: Just one reply to a previous comment. Yes indeed, the DNSO General Assembly had this problem. When I became the Chair of the DNSO General Assembly, there was no longer a need for any fee for participation. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you.

Now I'm conscious now of time, so I don't think we're going to get through the whole queue, but I'm going to go to you, Wolfgang, and then we'll go for another five or six minutes, please.

WOLFGANG KLEINWAECHTER: Thank you very much. My name is Wolfgang Kleinwaechter. I'm now a retired professor from the University of Ajus. And I was pulled in this community also already in the pre-ICANN time via the interim ad hoc committee and the white paper discussions.

So ICANN's DNA has a number of components. I think one good element is: try it, test it and learn the lessons. And one good example are the ICANN elections from the year 2000. So I think in the original ICANN bylaws there was a provision that nine directors will represent the At-Large community, but nobody had an idea how to find the nine directors. And so the idea came up to have global elections. And this

was a great test in the year 2000. Some people were enthusiastic, others were very critical. And the outcome was indeed we managed an election. Five directors were elected. One from Germany, Andy Mueller-Maguhn from the Chaos Computer Club.

But the lessons learned was that this is risky, and it was later substituted by the NomCom. And the NomCom is a unique element in the ICANN architecture because it's unique in a corporation like ICANN or other corporations in that the community itself selects half of the directors. So the NomCom is totally independent from the Board and it selects nine directors, voting directors, for the ICANN Board. I think this is a big achievement that is a very democratic element in ICANN structure.

And my recommendation for the next 25 years is to keep the independence of the NomCom. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Very clear recommendation. Thank you.

Please.

SIVA MUTHUSAMY:

My name is Sivasubramanian. Alejandro mentioned in his presentation that in the beginning of ICANN there were legal challenges for ICANN. If you could say more about that, and if it continues in some form today, either visibly or invisibly in that form or that form, and if that is what makes ICANN legal centric, that would be helpful.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you.

Please.

VANDA SCARTEZINI: Thank you. Well, thank you to Wolfgang for talking about the NomCom. I was Chair this year and will be associate chair for the next one and invite everyone to think and apply and be part of this process.

But I'm here just to remember that I've been here for 23 years and before that, my directory starts in the first one. So Brazil was part of this process since the beginning. And in 2009 with Cheryl Langdon-Orr and other women that are not with us anymore started DNS Women. So I'm glad to see more balance in this panel. And I wish the opportunity to invite all the women here for our session and cocktail for tomorrow at 4:30 in the afternoon, so we can continue improve the participation of women in this environment that is really, like the girl said, a very good experience. So keep doing that. We are dinosaurs now, but we're going to mentor anyone that wants to. And please join us. Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. You're such a great role model for us. And do go to the DNS Women's session. I strongly recommend the group.

Please, Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL: Manal Ismail. I'm with the Egyptian regulator, and ICANN was one of my first very early work assignments as a new graduate at the time when

the government of Egypt hosted ICANN5 in Cairo. And ever since I've been working with the GAC. And it's amazing to see the evolution of the GAC, which is, by the way, also turning 25, from 24 members and eight or seven observers now to 182 members and 38 observers, and also from a committee that is working behind closed doors and in a silo to a committee with all sessions open for the community to listen in and observe, and also working collaboratively with the community and very proud to be part of the efforts that led to the introduction of the internationalized domain names and intense efforts to complete the IANA stewardship transition, but also very challenging moments during the new gTLDs and GAC meetings ending after midnight, and also the smooth and seamless work of ICANN and keeping ICANN progressing during the pandemic period. So thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Manal.

Now we're almost at time, but we only have three people in the queue. And Alex, am I okay with online? Yeah. So if you could be really quick, please, let's finish the queue because we'd love to hear from all three of you.

Please.

[LUCIA]:

Well, hello. My name is [Lucia] and I'll speak in Spanish for better understanding. ICANN have helped me understand how important it is for new generations to get involved in governance issues on the Internet. And I feel really proud to have arrived here and to be able to

share with my colleagues how important it is for us as part of that generation to get involved in these issues and together to make this community much bigger. Thank you very much.

SALLY COSTERTON: Very inspiring rallying call for us.

Please.

NANAYA PREMPEH: Thank you, Sally. Thank you, ICANN. Thank you to all the sponsors, platinum, gold, and silver. Thank you, everyone, for coming. My name is Reverend Dr. Nanaya Prempeh from Ghana. I'm the country representative on the GAC, the newest appointed on the GAC. I remember Jeff was saying that ICANN is everything from job, career, everything, government. People have even found spouses from ICANN. Well, I'm blessed to have my spouse already. But what I'm looking for from this ICANN conference is a solution to redelegation issues.

Personally, I feel like this is the best moment for me to say this—

SALLY COSTERTON: Can I stop you? I'm sorry to stop you, but there is an opportunity for you to say this in the public forum. Would that be possible? Because this is really a 25th anniversary.

NANAYA PREMPEH: Okay, so let me congratulate ICANN for its 25th anniversary.

SALLY COSTERTON: I appreciate it.

NANAYA PREMPEH: I also want to mention I was the first woman to start an Internet company in Ghana in 1999.

SALLY COSTERTON: Congratulations.

NANAYA PREMPEH: Thank you. And we are interested as Africans. I can't wait to have ICANN in Rwanda next year. I'm praying that by then my problems that I'm talking about will be solved. But what is most important is that ICANN is mandated to ensure that at least affordability, accessibility and penetration of the Internet is achieved. So before we come to Africa next year, let's do a bit more than what we have already done so that a lot more Africans can support and be present at the event. Thank you very much.

SALLY COSTERTON: I appreciate it. Thank you. And please do bring your question back to the public forum later in the week and we'd be very happy to take it.

NANAYA PREMPEH: Will you be there, Sally?

SALLY COSTERTON: Yes, we'll all be there. The Board will be there.

Please. We have one more question, and I want to close the queue because I'm conscious we're over time. I want to close the session, actually.

Please.

ERIK UDEN:

My name is Erik Uden representing Mastodon.de. Well, first of all, I want to congratulate ICANN for making it to 25 years. And I wanted to say that it has been ... Well, there has been many changes, especially with the introduction of the new generic top-level domain program. And all I wanted to say is that there might be a need for a sort of course correction because certain types of big businesses are registering top-level domains that have file endings or file extensions as top-level domains like .zip or .mov. And I see that as sort of a big issue for the Internet as a whole.

And with a closing statement, I just want to say: wonderful anniversary session. And we should all remember there's no "I" in ICANN. Thank you very much.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. Well, that's a very nice closing comment. There is no "I" in ICANN. That feels like a theme of this session.

I want to thank the panelists very much indeed for coming, in many cases, an extremely long way to be with us, for sharing their experiences and their advice for the future. Thank you all so much for such active participation. The executive team will be back after lunch for a Q&A

and, of course, we'll be back in many, many events during the week, including the public forum. Thank you all very much. Have a good lunch break.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]