
ICANN78 | AGM – Joint Session ICANN Board and NCSG
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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello and welcome to the joint meeting between the ICANN Board and the NCSG. Please note that this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN expected standards of behavior. All panelists are kindly asked to state their name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. This discussion will be between the ICANN Board and the NCSG members only. Therefore, we will not be taking questions from the audience. I will now hand it to you, Matthew.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Hello, everybody. Delighted to see you all here. Welcome to the joint meeting of the ICANN Board and the NCSG. We have a full table. How wonderful. So, let me just turn it over to Tripti and she'll give a couple of opening comments and then we'll get started.

TRIPTI SINHA: Thank you, Matthew. We're delighted to meet with the NCSG. This is an opportunity to have a direct dialogue, so we're quite excited to be here. It's proven to be a very good and healthy exchange, so thank you for your questions. Matthew, I'll turn it right back to you to facilitate the dialogue.

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MATTHEW SHEARS: Thanks, Tripti. I think what we're going to do is we're going to go through the question that we pose to the NCSG first and then we'll come back to our questions afterwards. Your questions afterwards, sorry. I'll turn it over to you, Julf.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Before we go into the questions, I would like to thank both Tripti and especially Matthew for actually helping facilitate this and meeting us. Thank you. And I apologize to Matthew for the very drawn out process we had with the Board Seat 14. It is, as with so many things with ICANN, things take longer than you expect when you want to have a good result and reach consensus. Fortunately, the processes did work. We did reach consensus in the end, but it took longer than we had expected and we really apologize for that.

MATTHEW SHEARS: So, Julf, I just wanted to say thank you very much and no matter the process, it's been an absolute delight working with the NCSG. Thank you. Okay, so we're going to start with the question that we pose to the NCSG, which was very much aligned with the process that we're going through at the moment with the community, which is the development of the next strategic plan for the fiscal year '26 to '30. And as an aside note, I would encourage you all to go, if you have a chance, to the open community sessions on the strategic plan and to contribute your thoughts there. So, our question to NCSG was the following. Looking forward over the next three to five years, what are the key strategic issues ICANN and the ICANN ecosystem should be addressing in the fiscal year '26 to '30 strategic plan and why? Thanks.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. And trying to answer this question, we really try to think with the whole community and think about what the sort of challenges really are. And unfortunately, we didn't come up with any answers, but we thought about the problems and kind of just like to share our thinking with the board of our concerns with sort of things. This meeting has been very much about the history of ICANN and GNSO and so on. So, looking back at how we started with ICANN, it was a very different field than today. Governments weren't really sure what they should do with this weird thing called the internet, and we flew under the radar. Big companies were mainly just providing connectivity and so on. We have a very changed world. And the challenges for ICANN are, of course, on one hand, governments are really getting active and looking at things like content regulation, but also whether they should actually sort of take over the role of ICANN to, for example, UN. But even maybe more importantly, a lot of dominating technology companies are really taking over major parts of the internet and basically not caring about open standards anymore, but basically building their own proprietary universe over the internet. So, we were trying to sort of think about the challenges of trying to be relevant in this new universe, but didn't come up with real answers, but thought this is something we can think about together.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Julf. Any board members want to jump in on this particular question that's been turned back to us? So, we've been asked in this evolving world that Julf just described, how is ICANN positioning itself

in this new world? Strategically. Strategically. So, I don't know. I mean, I'm happy to take a crack at that and then we can... All right. So, I won't repeat what I just said in the opening, which was to encourage you to participate. So, we obviously are coming to the end of our current strategic plan and we have a great opportunity to think about the environment that we're going to be looking at and working in and evolving in over the next period. And I would suggest that we even look at it beyond the next strategic plan and look at a 10-year horizon or even longer. We have multiple strands going on at the moment that I think are critical for us to consider. We have an evolving innovation space where we have new naming systems and alternative naming systems. We have a governmental environmental space where there are new approaches to different regulatory issues that are facing us. We have an international intergovernmental process at the multilateral level that's likely to possibly shape our world going forward as well. So, I think there are multiple strands. And there are other key issues, one of which you've raised as well, which is the issue of ESG and the environment. I think... So, these are all elements that we could delve into, but I think that's really the purpose of this contribution that we want you all to make to the next strategic plan. But in the interim, I'd love other board members perhaps to jump in or Sally and Tripti just to give some thoughts.

