
ICANN79 | CF – Get to Know the ICANN Community: UASG, BC, and GAC Members Networking Event
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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Hello. My name is Siranush Vardanyan. I am a participation manager for this session. Welcome to the series of sessions, Get to Know ICANN Community. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions and comments submitted in the chat will be read aloud if they are put in a proper form. Please remember to state your name and language you will speak in case you will be speaking a language other than English. Speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. And please make sure to mute all other devices when you are speaking. You may have access to all available features for this session in the Zoom toolbar.

With that, I would like to introduce our first community who came today to talk to you. It's Business Constituency. It's BC. Today we are starting to learn abbreviations of the community of the entire ICANN multi-stakeholder model. So, Business Constituency is under GNSO, and I would like to introduce the presenters for this session. It's my great honor to introduce two fellow alumni. Lawrence Olawale-Roberts, who is currently holding Business Constituency Vice Chair position. Outgoing. Okay, he went to Council now. So, you see we are moving fast. And ICANN Fellowship Mentor for this round, Arinola, I hope many of you already know. So, without further ado, Robert, the floor is yours.

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LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Thank you. Good day, everyone. My name is again Lawrence Olawale-Roberts, and I am a Nigerian, and a member, an active member of the Business Constituency. BC is short for Commercial User, Commercial Users within the constituency of ICANN, and we are rightly placed within the CSG. Before taking off and allowing Arinola to present a set of slides to you, I just want to talk about, start off, with my experience as a Fellow, because I see that we have quite a number of us here in that particular state. It was just a few years ago that I first sat on this side of the divide, like you, in my first ICANN meeting, and it was quite a lot of information overload.

But one thing that I ensured that I did before leaving was identifying with a part of the community where I could continue to grow. And I didn't start with Business Constituency, I started with At Large, because I could see my roots, I know the African roots there, but I eventually moved on to the BC. The BC is a very active part of this community. There is virtually no policy that passes through that we don't comment about, because entities, commercial entities, see the Internet as a very important tool for business and for commerce. Arinola will continue at this particular point, and we'll take some questions thereafter. Thank you.

ARINOLA AKINYEMI: Thank you, Lawrence. My name is Arinola Akinyemi, a member of the Business Constituency, and the CEO for DigiSphere Ltd in Nigeria. Fortunately, a mentor for the fellowship at this round. So I say good morning to everybody, and I welcome you all to this interesting session about the BC.

I'm going to be starting with an overview of the ICANN mission itself. The mission of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, as we have heard since yesterday that we started, and then for maybe during our mentoring process, we have also heard about the mission of the ICANN, which is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifiers by coordinating allocation and assignment of names in the root zone, that's a bit technical, so I would skip a lot of technical details, but to tell you more about the BC.

We have in the ICANN ecosystem, you have the ICANN community. The ICANN community is a volunteer-based community. We all work together to ensure that the policy decision-making process becomes fruitful. In the community, for the ICANN ecosystem, you have the community, you have the board, and then you have the organization working together. The BC belongs to the community part of this chart, as you can see on the slides. The board also are members of different communities that will come together to make decisions. And then you have the Org, the staff. They support us incredibly well in all constituencies. That's the SOs and the ACs.

The Business Constituency, which I'm about to tell you much about, is part of what we'll call the Generic Name Supporting Organization. That's the GNSO. You can see on the chart the GNSO comes down into the Commercial Stakeholder Group, the Registry Stakeholder Group, the Registrar Stakeholder Group, and then the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group. On the GNSO, the BC belongs to the Commercial Stakeholder Group. You have the BC alongside the IPC, which is the Intellectual Property Constituency, and then you have the Internet

Service Providers Constituency. That is where we are. We are the commercial people. We are the money people, so to say.

Moving forward, I will now go properly into the BC. The Commercial and Business Users Constituency is actually the name, but it is short form, the Business Constituency, which is the BC. Our structure in the ICANN, the Business Constituency is one of the three constituencies in the Commercial Stakeholder Group in the Non-Contracted Parties House of the generic name supporting organization. When we say Non-Contracted Parties House, it means we do not have any official contract with ICANN, so we're practically volunteers in the ICANN ecosystem. The mission of the BC is to ensure that ICANN is accountable and transparent in the performance of its functions and that its policy positions are consistent with the development of the Internet, which is committed to a multi-stakeholder, bottom-up, consensus-driven model of engagement. I'm sure we've heard about the multi-stakeholder, bottom-up. So it comes from the bottom and it goes up. So the community, through its policy decision-making process, through comments, get involved in the policy process, and then it goes up and up and up until it gets to the board. Ideally, in the normal business model, you have decisions coming from the top, and then the workers then execute. But in the ICANN ecosystem, it comes from the bottom and it goes up.

