
ICANN79 | CF – Geopolitical, Legislative, and Regulatory Developments Update
Thursday, March 7, 2024 – 1:15 to 2:30 SJU

ANDREA GLANDON:

Hello and welcome to the Geopolitical, Legislative and Regulatory Developments update. My name is Andrea, and I am a participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. If you would like to speak during this session, on-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. If you are remote, please place your questions or comments in the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Portuguese. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English. Please remember to speak at a reasonable pace. All are welcome to use the chat. Please note that private chats are only possible among panelists in the Zoom webinar format. Any message sent by a panelist or a standard attendee to another standard attendee will also be seen by the session's hosts, co-hosts, and other panelists. Thank you for joining us today, and I will now hand it off to Veni Markovski, head of government and IGO engagement. You may begin.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, and welcome everyone. Just a reminder for all of us who are speaking, but also for the people who might be asking questions, we

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need to make pauses so that the interpreters can actually interpret what we are saying. So this is the agenda for the call. This session is a collaborative effort between several of the ICANN Org teams. The government and IGO engagement team, as we know it, is the GE team, consists of subject matter experts who work with governments and intergovernmental organizations and analyze and follow their activities when they touch on ICANN's mission. We work closely with other colleagues, like the legal department. They are even in the room. Global stakeholder engagement, OCTO, GAC support policy, even compliance, and others. So the information we present is a reflection of all of GE, as well as the efforts of those other functions.

So today, you're going to hear from several of our members. We have on the dais Elizabeth Olouch, who covers IGOs' activities and processes. Becky McGilley, who is co-lead for our WSIS+20 Outreach Initiative. Eleanor Plexida, who is our lead in legislative and regulatory global developments. We have online our colleague, I believe, Elena. She's online, right? Nora, who will be covering the European legislation. Oh, one piece of it. And we also have, in listening mode, our colleague Alexey, who is covering the United Nations. Actually, there is a session today on the open-ended working group. So he's trying to do two things at the same time.

So we'll start with an update of the current IGO processes. Oh, IGO is Intergovernmental Organizations, followed by the legislative and regulatory developments. And we'll then move to the coverage of the WSIS+20 CEO Goal Number 6. And then we'll talk about the WSIS+20 Outreach Network. So next slide, please. And then I give the floor to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH OULOGH:

Thanks so much, Veni. Hello, everyone. The Global Digital Compact, or the GDC, is now in the zero draft phase. Member states, observers, and stakeholders recently provided feedback on the themes and commitments, actions to strengthen digital cooperation, as well as follow-up mechanisms for the implementation of the compact. The first round resulted in a structural elements document of the GDC, which outlined several principles and commitments to strengthen digital cooperation. Most of the statements during the first consultation stressed the importance of not duplicating or creating new mechanisms to support the implementation of the Global Digital Compact. There were also several suggestions to reference the WSIS Tunis agenda, as well as expressions in support of the IGF.

For example, the European Union statement, in their statement, they said, and I quote, in line with the declaration of the future for the internet, the compact should endorse the IGF as the key platform for internet governance. The Africa group, in their statement, which was read by Botswana, said, an open, safe, and secure internet is vital for addressing the digital divide. And in line with the Africa Union's digital strategy, we advocate for the robust internet governance, end quote.

There were also statements during the stakeholder segment of the consultations, which were held separately. And there was a statement by technical organizations. There was one by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, or CIRA, who said, existing structures, such as the IGF, are best positioned to bring together these stakeholders to bolster the multi-stakeholder model. We do not support the

introduction of a new forum, such as the proposed digital cooperation forum.

The second round of the GDC consultations were held last week. Some of the member states' interventions suggested that the Global Digital Compact should reference the multi-stakeholder model and the technical community. For example, in the G77 in China statement, the representative said, in the preamble section, the group would like to see a reference to the World Summit on the Information Society, in particular the Tunis Agenda and the Geneva Plan of Action, as one of the pillars to build on in the compact.

In their statement, the United States said, the Global Digital Compact should also make explicit mention of the technical community as a unique stakeholder group, as has been the norm in UN digital conversations for almost two decades. On follow-up, the United States does not support mandating new institutions or duplicative processes, like the proposed digital cooperation forum.

Written submissions on inputs for the zero draft of the Global Digital Compact are being accepted through March 8. A preliminary draft is expected to be ready by the end of March, followed by negotiations among member states in April and May. ICANN will monitor the developments of the zero draft of the GDC and any potential impact on ICANN and the multi-stakeholder model, and provide updates to the ICANN community in the format, which we'll cover later in the presentation. Next slide, please.

Just a quick update on some other developments in the UN. As Veni mentioned, my colleague Alexey is at the UN this week. He's been

following the Open-Ended Working Group. He also follows the Ad Hoc Committee, or the AHC, which is deliberating the UN Cybercrime Convention, which did not conclude its work as a cybercrime convention. Which did not conclude its work as planned on the 9th of February. It suspended its activity to resume at a later date, most likely sometime in late spring or the summer of this year.

The main points of divergence during the discussions were human rights safeguards, procedural measures, and the scope of the convention. Provisions that involved mentioning gender wording were not agreed on. The stalemate means the member states are several months away from the adoption of the text of the UN Cybercrime Convention. It's not clear at this time to anyone if the points of divergence will find a compromise solution or whether we'll see a consensus. Further, it's not certain that two-thirds of the member states will vote in support of the draft text in future. GE continues to monitor the situation on this front and will keep the community informed on further developments here. Next slide, please.

Just some updates from the International Telecommunication Union or the ITU. We follow relevant discussions at the ITU which touch on ICANN's mission. The ITU Council Working Group on International Internet-Related Public Policy Issues or the Council Working Group Internet met on the 31st of January and the 1st of February. The Council Working Group Internet discussed potential topics for the online open stakeholder consultations and agreed to two topics. T

he first consultative topic on the developmental aspects to strengthen the internet runs from now until September and the physical

consultation will take place during the next cluster of Council Working Group meetings in October. Some of the questions in that topic include how relevant multilateral and multi-stakeholder processes, including but not limited to UN-based processes such as Summit of the Future, WSIS+20 and the IGF, could address aspects related to internet development. Also, how can we promote international multi-stakeholder cooperation on public policy issues that are focused on promoting the developmental aspects of the internet.

