
ICANN78 | AGM – Get to Know ICANN Community - Meet ccNSO and GAC Mems
Sunday, October 22, 2023 – 3:00 to 4:00 HAM

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: I am Siranush Vardanyan and I am remote moderation manager for this session. This is another session introduction to ICANN and we have the opportunity to learn about Country Code Name Supporting Organization and Government Advisory Committee, GAC. My pleasure is to give the floor first to the vice chair of country Code Name Supporting Organization, Biyi to introduce what ccNSO is doing and how the ccNSO works, what is council and what are the people behind that and what are on their table to discuss. My great pleasure is also to let all of you know that current chair of ccNSO is one of us, the fellowship program alumni, Alejandra Reynoso. We have a great support among vice chairs of the council, ccNSO council. Pablo is one of the fellowship selection committee members, so he is the one who actually selects you, one of those selection committee members and without further ado, me, the floor is yours. Please go ahead with the introduction about ccNSO.

BIYI OLADIPO: Thank you very much, Siranush, and good afternoon, everyone. My name is Biyi Oladipo. I'm from the .NG ccTLD registry and also vice chair of the ccNSO council. Today I'm just going to do a quick introduction to what the ccNSO is and what we do basically and how we're placed within the ICANN ecosystem. First of all, I would like to ask this question as I start. How many of you know who, what your ccTLD, your country

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code top level domain organization in your country is and how many of you have anything or the other to do with them? Let me see, show of hands. You know who they are and you know who, do you know who runs them? Excellent. I would like to say this up front that if you don't, please take an interest in knowing what the ccTLD is because that's the name that represents the country or the region that you belong to.

So quick introduction to the ccNSO. What does it stand for? The ccNSO stands for Country Code Name Supporting Organization. It was created for and by ccTLD managers. Within the ICANN ecosystem you have two types of TLDs, top level domains. You have the generic top level domain, that's the gTLD, and then you have the country codes. And we represent the country codes. Who is a ccTLD manager? A ccTLD manager is the organization or entity that manages the country code top level domain from the country or the region that it represents. And of course we know the ccTLD represents the country code top level domain.

Now the question is why are ccTLDs important? Out of the top ten top level domains in the world, seven of them are ccTLDs. So you can imagine how important the entities are. You have .com, which is the largest TLD in the world, and then you have .cn, which is a ccTLD, you have .de, .net, .uk, .org, .nl, .ru, .br, as well as .au. These are the top ten around the world. Seven of them are ccTLDs, so you can imagine how important ccTLDs are.

In terms of the purpose and goals of the ccNSO, we do a few things basically. We undertake policy and policy related works. Now when I say policy, what I mean are global policies as it relates to our relationship, the relationship of ccTLDs and IANA as well as the whole ICANN

ecosystem. The ccNSO does not, I repeat, does not make policies related to individual ccTLDs, because individual ccTLDs represent either countries or territories, and there are sovereignties involved, so you need to be very careful when you're working on it. But as far as global policies are concerned, things that involve everybody, and the relationship with IANA and the ICANN ecosystem, we work on policies that will guide all of us in those areas. We cooperate and learn with one another. For those who are new to the ICANN ecosystem, the ccNSO organizes what we call the Tech Day, which deals with issues, developing issues as far as technical infrastructure and development are concerned, and people come to learn from that. Also amongst ourselves, we share best practices as it relates to things that people have done that has worked in their own environment and see how they could help other ccTLDs grow as far as that is concerned, and we engage with other stakeholders, so we engage with works that concern the broader ICANN ecosystem and things that have to do with relating to other stakeholders within the full DNS ecosystem.

So the composition of the ccNSO, we have the ccNSO members, today we have about 176 members including IDN ccTLDs, who have joined the membership of the ccNSO. So you have the ccNSO members, you have the ccNSO Council, and this makes up ccNSO. So members are those who have applied and have agreed to join the ccNSO. Now I'm emphasizing who have applied and have agreed, because it's not automatic. Because we are a ccTLD, it doesn't mean you'll be a member of the ccNSO. There are ccTLDs that are not members of the ccNSO. We would love everybody to be, but you have to apply to join the ccNSO. And of course we have Council members who administer and

coordinate the affairs of the ccNSO. So this is the spread of ccNSO members across the world. We have members across all the five ICANN regions. So you have North America, six members, Latin America and the Caribbean Islands, 29, Africa, 40, Asia, Australia and Pacific region, 54, and Europe, we have 47 members.