So we also promote end-user confidence because it is a safe place to conduct business. So that is to tell us that, for instance, to ensure that when you click on Amazon.com, you are getting Amazon.com. When you click on Google, whatever website you decide to click on, it will be safe and reliable. And then that it is competitive in the supply of registry

and related services to ensure that the registries and the registrars, which will now belong to the Contracted Parties House, will be doing things accordingly. You register a domain name, they will go by fair practice, it's competitive, the pricing, and the services being rendered are done within the standard rule of practice. And then to ensure that the Internet is technically stable, reliable, and secure.

Members of the BC use the Internet to conduct business related to electronic commerce in the broad sense. That is, we are businesses that use the Internet to drive our business. The BC is run, the offices of the BC is run by the executive committee, which is composed of the chair, that's Mason Cole, the vice chair for finance and operations, that's Tim Smith, the vice chair for policy coordination, that will be Steve Del Bianco, we have the commercial stakeholder representative, that is the CSG, and that is Marie Pattullo. We also have two councilors, one is sitting right with me here, and then we have Mark Datysgeld, who is also a fellow. We also have two seats on the NomCom, that's for the small and large business seats.

The general operations scope of the BC covers the policy development process, we engage in comments, our vice chair policy operations, would always lead us in our fortnight calls, we have our meetings every two weeks online, and he leads us to engage, he brings the trending comments, comments of interest to the Business Constituency, and we engage in participating in that comment process. We also ensure that we take the compliance issue of the ICANN contracted parties, and then the ICANN itself to ensure that compliance to standard practice is being adhered to.

The BC also does a lot of outreach to boost diversity, that is why we are there, we are Africans. In the BC you have a lot of diversity in terms of region, in terms of gender, and it also reflects in our leadership. We maintain a website and we publish a quarterly newsletter. Currently we have a version of our newsletter for the ICANN 79 on the website. Our website is www.icannbc.org. And then we work with the Commercial Stakeholder Group, that is all the members of the Commercial Stakeholder Group like I mentioned earlier, the intellectual property constituency, the internet service provider constituency.

The BC also works with a few committees, we have some standard committees, that's the credentials committee which will help you when you are applying for membership. We have the finance committee that works on our budgets and finances. And then we have other committees that engages in the outreach committee for outreaches at most times.

So I'll take you through how to become a BC member. If you'll be interested or your company that you work for will be interested in being part of the BECAUSE, you can visit the website, you complete the membership registration, you wait for about 7 to 14 days and then the secretariat will, the credentials committee will look through your application and once you qualify, and I think on the website there's also a checklist that will guide you to know if you could proceed with your application and/or to get you to prepare your application properly. But a major factor is that you should not have more than 35% of your income with registry to registrar activities. Once it is above 35% then you will have to go to either the registry or the registrar constituency. If you're eligible you get an invoice from the secretariat, you make

payment, and on the next call you will be introduced to the BC mailing list and the membership at large.

BC is business and we believe that as a businessperson, you make money, so we are conscious about that. And so we have membership fees on the Business Constituency. We have three categories of membership. We have the category one which is for multinationals with operations in more than one continent. We have category two, regional, for regional based associations and companies, and then the category three which is for small and medium enterprise. I belong to the category three anyway. However, there is good news for those of us coming from developing countries. We enjoy about 70% discount to be members of the BC, so think about it. It could actually work well for you.

In conclusion, the BC itself represents all types of multinationals, medium-sized companies, and small enterprises. It also includes regional associations that represent business users. So you're welcome to join the BC. Thank you for listening. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

Thank you. I just want to add that membership of the BC are corporates. You have to be a commercial entity, so individuals are not members but companies. So that's why you find the Microsoft, eBay and Co as membership. Looking into the crowd here, I see three of our esteemed members. Zak is here. Please, let's put our hands together for Zak, for David, and there is [Ron] there also. Thanks for providing the support. Yeah, and Imran. So please. Siranush, how do we coordinate the questions if there are any?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: So we plan in a way that each presentation will take 10, 15 minutes, and then we ask questions. If you have any questions to Business Community, then you use this opportunity to ask, and then we will move to the next presenters. We do have a microphone here, like a roving mic? Okay, yeah, we do have it here. We can take it. Abraham, if you want to ask a question, you are the first.