The second consultative topic on the role of public policy in promoting multilingualization of the internet will start in October and run through early January next year. The physical consultation will be held during the cluster of Council Working Group meetings in January 2025. ICANN is planning to make submissions to both consultations. As I mentioned, this is open to all stakeholders to respond and will provide links on the Government Engagement webpage, which our community members could also use if they want to submit their own contributions and comments on these topics.

The World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly 2024 will be held in India, New Delhi. It's been hosted by the Indian Government from October 15th to the 24th. ITU regional groups are in the midst of their WTSA 24 preparations, where Member States will determine priorities for the WTSA 24 and potential regional common proposals. We can expect some preliminary proposals, particularly on internet-related resolutions, in the second quarter.

ICANN is an affiliate member of the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity, APT, and Inter-American Telecommunication Commission, or CITELE, and will

participate in the meetings including the regional WTSA 24 preparations. We'll keep the community informed as the WTSA 24 preparations progress over the next few months. And over to you, Elena.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Thank you, Elizabeth. Hello, everyone. On this part, which is the updates on what's going on in the legislative regulatory space, we will try to be as brief as possible this time around to allow more time for the WSIS discussion. So, a very brief overview of global trends, as in policy areas where we see legislation being used as in policy areas where we see legislation being put forth. Privacy, of course, is one of them. Privacy-related legislation is proliferating around the world. Nothing new there, but it would be an omission not to mention if we're talking about buckets of global trends, and I will spend no more time on this.

Then, cybersecurity-related legislation is a trend that's on the rise, so to say, with obligations to take cybersecurity measures and obligations to report in case of incidents on essential entities, or in some other cases, obligations for localization of services when it comes to essential services. In several cases, DNS operators are named essential entities, or not named per se, but included in scope. In the European Union NIS2, root server operators are now specifically excluded from scope. In the U.S. CIRCIA, we have a carve-out for DNS entities that are governed by multi-stakeholder processes, such as ICANN and IANA. We don't know in what way other draft legislative pieces around the world might target or not DNS operators and the effect, but we're bringing this to your attention because it is definitely a policy area to monitor.

Lastly, a trend to keep an eye on is content-related regulation, or shall I say legislation addressing illegal content online, and the role of intermediary services there. Again, we have cases where DNS operators are captured in scope as intermediaries. That's okay, and it makes sense, of course, as long as they are, the DNS operators I mean, they are appropriately shielded from liability over content that someone else is putting on their services, and they have no control over. What we are observing, nevertheless, is that there's often lack of understanding on what a registrar does, what a registry does, what is a resolver, and what do they do, and what is within their power, or rather what is not within their power when it comes to content. For example, we have seen court cases in Europe involving injunctions against resolvers. It's definitely an area to keep an eye on, and perhaps a role there for the community to help enhance understanding with respect to the different technical realities of the DNS operators. Something to reflect on. Next slide, please.

Very quick updates on NIS2. Although there are no real updates, in the sense that nothing happened since our last plenary, everyone is really focusing on Article 28. So just to recall that Article 28 is a small part of an otherwise larger piece of legislation that is about cyber security. NIS2 includes cyber security obligations and reporting obligations on DNS operators. The specific cyber security measures and reporting obligations for DNS operators are to be specified by means of Implementing Act, which is secondary legislation. There will be a consultation. There is a consultation expected on that front, so that will be a time for the community to provide feedback.

Regarding the domain name registration data provisions, as you might have heard the board saying this week, we haven't identified ICANN policies that would need to be revisited in light of NIS2 as such, but that relates to the text of the directive as it is now, and we need to see the implementing laws, of course. So I guess the message here, to paraphrase the popular phrase, is keep calm and wait for the implementing laws.

Now, the NIS Cooperation Group work stream on WHOIS, which is established among EU member states, the Commission ENISA, with a view to help coordinate as the EU member states work to implement Article 28, and it's non-binding, is focusing, as far as we understand, on verification and on legitimate access. There should be guidelines coming out of this work stream. We heard yesterday by Finn Pettersen that we are lucky to have here in the GAC, and he is one of the co-chairs, that there is consideration for draft guidelines for how to deal with urgent requests, among others. Now, as a reminder, there are no provisions, there is no provision on urgent requests in NIS2. There is a requirement for a response within 72 hours, but not urgent requests as such, but the EU member states can choose to go beyond the NIS2 text.

I will take the opportunity to reiterate our hope, I think I've said that several times, that the EU member states will implement NIS2 in a way that upholds and respects the multistakeholder model and its policymaking, or, as the directive itself states, the guidance and standards developed by the multistakeholder governance structure at international level, i.e. ICANN. And with that, I will hand over to my colleague Nora online for an actual update. Thank you.

NORA MARI:

Many thanks, Elena. Next slide, please. I will provide a quick update on a new law of the European Union that we have introduced in previous geopolitical plenaries a few times, and this is the EU regulation on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks, and agricultural products. As we mentioned in the past, the gist of the regulation has been to update and put in place additional protections on geographical indications, which are basically terms that establish rights for specific products whose qualities are specifically linked to an area where they are produced, for example, Feta, Prosecco, Parma ham.

So the regulation introduced a number of protections, including provisions specifically related to the protections of GIs in domain name. But the original proposal, the scope of application, was limited to country code top-level domains. While during the negotiations of the scope of the regulation, there were discussions about whether including or excluding gTLDs. In the end, compared to our update that we gave in Hamburg, the regulation does extend the scope of application to gTLDs.

In particular, the article that regulates against any misuse, imitation, or evocation of GIs, or any other practice liable to mislead the consumer, expands to all domain names, irrespective of the place of establishment of the relevant registries. The regulation has been just approved in the European Parliament, and will be soon approved by member states, and will be then applicable. Many thanks, and back to Elena.

ELENA PLEXIDA:

Thank you, Nora. And if we can have the next slide. It's the last update we have on this front. We would like to let you know that we have provided input to a public comment that Saudi Arabia opened on its draft digital infrastructure policy. Our comment highlights areas within ICANN's remit that could be considered in the context of this policy, IDNs, universal acceptance, DNSSEC. You can see the comment online. It's in the web page where we are publishing every contribution that we're sending to third parties. Thank you so much. And with that, I'm handing over to Becky.

BECKY MCGILLEY:

Thanks, Elena. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Becky McGilley, Director for Government Engagement, and I'll be covering ICANN's WSIS+20 work. So I'll start by taking us through this slide for some context and give a brief project update and description, and then pass it to Veni to talk about the WSIS+20 outreach network. And then we'll be able to answer any of your questions you may have regarding the project live at the mic or at the Q&A pod at the end.

