
ICANN78 | AGM – Welcome Ceremony
Monday, October 23, 2023 – 09:00 to 10:15 HAM

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Chris Mondini, Managing Director, Europe.

CHRIS MONDINI: Internet stakeholders, ICANN community members, esteemed guests, excellencies, and newcomers, it is an honor and my pleasure to wish you herzlich willkommen to your ICANN 78 here in schönen Hamburg. Welcome to the ICANN 78 Annual General Meeting.

As you may know, ICANN public meetings are held three times a year, and each ICANN meeting has a different focus and duration. The meetings are known as Community Forum, Policy Forum and Annual General Meeting, or AGM. During this week's AGM, important governance and leadership processes take place alongside ongoing policy development work of diverse participants from all stakeholder categories: internet users, academia, digital activists, technical experts, businesses both large and small, domain name registries, registrars and governments.

The hundreds of people in this room and joining online dedicate many thousands of hours of volunteer time to make sure that the domain name system, the DNS, and its related systems and protocols continue to function in a stable and resilient way, not only for all of its users, but for future users. It is because of your efforts that these systems work for

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all of us, all the time. It is no exaggeration to say your work is what keeps the Internet global, expanding, and interoperable.

This week, nearly 170 separate sessions will address important innovations and efforts not only to keep the DNS functioning smoothly, but to facilitate the inclusion of the next billion Internet users in ways that enable more communities and organizations to benefit from a trusted and safe Internet.

Often I am asked why ICANN chooses to organize each meeting in a different city around the world and why we invest so much in a fully hybrid experience for participants. So, before introducing our first speaker, I'm going to ask that we conduct a short exercise with the people here in person to illustrate why. So, if I could have the house lights up slightly, please. I have a request. If this is your first time attending an ICANN meeting and you are in this room, please do a few things for me. First, please stand to be recognized and remain standing. Second, please look around at someone who is seated nearby. Make eye contact with them. Now make a silent agreement with that person that you will say hello to them and introduce yourselves in your preferred mutual language during the break after this session. Now, if you completed the mission, please be seated.

If you can't be with us here in Hamburg in person today, know that ICANN has strong virtual participation tools in place for all public sessions during each of our public meetings. For example, when you register to attend a session online, you can see other participants from around the world who have expressed interest in attending, and you can find them on social media platforms or even during the sessions

where the chat function is enabled. You can direct chat with others who are following remotely.

Forging partnerships attracting new participants—these are what keep the ICANN community responsive to the needs of Internet stakeholders everywhere and into the future. And that is why we meet in different cities around the world. It is why we provide robust online experience. We offer interpretation and transcription in seven languages. We have offices around the world made up of people like me, dedicated to engaging with technical partners and convening the many thousands of diverse participants just like you, committed to consensus-based, bottom up policies that make the Internet better every day.

And with that, it is a great pleasure to introduce our Board Chair, Tripti Sinha. Thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA:

Willkommen in schönen Hamburg. Good morning. It is my pleasure to welcome you to ICANN 78 here in the picturesque city of Hamburg. Whether you are here in the room or joining us online, I am so glad you could be here today. Thank you to our hosts, the Internet Industry, DENIC, the City of Hamburg, and the Congress Center, Hamburg, for giving us the opportunity to come here in this wonderful space. It is an honor to be joined today by Jana Schiedek, State Secretary in Hamburg's Ministry of Culture and Media, Olver Sume, Chair of eco, and Andreas Musielak, Chair of DENIC.

I'm also looking forward to a video message from Dr. Volker Wissing, Germany's federal minister for digital and transport, and to hearing

from John Curran, Chair of the Numbers Resource Organization later this morning.

Friends from Singapore to Hamburg from ICANN One to ICANN 78, these mark 25 years of an eventful journey that we celebrate today. On the 30th of September 1998, ICANN was incorporated in California as a nonprofit public benefit corporation. However, that is not the only milestone we are recognizing this week. The IANA Stewardship transition took place seven years ago this month. The Root Service System Advisory Committee and Governmental Advisory Committee were also established 25 years ago in 1998. And the At-Large Advisory Committee, Country Code Name Supporting Organization, and the Generic Name Supporting Organization are all celebrating their 20th anniversaries at this meeting. Indeed, we have much to celebrate.

Going down memory lane, I would like to highlight a few salient events of the last 25 years. In October of 1998, ICANN's first Board meeting is held in New York. Esther Dyson is named Chairwoman and Mike Roberts is designated President of ICANN.

The same year, ICANN establishes its MoU with the US Department of Commerce and takes responsibility for performing the INR functions. In March 1999, ICANN 1 is held in Singapore. That same year, RSSAC has its inaugural meeting, as does the GAC.

Later that year (acronyms from the distant past) the DNSO and the PSO are established. The ASO was also formed the same year.

Between 2002-2004, the GNSO replaces the DNSO. The SSAC is established. The PSO is dissolved and replaced with the Technical Liaison Group. The Board creates the interim ALAC. The ccNSO forms.

Friends, these acronyms are the beginnings of a vibrant multicultural stakeholder community which includes the technical community, civil society, governments, businesses, academia and end users. The pioneering and unique ICANN multi stakeholder model is born.

Since then, the work of the community and the ecosystem partners have resulted in many things, including IPv6 address block allocations in addition to IPv4 as v4 moved towards exhaustion.

To date[:] the introduction of 1200 new gTLDs, enhancing security with DNSSEC in the root zone transitioning IANA stewardship from the US Department of Commerce.