ABRAHAM SELBY: Thank you very much. [Speaking French]

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm also a business owner and I resell domain names, hosting, etc. Which means that I have to buy my products from registrars. So my question is, what type of strategy does the BECAUSE implement to control the pricing for registrars to ensure that it's fair and consistent across the board? That's for the registrars, and also for the resellers, to ensure that as resellers, all prices are also consistent. Thank you.

OLORUNDARE JHAMES KUNLE: Thank you very much. My name is Olorundare James Kunle, an ICANN 79 fellow. My question is this. First of all, let me appreciate Ms. Arinola. She is actually my mentor, by the way. Thank you very much for that wonderful presentation. Mr. Roberts, we appreciate your contribution, too. As a matter of fact, the question I want to ask came from the last comment Mr. Roberts made. That has to do with being a corporate organization. If you say a corporate organization, that means it is

registered, right? My question is, if I am a corporate organization that is not really business-oriented like that, can it be registered under your community? I am tempted to say, okay, a corporate organization that has 0% revenue or something like that, you know what I am talking about, in terms of profit margin. That is one.

On the other hand, it is a little bit similar to what Abraham asked. In my own case, it is more like, okay, fine, it is actually a commercial entity. It is doing business in this ecospace, but it has not gotten a break, the startups. No break. It is still on the south end. So no money for now, and you know, it is still trying to make ends meet. So how do we come in? Thank you.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS: Thank you for all those beautiful questions. I will start with the first one. I will make an attempt to answer and yield the floor to Arinola to add her insights also. So to the first question that has to do with the startups and if there are any incentives for membership here in the BC, you will have heard Arinola talk about a 70% discount to members who are joining the BC from the developing regions of the world. That is basically the global north. As long as startups these days really have millions of dollars, but we also understand that there are commercial business entities that are not so financially buoyant, and it is our belief that reducing the list tier from \$200 to \$65 will allow a lot of entry for such entities.

Delving into the last question from here, where your business is just newly registered and you don't have global operations with offices in different parts of the world doesn't stop you from being a member of

the Business Constituency. As long as you are a commercial entity and you have a presence on the Internet, which our credentials committee will review, where we have other clarifying questions, we will definitely report back. And once you are able to provide that information and it's established that the applying entity is commercial-based, we definitely won't see barriers to joining the Business Constituency. So we don't look at how much you are making globally or how much income or revenue you basically have to put you into any threshold. You let us know what tier you want to apply into, and the credentials committee will definitely take it up from there.

To the question from the lady with regards to pricing control and how we influence that, that's one of the reasons why commercial entities engage here in ICANN. But what we do is plug into the existing policy development system, and where there is an opportunity to look out for the interests of commercial entities, which is why we are in ICANN, that is what we do. Don't forget that we will also have to align with the desires and the expectations of our members who are commercial entities. And while as much as we understand that the contracted parties are also in-- I mean for them to provide a stable service, which the Internet has become, we will have to ensure that their commercial business models are not impacted to the extent possible as commercial entities, and which we all agree to, we influence policies here in ICANN. I don't know, Arinola, if you have anything else to add.

ARINOLA AKINYEMI:

Well, I think, fairly, Lawrence has tried to do that, but I could also add that naturally as business people, there's no business that is set up not

to make profit. So you have to invest to reap. So if the BC has graciously granted, especially those of us from the Global South, the 70% discount on membership, as a startup, I do not think a \$65 fee would be too much. You invest it, and I'm sure you would reap it in the long run.

For the policymaking process, like [inaudible] was trying to find out, an example would be currently there's--I think the sessions happened yesterday in the Transfer Policy Review Working Group, which I am fortunate to be an alternate member for the BC on it. These are areas where policy processes are being discussed. That is how the BC engages. My primary, Zak is here, both of us sit down to ensure that when these policies are being arrived at, the consideration is given to the Business Constituency members in such a way that it will be favorable to us. Naturally, every constituency will try to drive policies that will be favorable to their constituencies, and that is why your voices are needed, so that when you are adequately represented, you will be able to impact the eventual outcome of that policy process. I hope that helps.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Any other questions? Abraham, last chance. Very brief.