So to start with a brief background on WSIS, the World Summit on the Information Society was first proposed, actually, in 1998 during the ITU plenipotentiary and resulted in a UN General Assembly resolution and two summits, in 2003 in Geneva and then in 2005 in Tunisia, which resulted in what we know as the WSIS Tunis agenda. And it outlines the responsibilities and roles of all the stakeholders in the development of the internet. And it also resulted in the creation of the IGF.

And so with the adoption of the Tunis agenda, member states committed to the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance,

which was subsequently reaffirmed and updated during the WSIS 10-year review in 2005 and also included a renewal of the IGF mandate for 10 years until 2025. And we are now approximately 18 months out from the next 20-year review of the WSIS, which will take place in New York at the UN in the last few months of 2025. The WSIS process holds significant importance for the development of the internet and its governance. And as we know, it's not isolated from other processes that are going to continue to take place through 2024 and up until the review and also that have been taking place in previous years.

So noting the significance of the WSIS+20 review, I can start by stating the obvious, that there is a lot of interest from the ICANN community towards this process. We've heard it extensively this week in the meetings with the board and with the different SOACs here in Puerto Rico. And of course, it is a priority for ICANN. The WSIS+20 is a CEO goal for FY24 and will likely be for FY25. And it's incorporated into our strategic operating initiative with key milestones and deliverables over the next two years.

So the mission from the CEO goal was to develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy designed to address the WSIS+20 review process with the purpose of preserving the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance and extending the IGF mandate.

In a sense, ICANN has two roles within this project. One that seeks to achieve objectives aligned with its mission of maintaining the security, stability, and resiliency of the internet. And the second is to take on a

facilitator role as a member of the outreach network, which Veni will discuss next.

So we are focusing on three key primary work streams. The first I just mentioned, the coordination of the outreach network, coordinating the efforts of like-minded community members who are keen to support this endeavor. Our communication work stream to develop specific communication plans that emphasize the positive impact of the multi-stakeholder model of internet governance. This will include messaging, an outreach plan that is targeted to specific stakeholders, a web page with resources, which will launch soon after ICANN 79, including a toolkit with documents, videos, and more. And our engagement work stream, which we're customizing strategic engagement plans for key stakeholders as well as key events, including national, regional, and international events. We've assembled a highly dedicated and skilled project team from across the organization that's poised to achieve our objectives.

Of note, ICANN will be and has been participating in key events leading up to the WSIS+20 review. We do encourage you all to reach out to your national governments to invite them to attend the high-level government meeting in Kigali this June. Please contact your GAC rep for more information. We'll also make sure events such as these with dates will be in the network mailing list and updated on our future web page, which, again, we're going to launch shortly after ICANN 79. We do very much count on the SOACs to engage and help with information sharing, to cover events and follow what's happening, since we can't be everywhere all at once. So we do count on your support to keep us

informed as well. And speaking of working together, I will now pass it to Veni for a comprehensive overview of the outreach network.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thanks, Becky. You kind of covered this slide in explaining what the WSIS+20 goal is. So the idea here is that we needed some tools, some vehicle that would help us to how to provide the rationale for the UN member states for why the WSIS+20 review process should result, among many other outcomes, obviously, which are related to different aspects of the process, in preserving the current multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance and extending the IGF mandate. So I would rather move to the next slide, if possible.

Yeah, so some of you have heard, because we've been talking since the beginning of the meeting, or actually even before when we were meeting with some of the SOACs, about the establishment of the WSIS+20 outreach network. So that's a network for exchange of information related to the WSIS+20 review process.

Key questions, which you see on the slide, membership is open to the broader ICANN community and other interested parties with shared goals. We do have, obviously, I mean, we are at an ICANN meeting, interest in having as many of the AC/SOs' members join the mailing list. We will see the way to join it in a bit. We count especially on the ccTLDs. We have, if I'm not mistaken, 172 of them are members of the ccNSO, and as many of them that can reach to their national governments and engage in a conversation with them would be great. Because the purpose of this network is actually to work together to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining this multi-stakeholder model of

internet governance that we've been talking for the last couple of decades. And making sure that, you know, the role of the technical communities continues to be singled out as a separate stakeholder in this internet governance. And obviously, continuing the IGF as the only platform under the UN umbrella which provides opportunity for every stakeholder to participate on equal footing.

The engagement will be done through coordination calls, webinars, event participation. We'll be sharing outreach materials and we'll be asking the SO/ACs to complement the work and, of course, more. And I think this is something I want to make clear because I've been talking to a number of people here at the ICANN meeting and before that. The best and proper way to engage with ICANN on this topic, WSIS+20, is to contact me or my colleagues from GE, but better me. Because then I know where to direct internally your questions. And in the unlikely event that we may not know the answer.

Reaching out to us is also going to get you the answers faster than if you try other avenues. We have been involved with internet governance and we've been following the intergovernmental organizations for quite a while. This is a function within ICANN which is now 10 years old. So we have a lot of expertise and a lot of knowledge what to do and how. And even, you know, how to paraphrase some of the questions that you might have if they are to be asked to governments at the IGO space so that we can get the answer that we are all looking for.

So a lot is happening, as you know, around ICANN outside of the WSIS+20. I would say much more is happening. And so when you, if you reach out to somebody else not from GE, you may, you risk that your

question may get delayed because, you know, people have other things to do. So I kindly and gently ask you that reach out directly to government engagement. We don't need go-betweens between us and the community. We can talk directly and we've been talking directly. This geopolitical session is actually one example.

So the members of the network role, obviously, is to help disseminate information, suggest suitable relevant events that we can be part of or we should be part of, join outreach events. I'll talk a little bit about one of those events in a bit.

And one thing which we put at the last but it's not least is what this WSIS+20 outreach network is not. So it's not a new structure within ICANN. It is not a working group. It's not going to produce common statements or positions. We're just facilitating. We're providing a communication platform, something we hope will be very useful for all of the ICANN community.

This outreach network and the mailing list we hope is going to be a place for serious conversations on topics touching on ICANN's mission and more globally on the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance. We are in a working mode. We are covering events and reporting back to our community. And we are asking you to also contribute in this conversation.