This year 2023, in anticipation of the next round, ICANN organized the first ever universal acceptance (UA) Day in its efforts to facilitate bringing multilingualism to the Internet. And the Board approved the next round gTLD implementation plan for the opening of the next application window.

So in going down memory lane, we can take pride in events that have punctuated our 25 years.

Now let's take a closer look at events that occurred in parallel on the Internet during the same exact span of time. Let me share some of those events with you. In 1998, Google was founded, a turning point in the utility of the internet to end users. In 2002, LinkedIn was founded, ushering in the beginnings of social networking and media platforms.

In 2004, Facebook was founded. In 2006, Twitter, now known as X, was founded, the same year Spotify was founded. In 2007, the first generation iPhone hits the US market, spurring a radical and impactful global change in the consumer smartphone industry. In 2009, WhatsApp was created. In 2010, the iPad was announced and unveiled. The same year, Instagram was founded, adding to the social networking platforms. In 2016, TikTok was created, yet another social networking platform. And as recently as less than a year ago, on November 30, 2022, ChatGPT unveiled to the world breakthrough developments in artificial intelligence.

And while all these unfolded, other giants companies are founded and capabilities are created that transform the way we shop, get our news bank online and learn online ad Infinitum. These services are connecting 5.2 Internet billion internet users worldwide, which is roughly 65% of the world's population. This is the reality we live in.

Now you may be wondering why I am stating the obvious: because I believe, when one celebrates a major milestone as we are, it is a good time to look, to not just look at our own accomplishments, but to also look at coincident outcomes—that is, the impact that ICANN's mission, coupled with those of our ecosystem partners has had on the world. A single, stable, resilient and interoperable internet is possible because we have delivered with fidelity on our respective missions. The Internet is a service and innovation platform for the globe. 25 years is not a long span of time, but the world has been changed in the most remarkable of ways during that time. It has enabled a rate of globally impactful innovation at a pace unknown in recent human history, and we must keep up with this rate of change.

On our 25th anniversary, let us remember that we bear a serious responsibility to the global community, and we must continue to deliver in good faith and in earnest on ICANN's mission. The gravity of an entire global population sits upon our purpose that supports the interconnected landscape of the world's digital experience.

Now let's look at the last twelve months. The past year has been that of extraordinary change in partnership. When I stepped into the ICANN Board Chair role, I did so on the platform of change and getting things done, as emphasized by you, the community.

Much has transpired since then, some procedural and others more complex and challenging. With the help of everyone on the Board, the Community and ICANN staff, there are significant activities that are underway, some of which I would like to share with you.

To select ICANN's next President and CEO, a process committee and infrastructure was thoughtfully put in place. This included conducting precedent setting, community wide listening sessions, culminating in a comprehensive position description that articulates the enormity, scope and scale of ICANN's mission. Through the role of the President and CEO, a search firm has been selected. The application submission is live, with a deadline of 27 November. The next leader of ICANN will be the first hired since the official IANA transition which happened in October of 2016.

Our work in preparing for the next round of gTLDs has made tremendous progress which was previously considered stalled. This long awaited initiative has been brought forth as a priority, something the community has been requesting for years. This has been a

collaborative process with the Board and the Community. There is still substantial and nontrivial work ahead of us, nothing short of a very heavy lift. We have reached significant milestones in partnering with the GNSO and arrived at a commitment to open the round in April 2026, which translates to completion of the application guidebook, the AGB, plus one year based on the status of current activities.

With the next round's focus on IDNs and universal acceptance, ICANN is doing its part in addressing, inclusivity, closing the digital divide, and moving the world towards a multilingual Internet.

The Board has prioritized collaborating more closely with the numbers community.

ICANN has a long standing and valued relationship with the regional Internet registries, the RIRS. Last month, I had the pleasure of celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Asia Pacific Network Information Center at the annual APNIC Conference. The RIRS are essential to the secure and stable operation of the Internet, and they have our unwavering support.

For this reason, ICANN has and will continue to provide neutral assistance and resources to support AFRINIC in the ongoing efforts to restore its functional governance, long standing stability and operations.

Now, let's look ahead. As I said when I last addressed you in March, ICANN is at an inflection point. We face new pressures in this evolving Internet based world order. The ICANN community has proven to be adaptable, and we are poised to address the challenges ahead. The

world is at a very critical moment in time, with two wars underway, heartbreaking human tragedies, and efforts to destabilize governance models of our ecosystem partners. Considering such times, it is imperative that we strengthen the fabric of trust and cooperation between our Internet institutions and with each other.

I would like to comment on some issues. We must emphasize the key part that ICANN and our partners play in technical internet governance and in ensuring a secure, stable and unified global Internet. At the recently concluded Internet Governance Forum, the IGF, in Kyoto, Japan, the theme was: The Internet we want, empowering all people. Overwhelmingly, it was recognized that when governing a fabric of technical infrastructure that spans the globe and whose impact is worldwide, the multi stakeholder model has proven to be highly successful, a model that enables stakeholders from multiple sectors to come together in dialogue, to share viewpoints and drive towards consensus-based decision making. This approach of broad inclusivity and democratization of stakeholder participation has yielded a system of voluntary standards, best practices, cooperation and trust.