So what's the benefit for ccNSO members? ccNSO members participate in selecting ccNSO councilors and also members of the ICANN Board. I'm going to show you in a little bit how we place within the ICANN ecosystem so you see where we are. But the ccNSO nominates two members, seats 11 and 12 on the ICANN Board, and we do that. We vote on global policies like I explained earlier. These are policies that are within the scope of the ccNSO, so we vote on that. We make your voice, that's the voice of ccTLDs heard in the ICANN community, and then we share experience and experiences and information. I would like to lay a bit of emphasis on this. This, for me, is the topical part of what the ccNSO does, because in sharing experiences, I know ccTLDs that have gone from zero to whatever numbers they are today, because they participated in some of these things and they learned from other people. So it's important to do that.

What does the ccNSO Council do? The Council administers and coordinates the affairs of the ccNSO. The Council also manages development of the policies. So we help to manage the PDP as a policy development process whenever we have one of those global policies that I referred to earlier. Councilors are actively involved in setting the course of the ccNSO, leading and participating in various working groups that the ccNSO has. I'll also share with you what those working

groups are in a little bit. And then we engage the community on topical issues and develop positions that require community input.

Who sits on the Council of the ccNSO? There are 18 members of the ccNSO Council. 15 of us are elected, three by ICANN region, and then we have three nominated by NomCom. And those ones who are nominated by their regions are nominated by members within that region, they are nominated and voted for by members within that region, while NomCom gives us three members. This is the current configuration of the ccNSO Council, the people who are sitting on those seats. Therefore, three years, you could be re-elected. And depending on the policies in your own geopolitical zone, you can have multiple. There's no term limit, really, and we've not decided on whether we're going to have terms limits yet.

So, where do we place within the ICANN ecosystem? Siranush had mentioned earlier that within the ICANN ecosystem, you have supporting organizations and advisory committees. So, ccNSO is one of the advisory committees and we sit on seats, we occupy seats 11 and 12 on the ICANN board. And this gives you an idea of where we are in the ecosystem.

So, how do you participate in the work of the ccNSO? To participate in the work of the ccNSO, you either represent a ccNSO member or you are affiliated to one. And a member, like I said, is an entity that manages a ccTLD and has agreed to be a member of the ccNSO. Where the volunteer—Can be anybody who is a representative of the ccTLD or a ccNSO member. And the councilor is anyone who has been nominated,

elected have mentioned that earlier. And the ccNSO also has staff that support the work of the ccNSO.

So, how do you contribute? You attend sessions. Most sessions are open. So, except those that are clearly marked closed, most sessions are open. So, you can attend sessions at least to have a feel of what we're doing there. For members only, you can vote. You can answer surveys as it relates to topical issues that have been discussed and are going on, especially for members. During members' meetings, you can give presentations, you can use the ccNSO mailing list, you can join a ccNSO working group or committee. And in a bit, I'll tell you who can join the group. Then you can join the TLD Ops mailing list and I'll tell you what TLD Ops is in a bit. And then you can apply for a position in the council, seeing that you already are supported or nominated by ccNSO members.

So, can I join a working group or committee? Membership is open to all those that are associated with ccTLD managers, regardless of whether you are a member of the ccNSO or not. As long as you have represented ccTLD, you can join a working group or committee. And depending on the scope and charter of a ccNSO working group or committee, other people who are in the larger ICANN ecosystem can join as observers. So, you can come in and observe the proceedings and things that are being done, the work that is being done in those committees.

So, which topics do we address? We talk about things that relate to security and stability of services, of ccTLDs. We talk about internet governance, we undertake legislative initiatives, things that relate to operational best practices and others. Now, the whole idea of

operational best practices is for us to share ideas around what has worked. And then you can see how you can implement that within your own environment. Maybe not verbatim, but how you can adapt or adopt whatever it is that's been discussed. And also, we discuss things that have to do with internal ccNSO governance. We have a committee that is responsible for ensuring that the ccNSO keeps to its charter.