I'm personally taking the obligation publicly that I'll be happy to provide, well, I should take happy away, but I'll provide information to each of the SO and ACs if we are invited to, to the board, to the staff, to everyone basically in the ICANN community. Be that during the ICANN

meetings or between them. Just ask, invite us, and we'll be happy to join a Zoom call or see you face-to-face if there is such an opportunity.

And so just to reiterate what I said just a little while ago, we are looking forward to partner with members of the SO and ACs because you are crucial in reaching out to the national governments and you are also subject matter experts. If somebody is asking me how a ccTLD is being run, I'm not going to start answering, regardless of which government it is. I will point to their national ccTLD administrators and will engage them in the conversation.

So you can sign up for the GE webpage. As we publish there all the latest information. And the same will be on the webpage, which is part of ours, which will cover WSIS+20 developments. And if we can move to the next slide, there is a QR code and a web address, which I think is actually pretty easy, [go.icann.org slash WSIS](https://go.icann.org/WSIS), small letters, WSIS 20. Or just scan the QR code and sign up for the mailing list. It's a traditional ICANN mailing list. There are some requirements, you know, to GDPR, etc.

And so I mentioned earlier about events that we want to talk. There is one event which was mentioned in the public session. And I don't know if Renata is here from CGI Brazil, but it's done. Yes, you're here. It's the NetMundial+10. Also Jordan Carter mentioned it. This meeting will be in Sao Paulo on April 29th, 30th. And it's going to address the global challenges for the governance of the digital world, which is a topic very high on the agenda of the Global Digital Compact. And probably will be on the agenda of the IGF. And so members of the mailing list who are from CGI Brazil, please share information on the mailing list with, you know, what's the latest. I mean, you spoke already, Renata, in the public

forum, but please share it on the mailing list. I would suggest maybe later tonight or tomorrow when people have signed up.

And this is one of the examples where you can see exactly, you know, what this mailing list will be about. And I think once we start working and once we start exchanging information, it will be much easier to understand what this network will look like. It's one of those things where it's easier to understand it when it starts working than to explain it in theoretical form before it starts. With that, I think we can open for. Is there one last slide? Questions or not? Yeah. So I think there are questions online and there is a microphone here. So we can start with whatever question is first. I don't see anyone at the microphone. Although I see somebody standing up. Yeah. Let's take Wolfgang's question.

WOLFGANG KLEINWAECHTER: Thank you very much. I think it's very encouraging that ICANN is engaged in all this international and global digital diplomacy things. So if it comes to WSIS+20, I think it's also basically a good plan. But to be frank, to say, okay, our main stream is to engage via our national governments and to try to influence WSIS+20 is a very understandable but also a poor advice. It may work for the 70 governments which have signed the Declaration on the Future of Internet. But many other non-state actors, you know, will have probably a problem if they engage their governments.

What I would argue is we should be stronger in building our own independent initiatives. So I was a member in the WSIS in 2003, 2004 and 2005. And why we had a success in Tunis? Because the civil society,

business and technical community had their own organizations. So it was the civil society was coordinated by Congo. The business was coordinated by the International Chamber of Commerce. And we had then in this process the evolving ISTAR organizations. And if they come with an independent, clear voice, this is much stronger than if you have, let's say, 200 statements from civil society organizations individually. So I think it would be a great opportunity in particular for ICANN and the technical community to go back to what we had already ten years ago, with the Montevideo statement that the ISTAR organizations raised a united voice. So I think Tripti and Sally made it very clear in their blog as a reaction to the UN policy brief on the GDC number five, where technical community was ignored, that there is a united technical community. If you go unit by unit, ISOC, RIRs, ICANN, in a different way, then you are weak. If you are united, you are strong. And we should be prepared to have a united voice, both in the GDC process and in particular if it comes to WSIS+20. So it's not enough just to say we consult and we facilitate a discussion, no statements. Yes, we need united statements. And you should reconsider this mandate for the working group. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, Wolfgang. Can we rotate maybe questions on the microphone? Because I know people have asked questions in the Zoom call and they have asked them a long time ago. Thank you.

JAHNAVI MUKUL:

Okay. Hi. My name is Jahnavi. I'm a NextGen member.

VENI MARKOVSKI: I'm sorry. I think there was a question before you on the Zoom call. Sorry. I'm sorry.

ANDREA GLANDON: Okay. Chris Disspain. Elena just said that there is a lack of understanding of what a registrar does, etc. Do you agree that it is part of ICANN's responsibility to provide the necessary education? And if so, what is ICANN doing to specifically educate and inform legislators around the world?

ELENA PLEXIDA: Chris, thank you for the question. Yes, indeed. I said and I will repeat, I think we observe in our interactions with policymakers and beyond that there is lack of understanding about the technical realities of all the DNS operators, if you will. And to the question of whether we see it as a job to explain how things work, yes, definitely. Besides that's part of our charter for engagement, what we do, basically that's our bread and butter. So we explain how things work and we're also pointing to the community's work.

That said, we also think that that's a collective thing. It's on all of us to explain how things work. Yeah. That's why I said before it's an opportunity, something for the community to consider. Thank you so much.

VENI MARKOVSKI: Thank you, Elena.

JAHNAVI MUKUL:

Okay. Hi. My name is Jahnavi. I'm part of the NextGen program. My question is similar to the gentleman who made his previous remark, but one of the biggest successes of ICANN has been its multi-stakeholder model in the sense that it gives a voice to so many different parts of the Internet community. And in your deliberations with WSIS as well as the developments you see at the UN Digital Compact, do you think it's realistic to expect that at any point any of the intergovernmental organizations would truly adapt a multi-stakeholder model as ICANN does and elevate ICANN or other technical communities or other user communities to the same level as they do the governments? Because right now what it seems like it's a multilateral model, but they're giving you space as an observer, and that's all that they sort of want to do. And do you think ICANN would want to have a role or, you know, want to advocate for a bigger role for an actual applicable multi-stakeholder model? Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

That's a question that we can answer for the next, you know, couple of hours, but it's a very good question. Unfortunately, some of those processes are outside of ICANN, and we can't really tell them. I mean, they have rules of procedures which are set up many, many decades ago, and they're not going to change them for the sake of the Internet governance discussions or the WSIS discussions. But it is, as Wolfgang mentioned, within the WSIS there was some more participation by other stakeholders, but that wasn't the case during the WSIS+10 review, which is taking place at the UN, and it was in 2015. So it's very likely that

the same process will take place in 2025. However, I wanted to make sure we understand that this is going to happen in 2025, and the real discussions will not start until the last couple of months in 2025. So until then, we have a lot of events, a lot of meetings and discussions, which might have an impact on the WSIS, and we are following all those. And we have mentioned some of those in the slides and on the website, and we'll continue monitoring those, because in some ways the outcome of the WSIS+10 review, or WSIS+20 review, will depend on what happens this year and early next year. And we'll see whether and how we can provide some feedback to the governments. We do talk to them regularly. We provide briefings to the UN missions in New York and in Geneva. In this year alone, we had in January one such session, which reached out to more than 100 member states, including several permanent representatives. So we are hopeful this will continue. Do we have another question online?