Starting in 2003, the international community at the World Summit on the Information Society, the WSIS, wisely accepted the multistakeholder model of Internet governance, recognizing the vital roles of the various stakeholders in maintaining and evolving the Internet as a global resource. With the global community coming together again at WSIS+20 in two years, we must ensure continued support for the multistakeholder model as the most adaptable, inclusive and effective approach to Internet governance by giving everyone a voice, it ensures the Internet remains inclusive and trusted.

ICANN has started to develop its next strategic plan. We invite the community to work with the Board and ICANN Org to look at the opportunities and challenges that confront us. Let us strategize together on where we need to reinvent ourselves and where we need to reinforce the tried and true, standing the test of time.

Meanwhile, the past year has seen great technological innovations that are bound to enhance the Internet. We are now at a pivotal point, with breakthrough developments in artificial intelligence and advances in quantum technology and communications that are ready to transform or even redefine our digital experience. We have yet to fully understand how this will shape and influence our lives. But one thing is clear: these new technologies are undeniable agents of change whose outcomes and impact will rely on and be delivered by the power of interconnected networks: the Internet.

As I mentioned earlier, today's rate of technological innovation is unprecedented, and our related efforts to problem solve and articulate policy must keep up. Through compromise, through consensus, through our dedication to our mission, and through our bottom up decision making process, we will solve problems and produce results.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to all members of the ICANN community for your hard work and your tireless commitment to our mission. Thank you to the ICANN organization staff for your unfailing support for facilitating our work and for making this meeting possible. All that we have achieved was possible because of our collective efforts. I am so glad to be here for ICANN's 25th Annual General Meeting at ICANN 78. I hope to engage with you this week at one of the Board's ten

bilateral sessions with community groups at the public forum on Thursday, or at one of the many other sessions. At this special anniversary meeting, let us celebrate this dynamic, adaptable and diverse global community that we have at ICANN. Congratulations to each and every one of you. Take pride in what has been accomplished and be ready to collectively tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead. ICANN is a pioneering multistakeholder governance model 25 years in the making. Danke. Thank you.

I would like to welcome onto the stage ICANN's interim president and CEO, Sally Costerton.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Good morning. That's it on the German. Don't worry. Thank you, Tripti. And thank you, Hamburg. I want to take this opportunity to thank our hosts for this extraordinary event. Your partnership through the last month has been amazing. There are a huge attendance here in the room and online, and much of that is due to your hard work and your commitment and your energy.

As some of you know, we have only been to Germany once before, in ICANN 2 in Berlin in 1999. But actually we were here virtually in 2020. And some of you will remember our wonderful host here, Oliver's Virtual Beer [Keller]. So the German community was innovating right at the beginning of the pandemic. We had Virtual Hamburg, and had we been here then, we would have been, I think, one of the first occupants of this magnificent conference center. And our teams are loving being here. It's a wonderful space. So we couldn't be happier that we're here to celebrate this special meeting that Tripti has talked about.

Now, since 1999, of course, the German internet community has expanded incredibly quickly. Hamburg, launched in 2014, now has nearly 20,000 domains; dot-berlin, nearly 50,000; dot-cologne, nearly 5000; dot-eco, one of our sponsors, eight and a half thousand. And dot-de is the third largest ccTLD in the world. So you have set us a wonderful example to show us what Tripti said: that expansion of the multi stakeholder community. we see it alive and well here in Germany and here in Hamburg.

Now, at this meeting, as you saw in the opening video, I'm very pleased to be able to say we have one of the largest attendances that we've seen in many years. And we have nearly 2800 people here, of which about 800 are online. And I want to say good morning, good afternoon, or good evening to everybody that is with us online. It is so good to have you with us, as well as everybody in the room who have come (and you will be astounded by this, I think; even ICANN veterans) from at least 167 countries. So we are a truly global group.

Now, I want to just take one moment to thank you, as Tripti did, to thank this community here in the room, here online and around the world, for your partnership and your passion and your commitment. And the team that I'm very fortunate to lead in this interim role is truly dedicated. But they come because they are inspired by the mission. This is what we all have in common. Whether we are volunteers in the community, on the Board, or in the staff, this is our common purpose and it brings us together, and it's kept us together for those 25 years.

Now, many of you will know that I've now been in this interim role for about ten months, and I wanted to take the opportunity this morning

to just share a couple of reflections. And like Tripti, I wanted to talk about trust. As the interim CEO, I'm focused on building trust, of course, through the work the organization does primarily. When I came to ICANN, which was about eleven years ago, I thought I came from outside the Internet world. And I thought, perhaps not unreasonably “Ah. ICANN is about technology,” and of course it is, but I quickly came to find out that it's really about trust. It's about people, individuals who trust each other, and people trusting the model that we have built; the volunteers, the community members, trusting the staff always to show up and to help them to do their job, to share that mission, to deliver.

I was amazed when we went into the pandemic, which was a tremendous shock. Of course, we couldn't do this kind of meeting like this. You had, as a community, complete confidence, that the ICANN team would fix it, we would find a way to keep ICANN working. And we did. And in that intervening decade, I have come to believe that trust is perhaps the most unsung hero of the success of the Internet and of ICANN. And as Tripti said, in these extremely difficult times that we find ourselves in, it is more important than ever that we trust each other, we trust our model, we trust that we can see forward into the future together, taking from the successes of the past.

Now, some of you may know (but many of you probably don't) that I have been involved in trust all my career. For many years (too many to mention) before coming to ICANN, I worked to help organizations all over the world to build trust with their stakeholders and to build strong, sustainable reputations.