In terms of PDPs, these are the PDPs that are currently on. There's a PDP 3 on retirement of ccTLDs. So, if it so happens that a country stops being a country, or a region stops being a region, or a territory doesn't exist anymore, what happens to that domain? How do we retire it? And then there's also the review mechanism of ccPDP 3, we call it review mechanism, which is on delegation, transfer, revocation and retirement of ccTLDs. And then we have the ccPDP 4, which is strictly for IDN, internationalized domain name, country code top-level domains, and how they play within the ccNSO. The results of this ccPDP 4 will eventually replace what we call the ccTLDs IDN, ccTLD fast-track process. So, these are some of the working groups. DNS Abuse Standing Committee. It's a new one, and it's actually opened a repository with useful resources for ccTLDs as far as DNS abuse is concerned. There's a survey that is going on, and today, sorry, at this meeting, the committee is going to launch the email list, and you can subscribe to that. TLD Ops is the standing committee that is responsible for managing incidents response as far as within the ccTLD community. And then you have the universal acceptance standing committee, which is also a new committee, which addresses issues that have to do with ccTLDs, and how they provide support for IDNs. The Strategic and Operational Planning Committee, SOPC, is responsible for reviewing and making

comments on ICANN's strategy and budgets. Then we have the MPC, the meeting programs committee, which is responsible for making sure that the ccNSO members' meetings that we have go very well, and I can tell you that they do a very good job. Then we have the ccNSO Internet Governance Liaison Committee, like the name suggests, they track everything that has to do with internet governance conversations, and how it affects the ccNSO and ccTLDs, and then make recommendations to the ccNSO Council, as well as the ccNSO at large. Then we have the Technical Working Committee, which is responsible for running the Tech Day programs during ICANN meetings. For this meeting, the Tech Day is going to hold tomorrow, and it's going to be from morning until right after the 25th anniversary celebrations, up until in the evening, and if you check the schedules, I'm sure you'll see the plan for the Tech Day. Then you have the Guidelines Review Committee, this is like the internal police of the ccNSO that ensures that we comply and hold on to the things that the charter of the ccNSO.

So how do you keep to date with the ccNSO These are avenues where you can reach the ccNSO website, the Community Wiki, and all the other things, then the ccNSO Secretariat email is there, if you send an email, somebody is definitely going to respond to you. And you can meet any one of us, you can stop us on the corridor during the meetings, Javier is here, Pablo is here, I think I saw [inaudible] is somewhere there, so you can stop any one of us and have a quick discussion with us on the ccNSO and what it stands for, I'm sure we'll be very happy to have those conversations with you.

There's a revamped ICANN Learn course that we've worked on, which talks about the introduction to ccNSO, I'm sure some of you have gone

through it, but if you haven't, you can also go through that and that would help you to understand what we do better, and at this meeting, this is just a schedule for this meeting, you can join us for any of these sessions and I'm sure you would definitely enjoy yourself, okay, thank you so much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Biyi, thank you very much for this introduction to ccNSO. Just for everyone to know, all the slides, all the presentations are uploaded to the meeting schedule, so whenever you go to specific session details, you will find all the presentations there, you can download them, you can use the information, so feel free to do, any questions related to ccNSO? Yes, please, Tracy.

TRACY JOHNSON: Hello, Tracy from New Zealand, first time fellow, I'm not currently involved with a ccTLD, although I've previously worked at Internet NZ, I'm also not currently working for an ISP, although I'm heavily connected, so I'm trying to understand what would be a recommendation, whether I observe in one of those groups, or whether you recommend maybe attending and getting involved with At-Large?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Can you repeat, Tracy, please, what recommendations you would like to hear related to?

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- TRACY JOHNSON: Recommendation into what group I should participate in, because I am not currently working for a ccTLD or an ISP, but I have a heavy connection with both of those, and would like to gather information and also provide feedback based on my connections working with ISP, and the ccTLDs, on what might affect the end users, and where would be the best place for me to gather information and provide that feedback, would that be observing one of the groups, like ccNSO, or attending At-Large group?
- SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: So, the main point is, if you are not related to ccNSO, and you are not part of any Internet service providers or country code name supporting organizations, but you would like to give feedback to your ccNSO or ISP, or your ccTLD, so how and where the person can come and participate to get that knowledge in order to be able to provide feedback.
- BIYI OLADIPO: Okay, now, you're not affiliated to a ccTLD, but you would like to know where specifically to come to, in order for you to be able to know what kind of recommendations that you can give to them, and suggestions that you can make to them on how to improve themselves. Okay, what I would suggest to you is, throughout the meeting, you could look at specific sessions that relate to the things that you are interested in, and I could give you a couple of suggestions. So, if you check the schedule that I showed earlier, there's a session on ccTLD news, where people come and tell you, tell us the things that are happening in their own environments, things they've done, things they are about to do, how it has worked, and what the envisage would happen. Okay, you can learn