ANDREA GLANDON:

Yes, we do. From Mark Datysgeld. The GDC has become difficult to track from the outside. Can ICANN provide ongoing updates as they can to the community between meetings, so that we may remain aware?

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Well, thank you for the question. It's difficult to track not only from the outside, but even from the inside, because, yes, ICANN has consolidated status with ECOSOC at the UN, but we are still, you know, the GDC, when they start negotiations, behind closed doors, they're only for member states, so we will try our best to provide information to the extent possible. And we hope that we'll be able to do that. If we are, we will be

publishing that information on the mailing list as much as we can get. And also we urge others, especially if there are people who join national delegations and participate, that do the same, you know, share information on the mailing list. Thank you.

PHILIPPE FOUQUART:

Thank you. Philippe Fouquart. I'm the chair of the ISPCP. I just want to thank you on behalf of the constituency for putting this together. The ISPCP has developed a response to the WSIS+20 questionnaire from the UN Commission on Science and Technology. And a number of our members are looking towards, first, be supported in their involvement, engagement with the national delegations, as you put it, to support the multi-stakeholder model. But also looking inward, we call that a risk analysis during our discussions within the CSG, which, for lack of a better word, intends to, beyond combating the grand plan of the takeover, as it were, looking into the detail of what's at stake among the various dimensions of ICANN's missions, which I think would be just equally effective in combating that initiative. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you. I don't know that there is any grand plan, just to clarify, but actually it's one of the most important parts, is if we do, if ICANN does its mission, if we do our job, that is the best argument that we can provide, you know, and governments can point out. And let's not forget there are 182 members of the GAC, of the Governmental Advisory Committee. These are our natural allies. They know what ICANN does. They know how ICANN does it, why. They know the processes. We hope they will be talking to their foreign ministries and foreign office

ministries or whatever they are, so that they can then send clear instructions to the United Nations on this particular issue. And let's not forget also that Internet governance is a very small part of the WSIS and the WSIS Outcome Review, I mean the WSIS+20 Review. So the WSIS has moved beyond the point where in 2003 and 2005 it was talking primarily about ICANN. This conversation has moved especially after the IANA transition. Thanks.

ANDREA GLANDON:

We have another question from Alejandro Pisanty. Following up on Wolfgang Kleinwaechter's, what can we do in a coordinated way between ICANN Org and member participants? Let's see if the new list announced by Veni gives rise to a more coherent effort. Ready to serve here.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

I mean, thanks. It's more of a statement, but Alejandro, thank you for watching. You are one of the old school ICANN people who have served on the board, and you do know the issues around WSIS and Internet governance, so please join the mailing list and provide as much information and participate. We always are happy to gain some of the experience of the Internet pioneers and the people who have been around the WSIS since the beginning.

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

Thanks, Veni. Hi, this is Chris Disspain. I'm going to cover several points because I hope this is a dialogue rather than just a series of statements. So first of all, I just want to respond to Elena's response to my question.

So I thank you and I agree, but I learned a long time ago that communication is the response you get, and that means it is the responsibility of the communicator to deliver the message. And if the message isn't actually being understood, then it's not the person who's receiving the message's job to try and understand it, it's the job of the communicator to deliver it again. And whilst I accept that we're all responsible for it, the fact that we're standing here listening to you and you're saying it is clear that there is a lack of understanding about what a registrar and a registry does means that even though we may be trying to do it, to deliver the message, we are failing and it is our responsibility, yours and ours, to continue to improve our communications and to do more work to ensure that the message is understood.

The second thing I wanted to ask was, or say rather, is it possible to get the slide back up that had the three boxes on the bottom, one of which was the network initiative? That's the one. So I appreciate the outreach network. I think that's absolutely fantastic. But what I'm not hearing is what else. I know there are two other boxes. There's communication, messaging, media outreach, social media, etc., and engagement, identify key government stakeholders, etc. I'm not clear whether those are things that ICANN will do or whether they are things that you're assuming will flow from the outreach network because I'm concerned, and I did actually have another question in the chat, in the Q&A, but I'll use that now. I'm concerned, for example, that ICANN chose to make no statement to the GDC, which I think is an odd thing not to have done. And my final point would be, Ben, you just made the point about there are 187, however many it is, government members of the GAC and they're very important and they are our allies. Well, some of them are.

A lot of them may well be. And they know how to talk to their own governments. I agree with that. And you said, and we hope they will, and I agree with that too. But hope is not going to solve this problem. ICANN needs to be a lot more proactive in dealing with this and getting on the front foot. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thanks, Chris. Your question actually was answered, I understand, in the Zoom call. You were standing here, so I understand you didn't see the answer. But, yes, this is actually showing what ICANN is doing, what you see on the screen now, the communication, the engagement. We have actually started already. I mean, we are not waiting to announce now, today, what we are starting. We have engaged in bilateral relations with countries, which I can tell you that we have had bilateral meetings with India and China in the last couple of months. And we are continuing with other countries, and we have engaged with other countries last year. This is not something that we advertise necessarily, you know, because some of these conversations are taking place, like, at the capitals or at some other places. But we do keep the community informed. We have the GAC, we provide the GAC with report, which has all the meetings that we are having, like bilateral and others, when we engage with governments, and it's on the GAC webpage. It's published every two months, and it has the previous two months plus the month ahead as to what we are expecting to engage with. Do you want me to answer your other question, which was asked?

CHRIS DISSPAIN: If it's in the box, don't waste anyone's time. Thank you. I did ask if I could say one more thing.