Trust, of course, plays a pivotal role in building a sustainable reputation, and that is essential for individuals, organizations, and even countries. Trust is also the linchpin of Internet governance. It involves a complex web of stakeholders, and we rely on that trust to ensure security, stability and openness, which is essential for our ever evolving global ecosystem to serve our global community that relies on the Internet. That trust fosters collaboration between the technical community, governments, businesses and civil society in shaping policies and standards. It encourages innovation and investment in digital technologies, knowing that users can rely on a safe and secure online environment. And ultimately, trust is the foundation upon which the Internet's global reach and transformative potential rest, making it an indispensable element for its continued success.

But trust is fragile. It's hard to build and it's easy to lose. We must nourish it and encourage it to grow. If we do so, we will ensure it continues to be strong and it will provide us with the stability and resilience we will need to face future challenges.

And as Tripti mentioned, now, more than ever before, we need the world to trust our model, to see what we see and feel what we feel. We must explain why the world is a better and safer place because of what we do. ICANN itself was built on a foundation of trust—not only root zone key signing keys or DNSSEC which act as trust anchors for the domain name system, but the anchors of trust that came from years of collaboration and consensus based policymaking that truly serves the public interest.

And the IANA transition succeeded because we built trust with all stakeholders governments, decision makers, civil society, businesses, academics and users so they could have confidence that the global Internet community would act as stewards for these critical resources, that we would continue to evolve and grow, to adapt and still remain neutral, but also to address new challenges as they emerge and to stay ahead of the latest technologies to maintain one global Internet. It has never stopped working.

The pandemic was a huge test. The world shut down, everything moved online, but the Internet never failed. But you know what? It starts here with each and every one of us. We have to trust each other if we want others to trust us. We have to show this to people who don't know who we are, what we do, or how much the world relies on us to deliver our mission. The CEO's job is to foster trust and confidence in ICANN. When we have that trust, people feel enabled to do extraordinary things, even when it is really hard. And Tripti talked about how we've come together this year after many years of feeling, we were stuck. We have taken risks, we have trust in each other, and we are looking at things like new contracts to tackle DNS abuse, the opening of the next round of top level domains to expand access to new users, and new languages and scripts. So we can do this. We are building and expanding that muscle memory of what we can do if we trust each other.

Now, since the last time we met in Washington, we've made progress on lots of initiatives, and to hear more about that, I'd invite you all to come and join me and the rest of the executive team for our Q&A session that will be in this room at 10:45. We have a lot in store this week and particularly wanted to draw your attention to. We have a special

anniversary panel following this session, and I'm very happy to say we have some very special invited guests are going to join me. And we'll take a look back at why ICANN was created, what are some of the challenges it's faced, and how do we feel about the future and the challenges that we are all going to face together. And we're going to have an open mic session at the end of that. So think about your stories of early ICANN and come and tell them to us (or today ICANN).

We're going to have the executive Q&A that I mentioned later today and a geopolitical forum this afternoon. So for those of you that are interested in understanding what some of those new landscapes look like and some of the issues that we are tackling, please do come along. I know that's always a very popular session.

And something I can guarantee will be very popular will be on Wednesday evening: our 20th anniversary celebration. And Chris Mondini has asked me to point out this is a party. So when we say celebration, we mean party. So come and enjoy and celebrate.

Now, without further ado, I'd like to introduce the video presentation from Dr. Volker Wissing, who is Germany's Federal Minister for Digital and Transport. And then I'm happy to say we have Benjamin Brake with us, who's the Director General for Digital and Data Policy, and he is going to come and make some comments after the video. Thank you all very much.

VOLKER WISSING:

Good morning, ICANN community. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Hamburg and a warm welcome to the ICANN 78 Annual General

Meeting. I'm delighted that you are all here to discuss the future of the Internet and to take important decisions.

For 25 years, Icon has been a driving force to digital progress in the world. At ICANN, the international community works closely together, managing the Internet from a technical perspective, but also shaping and developing it. I would like to thank you most sincerely for this work and wish you continued success in the future.

The Internet is global, and our responsibility does not end at borders. This is why we need international digital policy. In Germany, we are currently developing a strategy to create a rule based digital order, one that promotes democracy, prosperity and resilience in our digital societies.

We are defining fundamental principles that guide us. For example, we are committed to a global, open, free and secure Internet. In this endeavor , we are building on the extensive exchange of information and experience with national and international stakeholders.

The United Nations Global Digital Compact is another international approach. It offers a great opportunity to mainstream principles that are important to us at the global level. Hereto, we are committed to ensuring that all stakeholders will be involved in global digital cooperation, since this is the mainstay of the whole system.

ICANN is a role model for a successful multi stakeholder approach. At ICANN, governments and civil society, the scientific community and industry, internet users and the tech community come together to develop joint solutions. Everybody can be involved in your process. This

leads to greater understanding and acceptance. The more people involved, the better. This is why we are supporting efforts to make ICANN more diverse; for example, in terms of where stakeholders come from.

I'm sure that you will discuss this and many other subjects during your meeting. Let me wish you all an inspiring gathering. Thank you to everyone who made this meeting in Hamburg possible; first, of course to ICANN, but also to our three local hosts; that is the Eco Association of Internet Industry, DENIC and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

Since ICANN is also celebrating its 25th anniversary, we would like to cordially invite you to a welcome reception in the entrance hall of the CCC this afternoon from 5:30 p.m.. State Secretary Daniela Kluckert, will be there to welcome you and toast your anniversary.