a few things from them, make suggestions to the ccTLDs in your own environment. So, that's one place, but a number of other sessions that you could avail yourself of.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Also to add to what Biyi said, Tuesday is a constituency day, so this is the day for you, all of you, to learn about different constituencies, different communities. It will be hard to get the full point of what's going on there, because every community is doing their own discussions, and they are like long-term discussions, and you may get into as a newcomer and get nothing out of that, but at least you will get an idea, if this is the community I would like to be a part of, this is the community if I have the expertise or knowledge to bring to the table, or this is something which I would like to observe to get more knowledge to bring back to my country, representatives. Pablo, please.

PABLO RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Good afternoon to all. I'm Pablo Rodriguez from the registry .pr in Puerto Rico. We are going to be celebrating the next ICANN meeting in March of 2024. I'd like to bring to your attention the following. Many of you may be thinking, well, I'm just starting to learn, I really don't know much, I don't know how can I contribute, but the truth is that each one of you are leaders wherever you are, in the regions, in the country, in the territories where you are. Consequently, there are several things that you can do, and I would like to complement to what Biyi and Siranush was sharing with us.

You are not involved with the ccTLD, but you can reach out to them. Start the relationship, just like if you want to make a comment to your neighbor, first thing you want to do is know them, become acquainted with them, and then you can start speaking to them and start making recommendations, the same thing.

Also, there are other channels. As an individual, you might not be there to make recommendations to the ccNSO, but certainly, you can join the ISOC chapter in your area. You can also participate in contributing comments when there are public comments open in different things, and as you get involved in the different areas, constituencies, and groups within the ICANN community, you will continue to grow. And in that process, people will begin to learn who you are, become acquainted with you, involve you in other things, and as Biyi mentioned, what is it that motivates you? What gets you going? What is it that you want to do? The ccTLD in your country will have policies that will affect you and your people around you in your country, so be aware, be involved. Your ISPs, what is the ISP Association? Maybe you can reach out to them through your internet society chapter as well. So get involved. So it's not one thing. Participate in everything that you can. Get involved in everything. Participate in everything you can, and people are going to start getting acquainted and familiarized with you, and they're going to get you involved. And as you go through that process, that path, you're going to hone in on what is it that really makes you passionate about, and that you will go full throttle in that. So, please, get involved.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: There is one question from remote participation. So as the ccNSO is responsible for developing and recommending global policies to the ICANN Board on issues relating to country code TLDs, what are your plans to de facto countries like Somaliland having their ccTLDs? Note, Taiwan has their ccTLD already. So if you can cover briefly the response to this question, then I would appreciate if someone talks to [Malik.]

BIYI OLADIPO: The ccNSO does not, and I repeat, does not get involved with individual ccTLDs and their policies and things that relate to their existence. We are only concerned about the members who have been delegated and have chosen to be members of the ccNSO. And even with that, we only work on global policies and things that relate to our relationship with IANA and also the relationship within the ICANN community. Specific policies for ccTLDs are individual issues, so you can run your registration policies, run everything that you want to do within your own environment the way you want it and the way your laws allow you to run them. We do not get involved. Okay, so for whatever happens to Somali, Somaliland, wherever, is their issues. When they sort it out and they come to the ccNSO after they've been delegated, we'll accept them and then we'll work with them the way we work with others. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Biyi. Thank you very much, and thank you, ccNSO [inaudible], for being here and with sharing this information. I really appreciate it. Thank you. Our applause is to ccNSO people, and good luck for the ICANN 78. Thank you very much. And we will shift now to, so we talked about the community who is developing policies, so one