TRIPTI SINHA:

Thank you, Matthew. So, looking at what's potentially going to impact us in the next 5 to 10 years and scope it down to ICANN's remit, which is, you know, being the steward of the unique identifier systems, how will that be impacted? And as Matthew just said, there are these various

and sundry other naming systems, but we're more than just naming where the unique identifier systems, how is that going to be impacted? And that identifier system is going to grow to accommodate multilingualism. So, I see that those are the kinds of factors that will need to be rolled into the next strategic plan. And, you know, from the time that the internet came into being, governments are now taking ownership, right? It's all about sovereignty. And this is a strategic asset. The internet is a strategic asset for every nation in the world. So, how will they treat this resource, this asset? And we have to ensure that whatever legislation and regulation comes into play does not disrupt the underpinnings of this technical infrastructure. So, we would love to have your engagement in this so that we can craft a plan that will stand the test of time for the next, at least its next lifetime, which would be 5 to 10 years from now. And I think the threat horizon will also continue to evolve and change. So, we're hoping that you will bring to bear those kinds of thoughts. Thank you.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Tripti. I know Maarten would like to contribute and Edmon, and then I don't know, Ulf, if you have any follow-up thoughts on what you've heard, that would be good also. So, Maarten. Oh, and Jim. So, Maarten first, please.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Yes, thank you. And then, obviously, what Tripti says that we're coming up with the IGF as well, and it's also a critical time to make sure that that is understood more widely and that we stay on top of that. When we were thinking of it and thinking of the future to come, there's two

elements. One is war. There used to be war. There is war and there will be war. And this will affect the way the world interacts with each other towards the future. So, how do we act in that? And ecological progress, it's clear we're in a world that is not burning yet, but it's getting close. And how to deal responsibly with that is something to take into account. There's general trends that affect almost everything we do. Now, we are not there to fight wars or to improve the world all by ourselves, but this is a background we need to understand and reflect to. And as Tripti said, we're 100% clear on our focus should be on our mission in this, because if we go beyond, we may not be able to do it, even our own mission.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Maarten. Edmon, and then Jim.

EDMON CHUNG:

Yeah, I guess building on what Tripti said also, I want to tease out a little bit more what, I guess, what you meant by the proprietary systems. Are you talking more about the large social medias? Are you talking more about the metaverses? Are you talking more about the alternative naming system or all of them? Because those are... OK, that's useful. And I think building on what Tripti said, these are definitely some of the points that we... At least the board has identified as some of the challenges coming up. But teasing it further out, and what is the strategic response to those, I think we are looking to the community to hear further.

JAMES GALVIN:

I want to tease one particular thing and go straight down a path of... on a technology path here in terms of issues that are... strategic issues facing us, and call it namespace expansion. And just observe that there are a couple of dimensions in there that really do matter to us as ICANN. One in particular is the growing presence of alternate namespaces. And we call them alternate because, you know, we're the DNS. And that's the way that we see things, right? We have a model of a single global internet, one world, one internet. And so we have these other sources of names that look like DNS names. And they have an impact on us. They have an impact on... confusability. They have an impact on the user experience. And they have quite an impact on a variety of technologies in our space. So there's a relationship issue for us to consider about how we're going to interact with those other namespaces and those other opportunities. You know, the internet is based on innovation. There's no reason, and I certainly wouldn't want to find a reason, to exclude them or prevent them from developing and moving on. But we do have to think about the internet and what it's going to look like, given that those things are coming in even increasing numbers and increasing traction. The relationship to our system and the confusion that it creates. Thanks.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

So, Julf and colleagues, you've heard a lot about what we think about our own question. So, I'm turning it back to you now. Maybe we could hear from you as well.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Well, I think... Well, Stephanie, I'm going to let you respond first, but after my quick comment, which is that I definitely think this is a problem we all need to think about together, and we will try to solve as representatives of civil society. Help with that as much as we can. I also do point out that we have the advantage that our membership is very geographically and culturally diverse, so we encounter a lot of border issue problems sooner than many other parts of the organization. Stephanie, you wanted to...

STEPHANIE PERRIN:

Thank you very much. And I think we're a bit remiss in that we haven't been following the strategic planning exercise enough. I just dropped in there prior to this meeting, and I promise I will pester them more. I'm not sure that that's all that welcome. But I think that, as Julf was saying, we had that 20th anniversary. We talked about ourselves. We did not talk about the fact that everything's on the internet now. And we have here at ICANN, we have endorsed a human rights impact assessment process. We just came from a session in our NCUC meeting this morning where we heard about the takeover of the .UA by Russia during the ongoing hostility in Ukraine. And also, I didn't know that this was happening in Afghanistan as well, different kind of takeover. But it is very clear that everything on the UK, on the internet now, is a strategic asset. It's life. It is an act of war now to take over a domain. It's no longer a nerdy thing that we talk about at ICANN in the back rooms. We appreciate that ICANN cannot get into the geopolitics of these hostilities, yet at the same time, we have some kind of a responsibility to manage what's going on with the domain names. And if there's any way we could use the HR impact assessment to decide whether ICANN