Thank you and have a great stay in Hamburg.

BENJAMIN BRAKE:

[inaudible]. Distinguished hosts, dear Mr. State Secretary Shieidek, dear Mr. Zume, Alex, dear Mr. Musielak, Mr. Keller, dear ICANN community, I'm delighted to welcome so many of you here in Hamburg, but also on the screens around the world.

First of all, let me reiterate my minister's sincere thanks to ICANN as well as the three local hosts, the Eco Association of Internet Industry, the DENIC, and the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. Your unwavering commitment and dedication have made it possible that finally, after 24 years, the ICANN community has returned to Germany for its 25th annual general meeting.

When ICANN met for the first time in Berlin in 1999, barely 18% of the population in Germany used the Internet. Today it is 95. I wonder what the rest of the fifth percent are doing. At that time, the millennium bug kept computer scientists around the world on their toes. At the same time, the Internet economy was experiencing an unimagined boom, which in retrospect we refer to as the.com bubble.

Now, today, not only but also the digital world is again in a state of upheaval. New disruptive technologies offer great opportunities, but also present us with challenges. And the Internet itself is becoming a tool not only for a greater good, but also for those with dark intentions.

Minister Wissing mentioned the Global Digital Compact as a path towards a common digital future. I am aware that this compact has been subject to many debates in the multistakeholder community, and rightfully so. The same goes for the upcoming WSIS+20 review process.

Therefore, I would like to invite all of you to work with us so we can implement principles that reflect our values of a free, open and global Internet based on a multistakeholder model, because there is a lot at stake.

Yesterday, Salman Rushdie said in his speech on the occasion of receiving the Peace Prize of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association that peace comes under pressure from the right and the left, and, I would add, from those who deny facts and adhere to conspiracy theories. Rushdie continues to say that there are now voices, even in the progressive spectrum, that advocate for a kind of well-intentioned censorship, a censorship that gives itself the appearance of virtue and that many people believe to be virtue.

ICANN, of all places, has been the embodiment of free speech and of a free Internet for more than two decades. You, the ICANN community, have shown us that this inclusive model, based on the participation of various stakeholders, can work for all of us.

I wish you exciting discussions and much success in your upcoming work. I hope that you will have fond memories of your time in Hamburg and of our welcome reception later today and of course, also of the party. Thank you very much.

CHRIS MONDINI:

And now it is my great pleasure to introduce the State Secretary for Cultural Affairs for the fantastic city of Hamburg, Jana Schiedek.

JANA SCHIEDEK:

Wow. What else is there to say? Dear Sally Costerton, dear Tripti Sinha, dear Chris Mondini, dear ICANN community, the Internet is making its way to Hamburg, and it's so great to see you all assembled here.

Some of you may know the TV series, the IT Crowd. It tells the story of a three-person IT team at a fictional British company. In one of the episodes, the head of the IT Department, tries to explain to her colleagues as precisely as possible what the Internet is all about. She takes a box which, for the sake of the argument, contains the Internet and places it on the table in order to make it easier for her colleagues who believe that the Internet is an abstract medium, that somehow or other is always at the back and call to understand the way it works. Although it may lead to both disbelief and astonishment, in a metaphorical sense, one might say that in the days ahead, the Internet

is going to be in Hamburg in person—perhaps not the Internet in all its glory, but at least many of the experts who keep this abstract medium, the Internet, up and running, and who ensure that it is simple to operate safe and somehow or other always at our back and call. And at any rate,

I think it was a wise move on your part when you decided to convene this 78 ICANN conference in Hamburg in northern Germany, after such a long time. I mean, you mentioned it already, Sally. 1999. That was really a long time ago. And even three years ago, the virtual meeting; of course, we appreciate that. But I'm so happy that you're all here live nowadays, and we are especially pleased that at this year's conference we are going to be able to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of ICANN 25 years ago.

In the intervening years (you have mentioned it already, Tripti), web technology has made a gigantic leap forward, which is especially noticeable if we look back at the very static and graphically straightforward web design that existed at the end of the 1990s. Nowadays, on the other hand, there is a seemingly endless stream of information and interaction. Probably in 1999 we would have described it as science fiction. There's video streaming embedded in website and the mobile internet in your pockets and hands. And in the future there will be walkthrough internet with virtual and augmented reality technologies, and artificial intelligence will sift through the internet for us and generate content. All of these presupposes various kinds of infrastructure, and to these ICANN makes a crucial contribution. Thus you ensure that the internet is accessible with various scripts and various languages, that the interest of the various stakeholders are

taken into account and above all, the more than 365,000,000 domains which now exist can be accessed everywhere in the world.

In point of fact, almost 8% of these domains belong to domain owners who are resident in Germany. And I'm confident that the forthcoming implementation plan for opening the next round of applications for the new generic top-level domains will attract a great deal of publicity all around the world and will prove to be extremely interesting.

As you have heard already, some time ago Hamburg became the beneficiary of one of these gTLDs and for ten years now we have already been able to make our presence felt in the web and on a global scale with a dot-hamburg domain.

However, I would like to take the opportunity as your host to draw your attention to the possibilities which the venue Hamburg has to offer you and a conference like yours. Actually you are in the largest city in Europe, which is not also a national capital, and as you can see it's a harbor-front city longing back to the Middle Ages, where Hamburg was member of the Hanseatic League, the first successful free trade area commercial network from Lisbon to Novgorod. Until today you can see as well that Hamburg is one of the largest ports in Europe but also a city in transformation. Not only do companies like Airbus, Biersdorf, and Hapag-Lloyd have their headquarters here, but also digital economy like Meta, Google, Snap and the semiconductor manufacturer NXP.