of the communities who is developing policies. Now we'll talk about the community who is actually advising, the Government Advisory Committee, and my great pleasure and honor to introduce my best friend, one of the beautiful fellows we have in our family, Mistura Aruna, who is also one of the fellowship selection committee members, so she is really actually the one who selected you for this round, and ICANN Org staff supporting that, Rob, my good friend, so the floor is yours. Thank you.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Thank you very much, Siranush. Good afternoon, everyone. Rob, thank you so much for supporting me. So Rob is going to stay here to take the hard, hard questions while I just make the presentation. Thank you so much, Siranush. I call you Mamamia because you're more than a mentor. Yeah, I look up to you. Thank you so much. So congratulations, fellows. It's not easy. Like she said, we got quite a number of applications, and having to come up with this number wasn't easy. So congratulations to you all, and a round of applause to all the fellows so that I can identify you in the house. And there's a slogan. I don't know whether Siranush has told you. The slogan is, once a fellow, always a fellow. Yeah, good.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Don't forget, we also have NextGeners with us.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Oh, okay. Oh, my NextGeners, can you wave? Yeah, thank you so much. I promise not to make this presentation boring. It's going to be very

interactive. I was like you many years ago. You guys are lucky you have mentors now. When I became a fellow, we didn't have anything like mentors. So it took years to walk around. People like Mama Jay, I'm sure you have heard her name, Janice, then Siranush took over and have [a solid rock.] So let me go on.

So what are we going to talk about today? How many of you have heard of GAC before? And how many of you are aware that you have representatives on the GAC? Oh, that's good. I'm happy to see that. Then the next thing is GAC membership, how to become a member, the leadership and the support staff. Then we talk about GAC advice to the board. How is that done? How GAC operates within the ICANN? Then GAC working groups, what constitutes GAC advice and participation in GAC meetings?

So what is Governmental Advisory Committee? It was established in 1999 under the ICANN bylaws and it provides advice to the ICANN board on public policy aspects as it relates to its responsibilities with regards to the Internet domain name system. Then the GAC, I must state that it's not a decision-making body, rather it advises on issues that are within ICANN scope. GAC advice must be duly taken into consideration by the ICANN board because such advices are what they deliberate on during meetings as it relates to different governments, nations represented as members. And it's always submitted and in the course of the presentation I'll let you know how the GAC advice is transmitted to the board.

Then the GAC chair is appointed a non-voting liaison to the ICANN board. Then let's go to GAC membership. Who are GAC members? They

are national government and distinct economies recognized in international fora and usually we also have some serve in observer capacity. Who are the observers? Most of them are IGOs, intergovernmental organizations like WTO, World Health Organization, African Development Bank and [inaudible].

So how many GAC members do we have now? We have 182 member countries including my country Nigeria and 38 intergovernmental organizations, the IGOs like I mentioned.

So how do you become a GAC member? You must be a representative of your government. Because I work for the government, that's why I'm a member of the GAC. So you must be a representative of the government of your country.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And just to mention that recently I counted the GAC members, there are 17 fellows representing their governments in GAC.

MISTURA ARUNA: So we are looking forward to adding more to that. A round of applause for us. So we are going to talk about the GAC leadership. So I decided to put up these pictures here so that when you see them on the walkway you can stop to say hello, I have a question or it's nice to meet you, introduce yourself, a fellow, a first time fellow, second time fellow, nice to meet you. So Nicolas is the vice chair but we call him Nico and I must say that Nico is also a fellow of ICANN so it's possible for you guys to be chair of your constituency.

So we have five vice chairs. So for the chair seat, it has a tenure of two years and is renewable once or unless I stated otherwise, no, then we have five vice chairs, they serve just one year then it's also renewable for another year.

So how does the GAC accept or reject GAC advice? So the ICANN bylaw states that the governmental, the GAC on public policy matters shall be duly taken into account both in the formulation and adoption of policies. In the event that the board determines to take an action that is not consistent with the GAC advice, it shall so inform the GAC and say the reasons why it decided not to follow it.

So I'm going to ask a question now. Do you think the board has ever rejected any GAC advice? Or do you think the board has a right to reject any GAC advice? Yes. And when they reject, what do you think happens? Rob, can you?

ROB HOGARTH:

I now know why Mistura was asking certain questions in the GAC yesterday. The overall philosophy is that the GAC is an advisory committee to the board, so it's supposed to be a collaborative positive relationship. And so while there have been very, very few instances where the board has rejected that advice, there are very strong policies and procedures in place to encourage dialogue and discussion. So in the conversations we had yesterday that prompted your question in the GAC, there had only been one instance in the last 15, 20 years that had been identified where the board did reject GAC advice. And that was with respect to a registry issue with regard to .XXX. So that's something

for those of you who are interested in history or perspective may want to do some research on.