could intervene or not, I just offer it up to you as a possibility. Because it's hard to imagine that we would administer the thing and not care what happens. That's hard to imagine for me. And I don't think the UN is going to jump in very quickly on this issue. And I don't think we should let them either, because I think strategically that would be a bad move on ICANN's part. So I don't think I'm answering anything, but let's think about that human rights impact assessment because we pretty clearly see what's happening. Thanks.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Sorry, just very quickly, and I'm sure my colleagues on board will want to make comments as well, because you've asked an incredibly important, very, very big question. The point about the HRIA is an important one, and I think... I don't know if we want to talk about it in this session or broadly, but you and I have talked about this many times over the last years, and this is something that others in the group have much more knowledge about, and I'm looking at Avri there, because she definitely is. The Workstream 2 recommendations came out with the... opposed to the transition, the IANA settlement, that there would be... we would... the community and the organization would start to look at using human rights impact assessment tools, HRIA, for a variety of things. And the pilot was that the organization, as in the ICANN staff organization, would commission a pilot HRIA into a quite narrow set of activities, one of which was... I remember how we ran the meetings function. It was very operationally focused inside the org, and it was designed to... this is my memory. It was designed to test the idea as to what happens if we use an HRIA, because we brought in an external consulting firm and produced a specific framework and a test. Now,

since we did that, which was several years ago, it was before the pandemic... Sorry, my brain goes into pre-pandemic and post-pandemic, and Avri's going to comment in a minute. We have then had... there has then been a... reasonably frequent, fairly regular, by the way of putting it, discussion in the community and volunteer groups in four different ways about, "Okay, so if this, then what?" So, what do we know now that we didn't know before? Should we use these frameworks? So, we haven't put that into... We, collectively, it's my understanding, as a community, have not said, "We shall now do this, like this, using an HRIA." We couldn't. I just wanted the board and those who weren't around at the time and not involved in it to know that it was done. It was done in quite a narrow way. Doesn't make it bad. It was a test, a proof of concept, as well as a test of concept. Thank you. Which is one point you made, but you're obviously making a much bigger point about the risk, which is the question to ICANN as a whole about capture of domain names. In a conflict environment, that was your bigger point, wasn't it? Thank you.

AVRI DORIA:

Yeah, and I think that that first... HRIA was a good start. One of the things that also happened that perhaps, you know, ICANN, the larger ICANN can learn from is NCSG. I think it was NCSG. It might have been NCUC, but it was one part of NCSG, at least, did an amazing human rights impact assessment on one of the PDPs that we were judging. It was the one that came before SubPro. One of the PDPs. It was the one that we never accepted and that we've cut up into chunks and are now doing the RDRS. I remember that part of it. I don't remember the name of the whole PDP at the moment. But on that one, they did a really amazing

job. And not only did they do that, they had basically sort of mapped out what a human rights impact assessment for a PDP would be. And it was Ephraim that did this within the NCSG. An amazing effort by two people, but much more of an effort than two people could sustain. I kept waiting for the one on SubPro, but to get two people to put in that kind of effort again didn't happen. And so there's really something there that I think that the staff could look at as perhaps a model for how to take the HRIA, you know, maybe find a way to automate some pieces, maybe not, I don't know. But basically, there is a model there. It produced... And, you know, it's in all of our folders. We can go back and read it. Truly an amazing piece of work that I would love to see replicated on other PDPs over time.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you. I've just had my wonderful team, who are by magic listening into this, and have just sent me a slightly more... It's not about... That's also a very good point, Avri. Yes, I recall that. You're quite right. The framework of interpretation the community developed offers good baseline for human rights discussions and decisions. And we, this is my team, look to the community for guidance on this. We stand ready to help support and facilitate any work related to this. So I think that's really encouraging. So I think what we're hearing is, putting that together, as a minimum, we've got at least three ways that we can come back and have a look at this question. Framework of interpretation, the pilot we did inside the organization and the pilot that Avri's referring to. So I think lots of kind of... We've done quite a lot of this already. So we might be in a position, depending on what we collectively think, the

bigger question is, we might have a good set of tools we can use. But that takes us back to the bigger question.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Thanks, Sally. Thanks, everyone. One quick one, Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG: Just quickly in response, I think... Two things I want to add. One is that I think at the board, we talked about the global public interest framework as well. And one thing that Avri left us to do is to add back some of the human rights considerations from the by-laws that is now in place. The other thing that I wanted to add is that really, it's kind of interesting. And this is related to the geopolitics and stuff that was discussed. And I want to just highlight that observation that this is very consistent with the conversation we had this morning with the CSG, the Commercial State of the Group. So this is definitely something that I think the board needs to take on in terms of a more proactive way rather than in the past, more reactive way.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Thanks, Edmon. I think we should probably move to the other questions. So would you like, Julf, I'll turn it over to you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: And then we're actually gonna turn to Bruna for the first question. Please, Bruna.