Hamburg is also home to the DE-CIX Hamburg, one of the largest internet hubs in Germany, the second highest number of startups in Germany, a sophisticated startup ecosystem, and is one of the leading

centers of XR technologies and online and computer games industry in Germany.

Hamburg is a university city with 20 fixed six university where also basic research plays an important role. And Hamburg is one of the few places in the world where research is being conducted into the next generation quantum computers. At the center of Optical Quantum Technologies, which is part of the University of Hamburg, a quantum computer that will be used for applied computing is due to be up and running by 2026. And the European XFEL facility houses the world's largest X ray laser.

All of this and much more makes Hamburg one of Germany's top tech locations. And our mission is to transform the strong economic place into a digital, sustainable and human centered and holistic innovation space.

And as a result of all these efforts and many projects, we have become one of Germany's smartest city, awarded four times in a row in the last five years.

This transformation would not have been possible without all the work done by ICANN. Its quest for standardization and uniform processes that make the Internet accessible on a global basis and for everyone and everybody, is the basic precondition for smart technologies which are of benefit to us today, both to our city and the society as a whole.

And for all of this work, which has culminated in the 78 ICANN conference here in Hamburg, I would like to thank you all very, very much. We are very pleased and proud to be your hosts, and we hope,

besides all the work and all the party, you will find some time to discover the city as well and enjoy your stay. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Thank you very much, Jana Schiedek.

It's now a pleasure to introduce the Chairs of our excellent host committees, Oliver Sume, who is Chairman of the Management Board of eco, the association of Internet Industry, and Andreas Musielak, the CEO of DENIC.

OLIVER SUME:

Dear State Secretary, Jana Schiedek, dear Benjamin Brake, dear Tripti, dear Sally and Chris, ladies and gentlemen and dear ICANN community, I would like to welcome you all to the 78th ICANN meeting here in the beautiful city of Hamburg.

For eco, as Europe's largest Internet industry association, it means a lot that we are meeting here today at ICANN's 25th anniversary and for the first time, as we heard several times today in Germany since 1999, Hamburg is my hometown, and I am therefore particularly pleased that together with our cohost DENIC and the city of Hamburg, we have managed to convince ICANN of this great city and great conference center, and that after long preparations, we can now finally open the ICANN conference today.

Names and numbers have been of immense importance to us as an association for many years, and a large proportion of our more than 1000 member companies actually come from the domain industry.

The eco association brings together more than 140 international companies from this sector, managing around 70% of all registered domains worldwide. Experts from the fields of country code, top level domains, generic top level domains, along with registrars, resellers, technical service providers, and consultants meet regularly in our so called names and numbers forum to exchange views on current topics in the domain industry.

It is unquestionable that this is an industry that's not at the forefront of many Internet users minds. Many may not even be aware of the existence and importance. All the more, we need to emphasize over and over again that the domain industry is an indispensable cornerstone and guarantee for a functioning internet and in no small measure an industry that is of great economic value, securing many jobs in Germany and abroad.

By the way, this doesn't only apply to the domain sector but also to many other companies from our industry, such as data centers, which as part of the digital infrastructure form the foundation for the digital transformation in Hamburg, Germany and also worldwide.

Based on Eco's subsidiary, DE-CIX, which is the largest Internet exchange in the world, eco is not only a trade association but also an important part of this infrastructure and the global interconnection ecosystem. It is therefore of utmost importance to us as an association to make these companies and their fundamental role for a free and open internet and a successful digitization our economy and society visible.

Above all, it's essential to raise awareness among politicians for these companies and their potential solution for a sustainable digital transformation within the framework of regulation and political concepts for the future. It is therefore only logical that eco has been involved in ICANN from the very beginning and sees itself as part of this crucial multi stakeholder process.

Germany is traditionally a strong location for top level domains, so we are all eagerly anticipating the new allocation round of another new gTLD program. But it goes without saying that new top level domains are not the be all and end all. Equally important are the county code top level domains, which here in Germany are very successfully looked after by our cohost, DENIC.

And with that, I would like to hand over Andreas to you and wish you and all of us an exciting, informative and hopefully also an enjoyable 78th ICANN meeting here in Hamburg. Thank you.

ANDREAS MUSIELAK:

Many thanks Oliver. Good morning. Or as the people of Hamburg say, any time of the day in the special German dialect, moin moin So, Jana and Oliver, I tried to use a dialect. And since we also have many participants attending remotely and from various time zones, “moin moin” fits much better as an all-day greeting than just “good morning.” So once again, moin moin to all participants around the world.

First of all, I would like to thank ICANN for holding the 25th anniversary icon meeting here in Hamburg in one of the German centers of culture

and digital affairs. Thank you ICANN. This is a very special recognition for the very active German ICANN and domain community.

Let me take up on Oliver Sume's remark then that the eco association sees itself as part of this crucial multi stakeholder process. Of course, this also applies to DENIC. As a cooperative and those a member organization, DENIC and its many registrars, including a large number of ICANN accredited registrars, are part of this unique ICANN community. Together, we work every day to make the domain industry a little bit better. With our expertise and our experience. As DENIC, we provide various services for the domain industry in addition to our core registry service.