VENI MARKOVSKI: Oh, the educational—

CHRIS DISSPAIN: That's fine. No, no, Elena can respond to that later. I just wanted to make one more point, and I apologize for hogging the microphone. One more point, which is I want to make this really important point. We refer to Internet governance, and you said, Internet governance is only a small part of WSIS. That is absolutely true. But what ICANN does is only a small part of Internet governance, and it's really important we do not own that phrase, Internet governance, because that implies we are responsible for it, and we are not. We are only responsible for one very specific aspect.

VENI MARKOVSKI: You are absolutely right, and our engagement is always within the ICANN mission. We are specifically not talking about anything which is beyond our mission, and the governments actually do understand that, and I'm very happy to say, and you will see it in the answer, but just to share it, when we briefed the governments, when we briefed them in January, they used many of the stuff that we have told them, and it was actually Paul Wilson and Sarmad, our head of internationalized domain name program, speaking to the governments and Alain Durand from OCTO, and we provided them with a lot of information about how the Internet functions, what ICANN does, how we are working on the

multilingualism in the Internet. These are all topics which the governments are very interested in, and they show that the Internet and the model of Internet governance has helped to provide the people on the planet with these opportunities, like IDNs and UAs, etc. Thank you. Do we have another question online?

ANDREA GLANDON: Yes, we do. Could ICANN host periodic retreats with legislators/policymakers offering an interactive, informal environment with the DNS/Internet community to share expert understanding of the Internet policy to improve understanding and eventually to be of help in tackling policy challenges in technology matters?

VENI MARKOVSKI: Thanks. We actually do have workshops and capacity building workshops for GAC members, which would be probably the best place for government officials to participate. So, thanks.

JORGE CANCIO: Thank you, Veni. Thank you for organizing this. Jorge Cancio, Swiss government, for the record. I think, and this is a comment to the digital governance issues going on, and maybe we should start by considering that this is not something for staff or for Org. This is really for the community to wake up and to engage. And maybe Org can facilitate, can help, but it's really the community who can make a difference.

The GDC, the WSIS+20, might look like technical processes going on in the UN that don't affect us, but they do. Perhaps not tomorrow, perhaps

not two months after the resolutions of the UNGA, of the United Nations, but it will change the reality. The reality out there of digital governance is already changing. That's why we have these processes.

And that's why I also have a slight but important difference to what you were mentioning. It's not enough to preserve. It's not enough to extend. We have to have a proactive, positive narrative on how to evolve the multistakeholder model in order to be really fit for purpose to address the challenges of the digital world. And, of course, ICANN is just a very tiny slice, a very critical slice of that multistakeholder model. But the people sitting here are part of the wider multistakeholder community that has to rise, that has to wake up and engage into this process and not wait for governments to decide behind closed doors, but to open those doors or to knock on those doors and get engaged. So, people, that's my call for you, coming from a government, to engage, to really get into the process. There are many good opportunities, some more open, some more closed. One that is really quite open and very multistakeholder is NetMundial+10. That's why we are engaging in that. I know it's a bit improvised, it's a bit rushed, but it's with the best spirits and it's at the most timely occasion because it gives us the opportunity to really make a difference, make a positive contribution to the development of the multistakeholder model that has to be heard in New York and in Geneva and all those fora. So, thanks for giving me this opportunity. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, Jorge, and you're knocking on an open door, as we say in Bulgaria. The English expression is preaching to the choir, but I'm not

quite familiar with that. I actually agree with you completely. I just want to make sure that people understand, when we talk about the IGF and the changes, the involvement, etc., ICANN is not the place to talk about this. There are the IGF Leadership Panel, which came with a very strong letter to the Secretary General and the co-facilitators of the GDC, signed by Vint Cerf and the current and the last chair of the Multistakeholder Advisory Group. There is the IGF itself. There is the IGF Multistakeholder Advisory Group, and people who want the IGF to evolve, to be better, to update, whatever, upgrade, should actually propose maybe sessions for the IGF. There are still two IGFs left before the WSIS+20 review, and so that's the place where we hope that everybody will participate and will provide their input there, because if we start talking here about these processes, it's not the right place and we'll be. I mean, we don't necessarily. We may have some ideas, but we will also go and share them there. Thank you. Do we have another?

ANDREA GLANDON: Yes, thank you. From Anne Aikman-Scalese, apparently there is a March 8 deadline to submit comments regarding the structural components of the Global Digital Compact. Should we be providing input here?

VENI MARKOVSKI: Yes, the deadline was mentioned by Elizabeth in her presentation, so everybody can provide input, I believe. Yes, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH OULOGH: The consultation is open to anyone to make a submission. On the ICANN website, we do have a page on open consultations where some of them

which ICANN is participating, for example, the CSDD questionnaire that was mentioned earlier. So yes, please take the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire. ICANN did make a submission last year to the written consultations just for inputs to the GDC where we did outline some potential principles and we responded to some focus areas from ICANN's lens. So in short, please take the opportunity to do so as well.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, Elizabeth.

JORDAN CARTER:

Thanks. It's Jordan Carter from .au here. Look, Veni and team, I appreciate the things that have been outlined as ICANN's plans to act because they are, I think, going to be useful components of what needs to be done. But I think I want to endorse Jorge's point about all of us in the community needing to be acting on this. I think overall, if I had to sum it up, I'd say we need to do more faster together, because the GDC is going to set the pathway in place for the WSIS review. And those negotiations don't start in the last two months of next year. They start next month. So there's a kind of urgency to this.

And one of the key things I think we need, in the absence of ISOC playing a former coordinating role in some of this, we actually do need to go beyond coordination of info-sharing to perhaps having common positions and being able to advocate for them together. And it doesn't seem to be too odd for ICANN to take the two goals that you put up in that slide and to advocate for them wholeheartedly. So I guess my challenge would be we need to go further and faster. And if you're

looking for a community vibe on whether that's a good idea or whether you're already pushing the boat out and going too far, I would say the vast majority of the conversations I've had indicate an appetite for more to be done. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI: Thanks, Jordan.

ANDREA GLANDON: We have a comment from Kavouss Arasteh. Internet governance was initiated by Europeans in 2005 to resolve the big gap between the multi-stakeholder proponent and the multilateral supporter.

VENI MARKOVSKI: Thank you, Kavouss. Good to see that you're online and watching us remotely. Hopefully we'll see you soon.