BRUNA SANTOS:

Thanks, and hello, everybody. My name is Bruna Santos, and I sit at the GNSO Council. Our first question is about WSIS+20, which is one of the main topics for this week as well. The process is going to finish in 2025, and that seems to be a rather decisive year for internet governance with the outcomes both of WSIS and the Summit of the Future, like the GDC and IGF mandate renewal. A lot of the folks in our community, and including org as well, seem to believe that the outcome could potentially impact ICANN's mission, and especially over this tendency of ignoring the technical community. So our question for you is how the board feels about the broader discussion on both the GDC and WSIS+20 review, and if so, how are you preparing to both pretend and to defend ICANN from these potential impacts, and how can the community support and supplement these efforts? Thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA:

Thank you for the question. Yes, WSIS+20 is front and center and being talked about a lot. So just to take you back in time, back in 2003 and then ratified in 2005, the Tunis agenda essentially said that a multi-stakeholder body was the best body to be involved in internet governance. And a promise was made to do a 10-year review, so we had the 2015 review, which reasserted that thinking, and the next review is coming up in 2025.

So there is an undercurrent of conversation that's occurring in different bodies that perhaps multilateralism is the way to go as opposed to multi-stakeholderism, but very recently, as recently as a few weeks ago, there was a big IGF meeting in Kyoto, and prior to that, there were many local meetings and several board members attended these meetings.

Becky went to Taiwan to attend the Taiwanese IGF meeting, as well as Edmon, both two board members went to that meeting. I was invited to the Canadian IGF and a very large delegation from ICANN, which included 10 board members and 18 staff members went to Kyoto. And overwhelmingly at the IGF, there was tremendous support for the internet, the multi-stakeholder model. And we had many, many, many bilateral meetings with many ministries of many countries. And it was almost too good to be true. In fact, in one of my meetings, somebody said, "Why are we all in such violent alignment?" It felt a little, almost like we were living in this alternate reality because there's this undercurrent of, hey, we need to move towards multilateralism, but everyone's singing from the same songbook and saying, no, this is the way to manage the governance of the internet.

However, there's a deeper question, right? What does internet governance mean? It's a highly layered approach. And when we talk about it, we, ICANN, we're talking about the technical underpinnings of the internet. And there is general consensus that there is no other way to manage it other than using the modality of a multi-stakeholder model. And so that, we walked away feeling pretty confident that that will be the outcome of the next meeting, but I don't think we should rest on our laurels and assume that that is indeed what will play out in 2025.

So what have we done? The board has made this a priority for the board itself as well as for the CEO. So this has become an item in the CEO's goals for FY24. And I'll actually turn it over to Sally to speak to that as well. But beyond that, I would say we're feeling pretty good. And I think the question has the word defend. I don't think we need to have a defensive posture. We just need to have a posture of doing what we do

and we do it very well. And how can the community help us is just continue to do what you do, which is if we move this, if there's an effort to move this towards multilateralism, let's not forget, what does multilateral mean? Everyone else is not at the table. Who's at the table? Just governments. And that would just be, in my opinion, a travesty. Well, anyway, on that note, I'll turn it over to Sally.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Thank you, Tripti. Yes, lots in the question. Lots of, so it's the board's view, which is Tripti's, very strategic view, sort of if this, then what? So I think you're absolutely right, Tripti. I think my reflection would be is there's widespread consensus inside, small C. I also know because Julf and I speak regularly and I also speak regularly to the other SOAC chairs. I mean, everybody's talking the same thing. So within our immediate ICANN community, I'm hearing absolutely consistent view. We have to protect the model. We have to be very proactive. We're on a deadline. We've literally just had this conversation with the ccNSO like half an hour ago. They asked exactly the same question.

So what are we doing? Well, as Tripti said, I recommended to the board who were extremely supportive that we should for the first time bring this up to a CEO goal. And we've been following this for years. I mean, we have a team, our GE team led by [Veni] as many of you know, follows the UN agenda, participates in New York, follows the IGF. So we know about the content inside the organ, inside the community. And we had a full house standing [inaudible], I'm told, in the GAC room yesterday for the geopolitical session. And of course, that's how we engage with the community on these subjects. So that's all okay.

But what we collectively know and agree about is that it is not just one event, which is also I think part of what you were saying. It's not just a moment in time. It's not like an election where you go, this is a countdown to a date and everything has to get pushed into that date. It is a bit of that because there is a deadline and there will be a vote. But there are a series of critical staging posts that we already know that are mainly being driven by the UN. And others are jumping on the bandwagon. So that's what's the problem we're trying to solve.

What I also can tell you is that one of the reasons why I wanted it as a CEO goal, which is to say the board are saying, can you have this as a, yes, we all agree, we want to put this as a CEO goal, is that many people in the community and outside our immediate ICANN community have asked me this question pretty much since the moment I took on as interim CEO. Do I realize, am I aware, do I understand how risky it is, what are we doing? So there's a lot of voices and they're pretty much all on the same page.