However, we are particularly proud to be an ICANN-accredited [inaudible] global escrow provider and as such, effectively contribute to a secure and stable Internet. With our escrow service, we protect ICANN-accredited registrars and registries from a possible loss of registration data.

At the same time, we are aware that the domain world is changing. In the past, the focus was mainly on technical issues. The major challenges of the future, however, are legal issues. As a consequence, we at DENIC see the task of the domain industry to be broader than ever already today.

In addition to ensuring a secure and stable Internet, we as the domain industry have the responsibility of ensuring continued free access to the Internet for all, unimpeded by the legal framework. As DENIC, we are convinced that the multi stakeholder approach, which ICANN has practiced successfully since its foundation, is the right approach. It is

the only way to ensure in the long term that all points of view are sufficiently represented and that all important factors are taken into account to finally reach a meaningful consensus, or as they say at ICANN, rough consensus.

I would like to emphasize once again today that DENIC also needs responsibility. As one of the leading registries, we will continue to support the domain industry with great commitment and with the help of the multistakeholder approach in order to further develop the Internet successfully.

With this in mind, I wish all of us much success in the coming days in further developing the Internet with the domain name system as one of its essential resources. Enjoy ICANN 78 in Hamburg and thank you all. And now it's time to hand it over back to Chris Mondini.

CHRIS MONDINI:

Thank you very much. All right, more audience participation time. I'm going to ask a question. If you know the answer, I'd like you to shout it out.

What does the second N in ICANN stand for?

That's absolutely right. We're delighted to have an update from the numbers community, from the current chair of the Number Resource Organization, and the CEO of the American Registry for Internet Numbers (ARIN), Mr. John Curran. Please.

JOHN CURRAN:

Good morning, everyone; guests, esteemed guests, visit remote attendees, everyone who has made it to this wonderful AGM 78 here in ICANN. I'm John Curran. It's my privilege to give the opening remarks from the numbers community to this meeting just a little bit.

First and foremost, I want to say something we cannot forget. It's been said several times, but I want to take a moment to highlight it: 25 years of ICANN. Let's have a round of applause. That is a major milestone and I just don't want it to be overlooked. The numbers community has been with ICANN since the beginning. We actually predate ICANN. The regional Internet registries were in operation at the time. When ICANN came together in '98/'99, the regional Internet registries got together and said, "We'll be part of that. We will take our existing multistakeholder development process and we'll formalize it under the ICANN framework as the Address Supporting Organization." We're one of the three fundamental supporting organizations in the ICANN bylaws and we've been involved since the very beginning. Now I will say that it's been a wonderful time and great to have such a huge community supporting the multistakeholder model.

In 2003, the RIRS got together and realized we do a lot outside of ICANN. So we formalized our existing cooperation mechanism and called it something called the NRO, the Number Resource Organization. You will hear us use both terms. Don't get confused. Predominantly the NRO is us working together outside of ICANN. Within ICANN, the NRO serves the role of the ASO.

We are an integral part of ICANN. We've been involved since the very beginning. We make sure that we're here available for people who want

to understand what's going on in the Internet numbers community. We have been involved in things like the Ayanna stewardship transition, another major event we're now celebrating 7th year anniversary of. And we're part of the empowered community that came out of that. If people are aware of the empowered community, the ASO has a role there.

So we cooperate heavily with ICANN. Our communities meet globally around the world in more than a dozen meetings. So we have a very distinct constituency. But we make sure we're here at ICANN because ICANN helps coordinate the overall infrastructure, the overall identifier system. And so it's very important.

Now, our work with ICANN also goes in terms of supporting Internet governance in general. And I would say that if you think about it, Internet governance, the sustaining of the multi stakeholder model, how we coordinate names and numbers, is an essential thing. And we work with ICANN to do that in a number of venues around the world. Collectively, we call that the technical community. We work with other Internet institutions such as the IETF and the Internet Society to make this happen. And we have a distinct voice, the voice of the people who are operating the infrastructure of the Internet. It's one of many voices, but it's important that it has distinct clarity when speaking on stages both national and global.

Now, recently, the work of the number registry system has been focused on stability. We have a challenge coming up in preserving the Internet number registry system.

As people may or may not know, AFRINIC went through a little bit of a challenge in that it lost its member elected board. And therefore that's something that's sort of fundamental to how we run registries. We've been working in trying with AFRINIC in helping get them past that challenge. I will say there was a milestone in that: the appointment of an official receiver to hold member based open elections, which would get them back to a member elected board. We see that as a major development and step forward, and we're again looking for anything that will get us back to a normal operating governance model.

I'd like to say during this time, our thanks go out to the AFRINIC staff, who has been steadfast in their support of the African Internet community and making AFRINIC continue to operate in a very challenging time.

I also want to extend our thanks to ICANN. ICANN has actually been at our side through this, has provided logistical, financial support, and has been proactive in reaching out and seeing what can be done to help the AFRINIC Internet community through this challenging time.

Now we are looking at a path forward, and as I said, the RARs are something that's run by the region. Each region is an autonomous entity. So this is up to the African Internet community to resolve predominantly. Their governance processes will result eventually in a member based open election (we have confidence in that), at which time we'll need to engage the African Internet community to make sure they participate and they're actively involved in making sure that they get a governance board that supports their goals and needs.