But today, in the current environment, the expectation is that there is very consistent and regular communication between the GAC and the board to encourage that dialogue.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And actually, there was a comment from one of our virtual fellows that they can rethink and send back recommendations that are best interest of the ICANN community.

MISTURA ARUNA: Yeah, thank you very much, the virtual fellow. Yes, the board has a right to seek for further clarifications for any advice that is said by the GAC. So this is still continuation, and I'm sure you can read that up there. The consensus advice, how do they come up with advice? So adopting decisions by general agreement in the absence of any formal objection, like we're in the hall now, if you have to vote, of course the consensus agreement will have to be followed. I knew they were not listening to me. Okay, you want me to repeat? Yeah, if there is anything we need to vote on, the consensus agreement will be taken as yes. Am I right? Okay, so that's how it's done. Thank you very much. Yeah, I said it's going to be interactive, so please wake up.

Then the second one, the advice that enjoys broad agreement but receives one or more formal objection conveying a range of reviews. And the last one is failure to reach consensus of broad agreement, the full range of views are conveyed to the board.

So, can you see this? So that's the channel. The GAC consensus advice is produced via the GAC communicate or official letter to the board. Then if there is any need for clarification, the board seeks clarification. Then if there is none, then it goes through to the end.

Then how does the GAC operate within the ICANN community? The GAC determines its own operating procedures and they are all set out in the GAC operating principles. That can be found on the GAC website. Then GAC organizes or meets face-to-face during ICANN meetings three times a year. And even during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were meeting virtually, so we take every advantage of every meeting to sit one-on-one to meet.

Then advice from the GAC and ICANN is determined on the basis of consensus, like I stated. And after every GAC meeting, a communique is developed, including minutes of the meeting which are made available online. So I think, is it 48 hours after each meeting, the communiqués come out almost immediately?

ROB HOGGARTH:

For a long time, the communique would come out almost immediately. And for a long period of time, GAC meetings were closed. So they were very private, the doors were closed. As a member of the community, you would wait to see the doors open and the GAC members emerge. And I still remember when I was a younger person, I would just be in awe. Oh my goodness, here are these elevated people emerging from their secret chamber.

But over time, what has happened is the GAC and I think the rest of the community has recognized that there is a true value in collaboration and in communication. And it was about eight years ago where the GAC opened up its meetings and its sessions. And so now you can basically go in at any time during the week. I see a number of faces that were actually in the GAC room earlier this weekend. And so everything is open, it's no longer secret what's been talked about. It's online, you can see things in Zoom rooms from any place in the world. And so it's no longer a secret what's being discussed on the communique. People aren't waiting, let me see, oh it's been announced, let's download it. And that has reflected I think a change in general attitude and approach. The mystery is taken away, people can see the government issues that they have. And the key that really has changed and made things more positive for the ICANN multi-stakeholder community is that if governments are perceiving there's going to be a problem with a particular policy or the implementation of a policy, they can express those views earlier in the process. In the days of the secret star chamber, you wouldn't know governments' views until the actual end of the process. And at times that would substantially delay things because people would go, oh no, they've objected, and as Mistura pointed out, there's a very elaborate process for dealing with it.

Now, with government representatives a part of almost every policy development process, you're resolving, or if not completely resolving, at least working to identify those problem areas sooner so that they can be resolved sooner. And so that's been very positive. This is all an answer to 48 hours by the way. And so now what the GAC does is that it gives 72 hours to its members to see if they would make any changes to

the communicate. It's basically an objection or exceptions piece of the process. So the GAC finishes its communicate, we hope you'll sit in on some of those sessions this week. But when it's done, then internally the committee has a 72-hour review period. After that, it's usually the next Monday or Tuesday after the meeting, the communicate gets published on the website. But if you or a member of your delegation, team, company, or whatever really wants to know what's going on, you'll have listened to the discussions and you'll have already seen literally people changing words in the documents. So that now announcement, 72, 100 hours later, is purely ministerial or administrative. Everybody who needs to know has already gotten the information. Thank you for giving me the opportunity for that short answer.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Thank you, my backbone. So what constitutes GAC advice? He already mentioned part of it. But that little diagram there says to support, advise, assist, and also guide. So what are the benefits to member countries? What are the benefits?