Now, obviously the people who don't agree with our position are not talking to me. This is obvious, but perhaps should be pointed out because we said someone earlier said in the ccNSO meeting, here's what we need to do. We need to collectively to switch from engagement, communication, I'm telling you what I know, you're telling me what we know, to advocacy, to actually campaigning. So that's the first shift. We need to move, we collectively, whoever we decide we is, are, we are at that anyway, we need to move to a campaign footing. And in order to do that, I need to change the way the resources are organized inside the organization, step one. That's why the CEO goal is there. That empowers me to bring a cross-functional project

team, not just having it in Veni's team, but expanding that. And Veni and Theresa, just so that you know, because this is a decision we've already made, Veni and Teresa will co-sponsor that with me. And the other key player in that, of course, is our head of comms, Sally Newell Cohen. So I'm putting that in, and we're putting a project team in, we're doing it literally as we are here at the meeting, we're finalizing that project team. We'll probably be bringing in somebody external on a contract basis to lead that. Then we have to say, right, what's the task? And we want to produce a framework, a simple comms and engagement framework. At that point, we'll bring it to the community, say, this is what we think we collectively need to do. Now, tell us what you think. And then, in parallel, I say, this is the resource I'm gonna allocate, this is what the ICANN resources will do. Here's what all the other people who want to participate, either think about it like this, concentric circles, this is inside the org, this is inside the ICANN community, this is inside the technical community, this is everyone else, yeah? Because there are some everyone elses as well, already. We say, this is our bus, this is what it looks like. Come and sit on our bus. But we need some rules of participation, otherwise it's just gonna be an absolute mess. So we've got to agree, and this is why it's in a CEO goal, I have to work with the board to make sure that we get that right, and we don't get over-engaged to the point where it looks to the world like ICANN is singly leading this and will solve it for the world. No, we do enough to be effective and advocate and bring in all the voices. There are several government groups, for example, who are already doing that. So I think it's a look, more like a coalition approach, like we've done in Africa, if you want to think about it like that. But at the center, instead of having

a secretariat, because that's not an advocacy model, we need an actual campaign team that is going to lead and drive that.

Now, we're also, final comment, going to need some external help. I'm just working on the assumption that there's no way we can get what we need done, done without some external support of different types. And I'm at the moment, right now, looking at what our options are, what do the resources allow us to do. Xavier and I are working very closely on, okay, what's in the budget, and with Danko as well, how do we make sure that we're ready? So that's a lot of detail, but I know it's a really important question for you. And I'm also, because we're being asked this question a lot in this meeting, I think it's important to have, ah, there's Xavier, he heard his name and he immediately materialized, like a magic trick. And that's really important, as a community, we're keeping this clear, so we're all saying the same thing. So I really hope that's helpful. Thank you.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Sally. So obviously this issue is top of mind for us. I'm just interested to see if any of the board members who went to the IGF would like to jump in as well. So I see Maarten and Avri.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Yes, important things have been said, and you hear, we take the leadership very clearly in this. Of course, that shouldn't make you stop and interact. In all those regional IGFs, Tripti mentioned a few, I've participated to a few as well, you see often also ICANN-infested people, let's put it in those words. And it's good to be there and stay there. IGF

is much more than that big annual thing, as was explained, and we're aware of that. So the good news is, indeed, even yesterday, during the party organized by the Germans, Tripti introduced the minister, and she very clearly said, "You don't stand alone." And that is true, so important to keep in mind. And just my main takeaway from somebody who is at the origin of this community, Vint Cerf himself, he was chairing a panel, and I was deeply impressed when he said, "This IGF is about building an internet we want." That's good, but once we set what we want, we need to also work on it, because if we don't work on it, we may end up with internet we deserve, and we may not like that. But I think you see the full commitment here, and it means everybody on board, and I am fully, very much on board with what we're doing to get that leadership as well.

AVRI DORIA:

I wanna go back to what Tripti was saying about at the IGF, there was sort of this, it felt almost like you were always in a ... But I had the fortune to chair a main session that was looking at what's gonna happen next. And indeed, you were right, most of the voices were, go IGF, go multi-stakeholder model. But there was one or two voices that came in, and they almost had the temerity of being the outspoken ones in that environment that told us about what they didn't see a multi-stakeholder model doing for them, what they didn't see it doing for development that their countries could do, that their multilateralism could do. And I think it's very important as we go into this advocacy to remember those voices, to go back and listen to those voices. They're often civil society voices that are saying it sounds great, and it's similar to something we said, we heard in the CSG conversation earlier. It

sounds really great when you tell us, but I don't see it, I don't feel it. And therefore, the finding where they can see it, finding where they can feel it, the making those stories as part of the advocacy part of what's being told. So the voices are there. At the IGF, it took courage to be the lone voice saying, yay for multilateralism, but they're there, and they have a story also. Thanks.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Edmon, hold on to your thought. I just wanted to give Stephanie an opportunity to come in. I think you wanted to come in on this.