JIM PRENDERGAST: Thanks. Jim Prendergast with the Galway Strategy Group. It was not coordinated, but Jordan really just took exactly what I wanted to say, so I want to give him a big 1,000. We've got to be a lot more bolder than what I've seen on the screen so far. Maybe the coordination will play a role, but nobody can defend ICANN better than ICANN itself. And I, amongst with many others in this room, did contribute to the GDC. Elizabeth, I was surprised to hear that there was an ICANN contribution. I couldn't find it on the website, so if there's a link to it, that would be great. I know Edmon Chung, I don't want to call him out by name, but I just did, did contribute last year, but he did it in a personal capacity. He

didn't do it as a member of the ICANN board. So we can tell your story, but nobody tells your story as good as you do. Thanks.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thanks. Just for the record, to make sure that we're on the same page, I don't think we need defense of ICANN. Nobody's attacking ICANN, actually, except one member state. So we are at a very different point this year than we were in 2015, when the WSIS+10 was taking place. But I do get your point about this. And as for the GDC, we, and again, I'm sorry, because the conversation went in two different parts. There is online question, and I didn't repeat it for the sake of saving time, but I will repeat it now, to a similar question asked by Chris Disspain.

So the answer that was given in the Zoom call is that we've briefed the governments in New York and in Geneva in January. We did it together with the ITU. It was a session co-hosted by Bulgaria and Guatemala in New York and by the ITU and ICANN in Geneva. And we saw a number of countries using the information that we have provided. And as it is an intergovernmental process, we are talking about the GDC here, where the technical communities was explicitly excluded by the tech envoy and the secretary general. They claim that there are only three parties in this process, which is civil society, businesses, and governments. We elected not to send a formal submission, but we did talk to a number of governments. The statement that Elizabeth was talking about was done during the GDC deep dive on Internet governance, which was last year. And I understand these are different questions that they're asking this year and last year. But we did send a written contribution, which is online, last year. So it reflects our views on potential principles for the

GDC and ICANN's effort on digital inclusion in the light of the GDC focus area on connecting the unconnected. And we did, I believe, publish two blogs on the GDC, one which provided an analysis on the secretary general's policy brief, number five, which was about the GDC. And the other one was mentioned already. It's a joint statement by APNIC, ARIN, and ICANN last year around August, which are all on the ICANN website.

JIM PRENDERGAST:

So you raised what I think was a very deliberate effort to try and sideline the technical community, this tripartite. Whether it's defending ICANN or advocating for ICANN, you've got to speak louder. You've got to speak at every opportunity. We're doing that. We need you to do that with us. Thanks.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you for doing that. Do we have something online?

ANDREA GLANDON:

Yeah. I want to read the entire statement that Kavouss sent. He sent it in two messages. So it's, Internet governance was initiated by Europeans in 2005 to resolve the big gap between the multi-stakeholder proponent and the multilateral supporter. After about 19, 20 years, did IGF made a progress in this regard?

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Well, that's a question I will save for the IGF to respond because that's where this conversation is taking place. So thank you.

PAUL WILSON:

Hi, everyone. Thank you, Veni. Paul Wilson from APNIC, but speaking in personal capacity here. As you said, Veni, in the lead-up to GDC, we're hearing about this tripartite model, which is business governance, governments and civil society. And it differs from the IGF model of four stakeholder groups, those three plus technical community, all participating in theory on an equal footing, as they say. And what is proposed within the tripartite model is that the technical community is absorbed within civil society. And some of us have objected to that for a few very good reasons.

For one, the Internet that we are concerned with is very different, frankly, from the one that civil society is concerned with. We're quite specific and quite exclusive, actually, of many issues quite deliberately, many issues that others are and should be concerned with, you know, content and conduct and so on. So we have a very good case, I think, but I just wonder if we respond to that not by just doggedly insisting on the IGF model, but look at evolution and try to distinguish ourselves in terms of the target of our work and the interests of our work, which is really fundamentally different. We are fundamentally different. What we represent is a set of specific activities and expertise that's critical not to our interests, but to the entire Internet, to the interests of everyone. We represent expertise and not our own interests. And we have a neutrality that's in the interests of everyone, in the interests of all stakeholders and not our own. And in that sense, I think, maybe we don't and shouldn't claim to be operating on an equal footing. We're operating, in many senses, on a different footing, and maybe it's time to recognize that. Our footing is not superior or inferior to the others,

but it's fundamentally different. And if we can articulate that, articulate what the technical community actually is, then I think, actually, we could find ourselves in a better position to be part of or be a participant in what can be a tripartite model of those three stakeholder groups. And, in fact, knowing the technical community, as I do, if we do it right, it could actually help us to achieve much more unity within the ISTARs and the other organizations that could really help with our success in this whole process. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you. I'll use the opportunity. We are coming to the end of the conversation. We are two minutes out, but there are three people at the microphone, so, Chris, you're going to be last. And we won't have time to take other questions online, unfortunately, because that means then the people who are standing here will be standing beyond the time that we have. Nigel, do you want to speak?

NIGEL HICKSON:

Nigel Hickson, UK government. I'll be very quick indeed. Completely agree with what a lot of people have said. I think the words have to be engage, engage, engage. I mean, I think, you know, the time for information sharing, I'm afraid, is over. The time for education, to an extent. Education, information sharing, yes, is good, but in a situation where you've got negotiations going on at the UN, it's engagement that really counts. And therefore it's engagement in terms of writing that letter before midnight tonight on the UNGDC, because that makes a difference. Governments are preparing their letters. ICANN should be having a letter in there. The technical community must come together,

as Wolfgang has said, and engage. Engage at NetMundial. Come along to NetMundial. The technical community should have a real voice at NetMundial. Come to the UN CSDD discussions in April. ICANN and ISOC should be at those discussions. They should be at the discussions at the WSIS high-level forum in May. It's by engaging in these processes and showing what the technical community is about and why engagement is so important. Not about internet governance, not about the governance of the internet, but also the governance on the internet. The examples that we can give of international domain names, universal acceptance, widening the ability of people to connect. We have to engage at those levels.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, Nigel. I was going to say, for the record, there was applause, but it's already in the record. Actually, nothing of what you said is against what we've been talking. The forum, the CSDD, the WSIS high-level forum in May, we're in one of the slides that we showed, and we are planning on participating. We are participating anywhere where ICANN can participate and can contribute to the conversation. I do have to say, though, Nigel, that I don't think that engagement and exchange of information necessarily don't go along with each other. Actually, I think they are with each other. And I want to make sure that we are definitely not using the word education when we are talking to the governments. We don't think the governments need to be educated because they have pretty good experts on the governmental delegations. But we do think that the information that we provide is neutral, factual, and it's important for the governments to understand what actually ICANN does, what the other internet organizations do, so

that when they discuss behind closed doors issues that may touch on ICANN's mission, they don't lead to unintended consequences. Thank you.