ADEBUNMI AKINBO:

So the benefits are the opportunities to provide advice directly to the ICANN board, which is one of them. Opportunity to have face-to-face meetings and online discussion with other GAC members and observers. And also access to relevant subject matters, matters within experts' opinion for GAC and ICANN in particular. Thank you.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Thank you so much. So I know you guys are not sleeping. So how does a country nominate representatives in the GAC? So I mentioned that earlier, so I'm not going to [inaudible]. Then functions of the GAC support staff. So Rob, you're support staff. So he's also here supporting me. So actually they maintain the GAC mailing list and membership record. They manage incoming and outgoing correspondences for the GAC chair. Then they handle administration of the GAC website. So the GAC website is very, very robust. Whatever information you need, you get it from there. So thank you very much, Rob, for doing well. Then arrange this translation of GAC documents. I'm sure when we speak in English, it's translated to other languages. Then coordinate the schedule for formal GAC meetings, include room bookings, liaison with us, and technical support amongst others.

Then GAC working groups. Of course, GAC members participate in different working groups. The first one is the underserved region working group. The underserved regions, they actually work on regions that are underserved, that are not really participating in ICANN. Such regions like Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. So they try as much as possible to engage, advocate, and conduct outreach to have more people participate in GAC so that almost all nations are represented in the GAC. Then we have the universal acceptance and internationalized domain name, UA and IDN. It was explained earlier, so I'm not going to waste time on that again. Then we also have the GAC operating principles evaluation working group. They are the ones that actually review the GAC principles from time to time, come up in turn, come up in light with the current happenings, and ensure that it's updated. Then we have the public safety working group in which I'm a member of. They

ensure that the DNS is safe, and also encourage and develop DNS abuse. Then the last one is the human rights and international law working group. They ensure that the rights of persons are well respected, and also international laws. So whatever you're doing, we put international laws into consideration.

So how do the GAC working groups work? Of course, we have members as working group members, and we also have people that serve in observer capacity. Then each working group has its chair and co-chair. They sit down, they meet either during the face-to-face meeting or virtually to deliberate. Most of the time during ICANN meetings when we meet, they give updates on whatever the working group has been assigned to do.

So working group participation is very fun to be in a working group. You learn a lot from it. You contribute. For me, I'm still learning. I've been around for quite a long time, but I'm still learning, and it's good to learn.

So what are the joint working group? The joint working group, that's the inter- or cross-community working group. We have the cross-community working group on the new gTLD, the new top-level domain, generic top-level domain. I think it was mentioned here when I came in earlier. Then we also have the PDP. I heard when Siranush was telling you the full meaning of PDP, policy development process on new gTLD subsequent procedures. Do you know why it's called subsequent procedures? Does anybody know?

Thank you very much. Then we also have the PDP in intergovernmental organization, international non-governmental organization, creative rights, and all joint working groups can be found on this address up

here. So you might want to snap up. The presentation will be made available to you, so you can go on to them.

So participating in the GAC, how many of you are from the government here? Do you have representative in the GAC? Would you like to join them? So membership is open to everyone. Like he said, when I came in as a fellow, it was closed. Once you open the door, you see them well-suited, you'll be like, no, this place is not for me. Always serious meetings, but now it's open to everyone. And members, like I said, and I'm going to reiterate, are national governments.

What languages are used during GAC meetings? Just like you have here, English and Arabic, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, and Portuguese. So virtual participation, you all know what it is. So if you can't attend the meeting face-to-face, you have a right to participate virtually. Just go to the schedule, then it guides you on how to be connected online. So thank you very much. Did you get anything from what I said? Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you, Mistura. Thank you, Rob, for the presentation about GAC. It is really, indeed, very important to understand that the governments and their agreements on the policies and their advices to the board are all influencing us as end users. So it is very important to follow their work, to support our own governments to advise proper things for us then to implement them and use as internet users. Any questions to Mistura? Okay, we have only six minutes, five minutes left, so we will start from Shita. Please go ahead, and then we'll have Lucia, Naima, and who else? Houda. No more. 30 seconds each.