STEPHANIE PERRIN: I apologize for grabbing the mic again, Stephanie Perrin for the record. I appreciate that the government departments that were at the IGF are probably keen, but I bet it's the culture and the industry departments, not the revenue departments and the tax authorities. And I think it might be important to figure out where they're meeting and what they're thinking. There are definitely, as we talk about this ripening, there's certainly concerns that are hitting governments in the face. So we are at an inflection point, it does seem to me. One thing that we said in one of our meetings the other day, Sebastien Ducos said, we as techies are not good about tooting our own horn. And I do think that communications is a key issue here. ICANN, we beat ourselves up because we're not on time for things that takes time. Compare that to governments. I always say this, government's way slower than us. We do eventually get things done and we make compromises. And yet we don't communicate, A, how hard this is, because of course engineers don't, they talk about, they fixed it all, they fixed it all, they fixed it all.

No, no, let's talk about how difficult this is and let's celebrate our successes a bit. I think that's really important. And the second point I wanted to raise was, if you wanted to start closing the door on civil society participation, hold a meeting in Saudi Arabia, because many of us will not be going for a number of reasons. And I think that's an important thing to keep in mind. It's important to have civil society in the room if you're dealing with what is a fundamental pillar of society and that's the internet. And I don't think this is a good trend, holding it in a country where many people will be unable to go. Thank you.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Stephanie. A number of people have said they want to speak now, so I'm gonna have to close it, otherwise we won't get to the—So Edmon, then Bruna, and then Leon, last word on this issue. It's an important issue, but we do need to move on. Thanks.

EDMON CHUNG:

Just quickly, I agree very much with Tripti's characterization and with Avri's addition, but I want to add one more thing, is that as Tripti mentioned, we don't think this is done. And everyone is praising multi-stakeholder model, but as we all know, the interpretation of what multi-stakeholder model really means could vary. And so I think part of the advocacy, part of, as Stephanie, you mentioned, we need to show them what exactly we mean as well. The bottom-up, the consensus-based driven direction and decision-making, those are a very important part of it, and I think both Sally's team and board is very aware of that undercurrent as well.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Thank you, Edmon. Bruna.

BRUNA SANTOS: Very briefly, just to say that I like the approach about a campaign and the advocacy movement as the advocate I am, but it does seem like a double-tiered approach to this, because this community, or the IGF community, they can sound like ivory towers from time to time, and we tend to look at those issues as if they would never affect us. So there is an internal work in convincing community about the relevance of this topic that is also worth taking a look, and we had a question on the ccNSO/GNSO meeting about how this would affect the ICANN community. So it hints that there is some internal work to do, and just to say that on the campaign side, we're here to help as well, and help put the message forward as much as we can. So thanks.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Thanks, Bruna, and just as a side note on that, I recall a long time ago, back in the WSIS and Tunis in 2005, the technical community as a kind of a broad umbrella had a number of other players in it. It had the ICC, it had a whole range of civil society organizations who aren't involved in this issue area at the moment, but may well be interested in participating in that broader campaign, as you suggest. Leon, please.

LEON SANCHEZ: Thank you, Matthew. I want to center on what do we think, or at least what I think, the community can do to support and reinforce this effort.

And I mean, we all know each other at our home countries, right? We know who the CC operator is, we know who the business community is in regard to our community within ICANN, etc. So there are a number of governments that are not necessarily looking into internet governance. So we need to make them aware about internet governance and the multi-stakeholder model, and to champion that multi-stakeholder model at a local level. We know that there are different governments that, I mean, they can't defend what they don't know exists, right? So that is the part where our community can reinforce this effort. I mean, ICANN does a lot of work through stakeholder engagement, through government engagement, etc., but we have to recognize that there are limited resources that they can access, and they can only do what they can reach, right, with these resources. So in this end, again, our community is an additional tool and an additional force that ICANN can take advantage of in reaching out to our local governments and try to reinforce this notion of multi-stakeholder model and defending it and explaining them why this is important, why this is useful, and why they should come on board and defend themselves as well.

MATTHEW SHEARS: Thanks, Leon. And now I'm going to go back on my word and give the last word on this topic to Benjamin.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Thank you, Benjamin for the record. Actually, this point, I also reiterated it the last time I spoke to Sally, that it was important because we are passionate about the multi-stakeholder model, and that it was important to also equip us enough to be able to do that for them, to be

the mouthpiece going everywhere to do that. And one of the things that happened was we were trying as much as possible to make our presence at IGF in our own capacity, but we had a resource, but we just had time problem to activate that resource. And I was trying to let the community, ICANN, know that this is important work we're trying to do, and every resource available to make sure we go out there and scream multi-stakeholder is the best way to go should be facilitated and encouraged. And trivial things like timeline of meeting a budget request shouldn't be the things that should hold on, things like this. That's just what I, we know how important this is, and for us, we can't go any other way than multi-stakeholder. And this is what ICANN should also help us, help them achieve. Thank you.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Many thanks, Benjamin. And back to you, Julf.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Something that's been very important for us and continues to be increasingly important is sustainability. Stephanie, do you want to actually present a question on that?