MICHAELA NAKAYAMA SHAPIRO:

Thank

you. Nice to meet you. I'm Michaela. We are a new NCSG member. Really great to see you all, and thank you all for the presentation today. I will start with a practical question. I'm curious about the activities that you outlined in terms of the resources, the webinars, etc., whether that's material that's already been created by the ICANN team and is to be disseminated and shared among the community, or if this will be an opportunity for community members to come in and provide input. I know personally my organization would be keen to input and would be happy to provide a perspective if that's something the team is open to. And on that plane, I would be keen as well to see as the development of these resources and ICANN's positioning and engagement in this space, I would be keen to see beyond the messaging of just a recommitment to the multi-stakeholder model, kind of an elaboration on why that's significant and why governments and others in the technical community should care rather than just a reiteration of that. I think it could be an opportunity to go back in some ways to the basics of why the Internet that we value is so significant and why that's important. There's a lot of organizations that do great work on this, including, I would toot my own horn, our organization does some work on this, we're happy to input, but I would also point to a really fantastic presentation that Demi did actually yesterday at the ccNSO on Internet

fragmentation, on the kind of core values of the Internet. So that's all I had to say. Thank you.

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you. We consider the mailing list the place to share information, so we do produce documents. I mean, there is actually a WSIS+20 information paper published, I think, somewhere about a year ago on the GE webpage, on the ICANN website. I urge everybody to read it, not just because I wrote it, but because it's actually explaining why. It's answering some of the questions that you just asked. And I'm more than happy to, you know, see others who will join the mailing list or who have already joined the mailing list to share what they consider important and what they want to share with us. Because if we all share information, then we all become richer. We all have more information. We don't intend this to be like a one-way communication where ICANN produces something, sends it, and we expect everybody to take it. No. We believe that it's better to have, like, a thousand different voices, even if we talk on the same topic. Each of us comes from a different perspective. Then, again, ICANN has a very narrow mission. We're not going to discuss content or anything like that, you know. So I think the community is pretty much aware of what we do, and they don't expect us to do more than what we are allowed to do.

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

Thanks, Veni. It's Chris again. I had two points. I've just got three now, but I'll be quick. First one, you just said we're not going to discuss content. No, we're not going to discuss content, but we should be discussing not discussing content. In other words, we should be making

it very clear that content is not what we do, because some people think it is. I want to talk about two things that you said. You said this is not the place to discuss the IGF. Well, when the IGF started, ICANN was immensely involved in every step of the IGF process because it was a place we could go where we could make sure people understood what it was that we did, and ICANN was on the agenda of the IGF for many years as a subject of discussion. And we funded the IGF and we did a whole heap of things. So actually, it is incumbent upon us to have a discussion about what we think about the IGF. And picking up on what Paul said, we should be coming up with our suggestions about how the IGF could be improved. This is a place to discuss the IGF. It's a place to discuss our positioning in respect to the IGF.

And the second thing I wanted to pick up on, and I may be paraphrasing you slightly, but what I think you said was no-one is threatening ICANN with the exception possibly of one state actor or something like that. But you certainly said no-one is threatening ICANN. If that's ICANN's position and if you believe that to be the case, then why are we bothering with all of this, apart from being a good citizen and getting out there? Why are we bothering? We don't think ICANN is not under threat. We think the positioning of the GDC, excluding the technical community, is a threat to ICANN. And ICANN is under threat from all sorts of ways. It's under threat from the European Union's legislation on wine and cheese and ham, which is just, you know, I'm not going to go there. But seriously, if we genuinely believe that ICANN is not under threat, then we might as well all concentrate on doing a whole heap of other things. Thank you

VENI MARKOVSKI:

Thank you, Chris. And actually, that's an important point. I'm sorry if I have left you with the impression that we—What I was talking was within the context of the discussions that we have seen so far at the open-ended working group on cybersecurity. That was my particular—I should have been more precise in what I say, and my wife keeps on reminding me that English is not my native language, but it's also not my second language or my third, but my fourth language, so I have to be extra careful what words I use. And, by the way, if anybody here has seen things that I have said, something which doesn't sound right, just correct me, because it may not be right.

I do think that what you are saying about, you know, what we think about the IGF, of course, everybody here, especially the people who have been engaged with the IGF and the WSIS since the beginning, like Wolfgang, myself, others, Theresa Swinehart has been around as well, we may think different things about the IGF, but unless there is a session which is dedicated to that topic, which, you know, the community has to decide, for us, you know, as an organization, when we participate there, we are very careful, you know, to talk about ICANN's mission, like our workshops at the IGF, you have noticed, are related to, you know, international domain name or new gTLDs, whatever, which is related to ICANN.

But, having said that, we are open to any suggestions that you guys may have, and one of the ideas behind the outreach network is exactly that. We could hear ideas which we haven't thought about. I don't think that we in GE believe we are the best and only resource of ideas and information about the WSIS processes. The fact is we are following them, we have the resources to make sure we keep you, the community,

informed, but we cannot really do anything without the community helping us to understand better the processes, and without the CCs and the GNSO members and companies around the world which have vested interest in the ICANN's mission to tell us what they think is important and to tell us we may miss something. We may miss many things that are happening in the national IGFs, in the regional IGFs, which could have an impact.

As for the GDC, you are right, it's not only, by the way, what you mentioned. One of the things that are of serious concern to us is the proposal to create a multilateral digital cooperation forum. For those of you who are not familiar with that, it could replace the IGF, effectively, because if the UN General Assembly creates a new body under the UN this year, next year when the WSIS+20 negotiations take place, member states would have the right to say, look, we already have one body created, we don't need the IGF because we have something where every member state would participate under the UN General Assembly Rules of Procedure. Now that, of course, means nobody else will be allowed because the Rules of Procedure do not allow other stakeholders, be that like ICANN with consultative status to ECOSOC or just other non-profit or businesses.

So it's a very delicate balance that we have to navigate and we are trying to do it with the maximum efforts that we can, but also being aware that this is a process which we have limited ways of participating.

So thanks a lot for staying an extra nine minutes. I really appreciate that. And we are at your disposal at the end of this session and throughout the ICANN meeting and beyond. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]