We're going to be working with them through this time also to make sure that they support their obligations in the framework. We have obligations in something called Internet Consensus Policy Two, which is a joint agreement with ICANN for the recognition of an RIR that sets certain requirements. We also have MoUs, both the NRO MoU and the Aso MoU, along with ICANN, that defines the roles of an RIR and responsibilities. So we'll be working with AFRINIC. We're very flexible in doing this, but we want to make sure they get back to a normal governance model.

And then finally, we're busy having discussions globally with the Internet number community, both in venues around the world, but also this week in discussing what can we do to strengthen the model. The AFRINIC event has caused a little bit of a review and self-reflection, and perhaps there's some things we can do better. I'm not going to delve into that, though we could go for hours. But I will say there is a meeting tomorrow. The ASO has an open meeting with the ICANN Board, and so that's a great opportunity to discuss that.

In closing, I just want to say again, welcome on behalf of the Internet Numbers Community to ICANN 78 in Hamburg. And that concludes my remarks. Thank you.

CHRIS MONDINI:

Thank you for that excellent update.

And now for a very special award presentation, I would like to re-welcome to the stage our Board Chair, Tripti Sinha.

TRIPTI SINHA:

The ICANN Board of Directors established this award in 2020 in honor of the late Dr. Tarek Kamel, an Internet pioneer and well-loved member of the ICANN community and organization. The award recognizes members of the ICANN community for significant contributions to developing capacity in areas related to ICANN's mission of one global Internet.

It is my pleasure to announce that the recipient of this year's Dr. Tarek Kamal Award for capacity building is Margarita Valdes Cortez. Margarita is the legal and business director of NIC Chile, which is the official registry for the dot-cl ccTLD. There, she helped create the online arbitration system to resolve conflicts between trademarks and domain names. She is a former chair of LACTLD, the Latin American and Caribbean Association of ccTLDs, and she has been involved in the ICANN community for more than 20 years.

In addition to representing NIC Chile in the ccNSO, she has served on the Nominating Committee, the Fellowship Selection Committee and the host committee for ICANN's third public meeting in Santiago, Chile. With this award, the Board recognizes Margarita's capacity development work at a local, regional, and global level. She played an instrumental role in fostering collaboration between the government of Chile and the University of Chile, which sponsors NIC Chile.

Congratulations, Margarita, and thank you for your countless hours of work in support of our mission.

MARGARITA CORTES:

Good morning. Thank you for being here. And I will speak in Spanish so you can have your headset. Receiving this award for me is like winning an Academy Award/Oscar. I am very happy with this recognition. Thank you very much. Of the 25 years that ICANN is celebrating, 24-and-a-half years I've been working as a volunteer in my organization, NIC Chile, in the cl domain name that belongs to the University of Chile.

My first ICANN meeting was in August 1999, where I worked as part of the organizing committee. In those times, my command of English was really basic, but it was well-intentioned. Working for cl, being a lawyer, implied great challenges for me, as I was a member of the School of Engineering of the same university, where I was studying.

However, overcoming prejudices and showing that I was bilingual and that I understood the Internet dynamics as the phenomenon that it was, and the legal framework, was always the big challenge. We were five people in that time. Now we are 53.

However, my energy was focused in improving the experience of the dot-cl users, mitigating information asymmetries in end users, using a mediation system when conflicts with domain name happened, and later on, by designing the online arbitration system for our dispute resolution system with dot-cl.

Today we want more entrepreneurs and small companies to access their digital identity with dot-cl. And I am focused on the users so that they can have access to legal help to defend their interests and rights, connecting the users of the dot-cl with schools of law in different countries and universities in my country to help the weakest and to face arbitration proceedings and to be able to defend themselves and

persevere in good faith in accessing their domain names. All of this has been a great success. If you want to know about this project, I'm happy to share this with you.

And now I would like to thank my daughter Fernanda and my husband Ivan, my strategic partners in lives, who have helped me in each of my steps with my innovating ideas; my colleague, Humberto Carrasco, who thought about me for this recognition, and with him to all my colleagues and friends in the LAC RALO, LACTLD, LACNIC, and ICANN with whom we debate and think together on how to reach a better experience for the Internet users in the region; my friends Gonzalo Navarro, Chris Disspain, Pablo Rodriguez, and Luis Arancibia, for supporting me always and helping me to be a better person each day. Thank you for such good and sensible conversations.

And a special mention to Vint Cerf and Theresa Swinehart for taking care of me in Rome in 2004 when I was alone and they became part of my conversations; Patricio Poblete and Jose Miguel Piquer, who are the professors of the School of Engineering where they started in NIC Chile. They, in 1999, received me with a lunch with my proposal for legal assistance to NIC Chile. They believed in me and they hired me the following months.

And finally, thank you to all my friends and colleagues in ICANN who have helped all this effort that took so many years, including participating in ICANN 13 in Romania, which, being six months pregnant, was worth the effort to build this solid community that's shown to be the model we need for the development of the Internet for

everyone and with everyone, everywhere we are. And finally, for today's party. Thank you very much.

CHRIS MONDINI:

And now we have arrived at the moment for a wonderful cultural performance by a delightful group that I'm sure you're going to enjoy. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming [inaudible]

UNIDENTIFIED:

[singing German songs, including My Bonnie and a shanty] Thank you. That was it for us and. Enjoy Hamburg and the time here. Thank you very much. Bye.

CHRIS MONDINI:

What a rousing way to bring this opening ceremony to a close. We will be back in this room at 10:45 for an anniversary panel. Please do join us and don't forget during this break some of you have assignments to please meet a newcomer. Have a great break and we'll see you back here shortly. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]