STEPHANIE PERRIN:

On the question of sustainability, and not necessarily a universally held view, but we really feel strongly, some of us, that it's time to look at a more nuanced approach to travel and meetings. Travel is difficult for many of our folks coming from places where they can't get visas. We have not really used the concept of regional hubs since we went into Zoom land. And we think that possibly, regional hubs connecting to a

main conference might save a lot of money, save a lot of carbon points, and improve the networking in regions. Because very often, when we come to a main meeting, we tend to network in our regional hubs anyway, I don't dispute the fact that we still need to meet on a regular basis, because as Chuck Gomes was saying in the GNSO celebrations, we need trust to make the multi-stakeholder model work. So again, we still have to have these big meetings where we can promote trust by meeting across groups, but can we focus a bit on the environment and meet more locally? And to what extent can the regional outreach folks help us do that? Especially if we're working on a campaign, it might be time.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Shall I kick that off? Because then I can just make a couple of comments also about the CEO goal on sustainability. That's a very interesting question, and it's a very longstanding question. In the 11 years that I've been at ICANN, we've always been looking at this question. In fact, the last time we used regional hubs, and I'm not going to give you the right date, but somebody clever will tell me when we did the meeting in Nairobi, and it was well before my time at ICANN, and there was a terrorist incident on the ground, I think it was in Nairobi, and oh yes, you're nodding. And as I understand it, because I wasn't here at the time, the community pivoted very fast and said, "It's not safe for us to go to Nairobi." I mean, I think some people did, but most people didn't. Therefore, we will convene hubs, and we will participate in the ICANN meeting from groups, and there was a group in DC, and that sort of idea, which is what you're talking about. So that was the last time we did it physically. I think it was the only time we did it, actually.

Now, the question of, there are two different things here, and I don't want to spend too much time on this, but I want to just paint a picture so that we can come back to it. At a more strategic level, ICANN has to look at its ongoing meeting strategy, its meeting strategy. Now, the three big meetings, this one we're at, is determined by the community policy, which some of you are involved in creating, which was created in 2013, was updated in 2016. So we have a meeting strategy policy that has been created through normal community policy, which the organization implements. And that, one of the key elements of that, apart from having three meetings a year of different types, is that we rotate around the regions. So we take ICANN to the stakeholders. And when we presented that policy all those years ago, and we worked on it, which I did, it was one of the first things I did, we looked at this issue. Should we have regional meetings, regional ICANN meetings? And this was a long discussion. The meeting strategy working group met for multiple years before the policy was created. And there was a long discussion about this question. But post-COVID, and the eventual conclusion was that we shouldn't. We shouldn't break out of the big meeting because we would disaggregate and we might not go back together. That was essentially the conclusion.

Now the world, of course, changed dramatically after COVID. Now we're in a very different place because we now have permanent hybrid meetings. And on top of that, there has been enormous amount of growth in our actual meetings in regions, not saying it's a regional ICANN meeting, but we meet regionally. We have DNS fora, we have technical meetings, we have local stakeholder meetings, regional stakeholder meetings. We had them partly because we had them

virtually all the way through the pandemic because that's what kept us together. When we couldn't physically come to an ICANN meeting, we couldn't physically even come to a regional meeting, we could collaborate regionally online, and we did. So we created some new best practice, albeit for an appalling reason, but now we have it. Now I've got a member of my team who I've recommissioned, if that's the right word, to go back and have another look at this. What should our regional meeting strategy be? Completely, not just should we have ICANN regional meetings? We've learned a lot in that tiny bit. So that's on the stocks, and I've got the staff working on that at the moment, so more on that.

Now within that, we'll absolutely come back this question, should we have regional hubs for ICANN meetings? I welcome that. I think this is the right time to reintroduce it. This is the right way to reintroduce it. So not really tactically, but up at the bigger picture of how do we do meetings around the world and bring our stakeholders together and why?

And I would just put one thing on the table. Here's the problem. Now hopefully this week we can get around this, but I can tell you why it's hit the rocks every time before we've discussed this. It's called time zones. Because what happens when you have hubs—I'm not saying no, Stephanie, that's not what I'm saying, and I don't want to get into a detailed discussion about it now, but just for the benefit of the group, because it sounds like a really good idea. Why wouldn't we just do it and put people in ICANN offices and facilitate this meeting? And it is a good idea. I mean, it absolutely is. And during COVID, if somehow magically, we looked at it again in COVID, were there places we could bring people

together that was safe? And could we create secure kind of bubbles where we would bring people in in the regions? And the reason face-to-face to do exactly what you're saying for all the right reasons, the biggest problem that we have hit historically, which does not mean we can't overcome it and we shouldn't look again, if you are having a meeting like we are now in Hamburg and you put together a hub regional office in Los Angeles or in Singapore, in other words, at the most distant points of the globe on the timeframe, you are asking your community members who are in that hub to work all night. And you're asking, you have to physically take care of them, feed them, water them, and manage that process. So we have done it. I don't want to talk about it more now, but as Stephanie asked the question, I want to incorporate that in our thinking.