SHITA LAKSMI:

There are two questions. One question is, what is the common decision-making processes, whether it's consensus or it's voting? So I think I would like to know the dynamics within the GAC. The second thing is, because the geopolitics getting more involved into the internet and internet governance, do you think later on the discussion will be more difficult? Because as you said, it's only one rejected ideas from the ICANN. Will it be so smooth later on? Thank you very much.

ROB HOGGARTH:

Thank you. Thank you for the question. I think in terms of a general answer, what you should take away from this is that the GAC is a very collegial group. It's not super formal. In other words, people do not stand on particular principles or on particular processes or procedures. When the GAC is talking about advice, and it typically comes out in the traditional GAC Communique at each meeting, it's the product of conversations and discussions. The process for developing the Communique has evolved over time, but it's really a dialogue that takes place. Somebody submits some documentation, somebody proposes a topic. There are conversations that take place in the various sessions, about seven to eight hours at any given meeting. And there's not a vote. I mean, the real key element to what Mistura included in her slides is, is there an objection or not? And if there is an objection, then okay, there's no consensus. We aren't going to put it in the communique. We bring them, or you, not me. And so it's a very collaborative process. So I hope that's helpful to hear.

In terms of will things change over time, I've been with the committee in a support role for about seven years now, and I really have not seen that evolve. If anything, there's overcompensation within the GAC, recognizing everything that's going else in the world, that in this particular environment on issues of internet and technology, there's a collaborative, collegial effort. You can see countries that are having disputes elsewhere with respect to policy or laws or rules, conversing, because this is the internet, this is a collaborative environment. Everybody is sort of going in the same direction. And where they have disputes, they're happy to discuss them. Most of them take place in one-on-one conversations and not in a battle among the group or in a public space. I hope that reflects your experience.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you. Lucia.

LUCIA LEON: Thank you. I wanted to ask, given that there are member countries and people that are part of GAC, what is your relationship with the countries? My question is operational. When you have representations for your countries internally, do you need to coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or technology or something like that?

MISTURA ARUNA: If I heard you correctly, you're asking if a member of GAC, do you need to coordinate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: So the question relates to your communication within your own Ministry of Foreign Affairs in relation to you being a part of ICANN discussions also. What is your communication related to your own government?

MISTURA ARUNA: Once you represent the government of a country, no matter the ministry, you represent all of them. There are some countries that have their foreign affairs and communications converged. Once you represent a country, you are in tune with all other ministries and you speak one language. For my own country, before you come for a meeting, there's what we call a preparatory meeting so that you all have a voice when you come for the meeting. So you don't come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ministry of this, then you come to the meeting and speak a different language. No, you speak one language once you come from a country. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: So what is the proper thing to say? There is internal coordination to get one voice to be brought to ICANN. Am I right?

MISTURA ARUNA: Yes, please, Siranush,

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Naima.

NAIMA AWAN:

I actually have two questions. Number one is, how does GAC ensure that its advice to the ICANN board is representative of all the countries, of all governments? And the second question is that when GAC initially started, how many countries were GAC members and how much time it took to reach to the number that it is at today? And was there any hesitation on parts of nations to be part of GAC? Thank you.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Thank you very much for the question. The first one, that's what we call the consensus. Everybody come together, bring out a burning issue that requires the board's attention. If there is no rejection, it's a consensus. So it's transmitted to the board, either via communicate or formal letter to the board. So that is it. Then the second one, I remember as when I joined the GAC, there were 64 member states. Then in 2010, there were 32. Then subsequently, they increased. And I talked about the underserved working region. They go out, do outreach, especially in the underserved regions like the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Africa to ensure all national countries come about to be a part of GAC. Because only when they are part of GAC, they will be able to contribute, have policies. I remember when the two-country code or three-country code domain name thing came up, a lot of countries were communicated to that. We used .ng in Nigeria. If you are not part of it, it could be auctioned out to another country. So we try as much as possible to advocate and ensure everybody come on board. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you. Unfortunately, we are not able to take more questions. Houda, I'm sorry, but Mistura will stay here and you will talk with her. I

really appreciate Rob and Mistura, you being with us here. Thank you for sharing the insights of how GAC works, how governments behave, and how they come to the consensus here in ICANN. So thank you very much and our huge applause is to our presenters. And we are looking forward for the active week and participation of fellows and NextGeners in some GAC sessions. Thank you very much.

MISTURA ARUNA:

So like I said, GAC sessions are open. Please, [inaudible] downstairs, you're welcome. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]