Now, when we come to the question of sustainability, and now we have a CEO goal on sustainability because it comes back in through that door as well. You're absolutely right. So when we say, well, what can we do differently? What we are going to do in the CEO goal, just to be clear, because I think there could be some confusion generally about this. Here's the first thing we said, this needs to be a CEO goal. It's never been one before. It's going to be one now. The time is right to do this. Board absolutely agrees with that.

What should that be? Well, this was a much longer discussion. But it is about creating a comprehensive approach for how we implement a sustainability strategy. So the deliverable in this goal currently is that it's not the strategy, it's the approach for the strategy. So this will be the information gathering phase. So this, for example, will come in kind of now as part of this year's work. Let's put everything on the table, kind

of, you know, strategy planning exercise, if you like. What are all the things we have to think about? Carbon footprint. I think things like talent retention is another one that's very interesting, it's been raised by my HR team. You know, the ability to, a lot more of our future staff care deeply about our sustainable footprint. And so it's really important if we're gonna attract the right people, that we actually know what we're doing and that it's consistent across the community. So for the next period, we will run it very, not unlike the WSIS, in terms of a centralized sort of plan inside the organization to create a framework that we will resource. But as we go through it, we then have to come out to all the community groups. And in fact, I've got one pinging my phone right now, saying, "Can we meet this week to discuss how we join together the work that the community's—There are several groups in the community who are active in this. How do we bring that together so that it's a collaborative effort? But clearly, the org has to put some resource and structure around that, otherwise we don't move forward. So I hope that's helpful. And hopefully we've also picked up on Stephanie's specific question about hubs.

STEPHANIE PERRIN:

If I may, it's Stephanie again. You probably thought of this and it probably hit the wall too, but my answer to the 12-hour problem, the folks on the other side of the world getting up in the middle of the night, would be to automatically fly those guys into the meeting and leave out the ones in the middle and run six-hour meeting shifts. So you have to get up at 6:00 if you want to attend the regional hub meeting. It wouldn't kill us. And that might also foster a little more appreciation of the people who have to get up regularly for PDPs at 1:00 in the morning,

because I'm afraid we're not really being respectful enough to the people on the other side of the world. We're running on a North American-European schedule. Thanks.

MATTHEW SHEARS: So we have Maarten, Kathy and Raoul. We're really running out of time, so if we can be very quick, we'll try to get to another question just briefly. So please go ahead.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Yes, so I'd like to really just frame it, because it's clear that ecology is important for this world, not only for what we experience daily, but also what we see wherever we go. So basically, if you cut it down, it's three aspects. One is this internet that we are supporting will help to fight this ecological threat and to deal with the sustainable development goal that relates with that and things like that. And that needs to be done in the most ecological way. And you will see that even the IETF is already starting to discuss, so what does this mean for the way we organize it technically? [inaudible] isn't there yet. Then we've got the operations of Board, org and how we get things done. There you can very much measure what's happening and then see, so what does really make the difference? Because we may think things make a difference, but we don't know yet. And let's not just run behind the fad, but make sure that we measure so we know where we can make the difference. And then very well illustrated, what you said, Stephanie, is right on. The community may organize itself in different ways, but we have a global mission and we need to protect the global understanding. And how do we do that effectively is not something I or you can determine. That is

where the bottom-up community needs to be able to say, "So how can we do that?" And again, this is where Sally and her team is working on as well to inform the discussion in terms of real impact. So that is just the framing of how we're talking about in the board at the moment.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

First, a question to Sally and Tripti, and I know I'm anticipating what Julf is going to say. They're important questions we haven't gotten to. Maybe we could ask for a written response on them, questions on applicant support, among others. Regarding time zones, first, thank you, Stephanie. Thank you, Sally. There is precedent on this. Years ago, there was a Nairobi meeting that many of us could not travel to, and we actually created a hub. I think it was kind of self-organized, a hub in the D.C. area, and we slept during the day and we were up all night, and there were snacks and there was coffee, and it was brilliant. We broke silos. I met people who I had never met before. It created new levels of relationships, and it worked really, really well.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Thanks, Kathy. Raoul, you have the last word in about a minute. Thanks.

RAOUL PLOMMER:

Cheers. Yeah, I think that this fighting the CO2 emissions and world burning, I think time is of the essence, and I think we don't want to get stuck to a PDP that lasts for a decade until we can actually decide to do something. So I think we should first start with something that's completely direct impact of ICANN to the environment, which is the flights, and that's like undeniable, tangible amount of CO2 emissions

that we do produce. So I think we should really start with that, and I'm sure that ICANN is able to go into extremely complex calculation and evaluation of how it can sort of help these environmental goals through their contracts, but I think we should really start with the tangible things first.

MATTHEW SHEARS:

Raoul, thank you very much, and I must apologize for my terribly poor time management that we haven't gotten to the last two questions. So, Kathy, to your point exactly, we will come back to you with an answer to those two questions. Thank you so much, and thank you, everybody. Julf, thank you very much, and I'm bringing this session to a close. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]