ABRAHAM SELBY: All right, thank you again. I'm asking this question on my own capacity as an ICANN 79 fellow. One question, quick one, is that which benefits do we get as BC members? If you are a Business Constituency member, what are some of the benefits that you will get? Thank you.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS:

The

most important benefit you get is you have an opportunity to influence policy, I mean policy that governs the Internet. We all, while we might represent our individual entities and companies and all what not, but there are definitely millions of other companies, commercial business users that are not here in ICANN, and we are more or less like proxies, voices for those. Aside from the ability to influence global policy that governs the Internet, while we are here in ICANN, we are also able to network and have friends with businesses from other parts of the globe. Coming all the way from Africa and engaging here in the BC, I've been able to have friends from Canada, people from India, and all the other walks of life. Aside from that critical, because what we do primarily here in ICANN is develop policy, aside from being able to affect impact on policy, you also build a good network and our knowledge increases. There are so many things I know today that I didn't have an idea of or even existed some five, six years ago. So you're able to build knowledge, you're able to build your capacity, you're able to network, but importantly you're able to impact policy.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you very much. Is there a specific session BC will be holding during this meeting? So if you can invite fellows, those who are interested to come and learn more, please share.

LAWRENCE OLAWALE-ROBERTS:

Thank

you. I was going to miss out on that big opportunity. The BC is a member of the CSG, the Commercial Stakeholder Group, and I know Tuesday we

have a lineup of activities. The BC also has its own membership meeting that is open. In other words, you don't have to be a member to participate or to join us physically at this meeting. Please look out for – Arinola is helping me to pull out the venue and the time, but please look out for sessions that have to do with Business Constituency. We have a 12:15 on -- what day is this? On the 5th. That's Tuesday, I guess. At 12:15 we have the BC members call. You are invited to join us. You don't have to pre-sign a form or anything. But aside from that, please also look out for the CSG meetings. There are some very, very interesting discussions that will be had on the RDRS.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Look for agendas, please. And if you are interested, today's sessions are -- the purpose is that you learn today, and on Tuesday, which is the constituency day, you go to the community. So you see them in action, how they work. So try to find the most important information for you and digest and see it in action on Tuesday. With that, I would like to thank our Business Constituency representatives, my fellow colleagues. Thank you for coming, and thank you for your time. Our applause is to our presenters. Thank you very much.

And I would like to invite here next to me the Universal Acceptance Steering Group members. Please join me on the stage. Yes, it's a big group, but very interesting group. Very interesting work is done. Universal Acceptance Steering Group. You have heard about this group during prep week as well, but they graciously agreed to come and talk to fellows to identify the main directions within universal acceptance, because I know that topic is interesting for many of you. And with that,

I will start with probably Abdalmonem, who is -- I used to start with those who had been fellows, so apologies. So I will start with Abdalmonem, and he will introduce all the speakers. Here, please.

ABDALMONEM GALILA: Yes, thank you. This is Abdalmonem Galila for the record. Actually, I am an old fellow. One time a fellow, always fellow. Actually, fellowship, you are the guys who will be the leadership at somehow here in ICANN. So keep going ahead. I am I am working for the National Telecom Regulatory Authority of Egypt as a planning manager, and I have different roles within ICANN advisory committee or SOs. I am the GAC representative of Egypt, the alternative one, and I am the ccNSO member and the chair of universal acceptance committee within ccNSO, and I am the vice chair of email address internationalization work group. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Can you introduce everybody? You can introduce yourselves. Okay. Anil, please go ahead.

ANIL JAIN: An introduction with the fellows and NextGen of ICANN. You are the future of ICANN, you are the future of Internet for us, so it is very, very important. You people are very important for the Internet community. Now we are introducing a very specific topic today. Normally Internet and Internet-related software are in English. More than 60% of the world population do not communicate in English. So what they are doing, because more than 5.5 billion people across the world are using

Internet. So some of them who are not conversing in English, either they are not connected with Internet at all, or they are not doing the job, or they are not taking the benefit of Internet which is required to be taken. And it is estimated that next 1 billion Internet users will come from those communities who do not speak English. So today's topic is that multilingual Internet which is required to fulfill those gaps and bring the whole world together and everybody using Internet effectively.

So in today's session we will be talking about universal acceptance as an overview, why does UA matter, and then my colleague Satish will take care of UA's structure and working group, how we work as a UASG, who does what, then what work is done at the country level, at individual level as the local initiative and ambassador program. Then we have started a very special program called celebration of universal acceptance day. And that has brought a lot of enthusiasm and energy across the world. My colleague Dr. Nabil will take you through the UA day. And as she was asking from the previous speakers, what are the engagements of UA during ICANN 79 that Nabil will bring you, for all of you, and finally we will be more than happy to answer your questions.

Now let me come about how the universal acceptance is there. So universal acceptance is basically two definitions. One, the domain which now you are aware, which we call IDN, internationalized domain names, they should be acceptable by all computers, that is hardware, and also all software and applications.

And the second aspect of universal acceptance is the email. The email, if it is available in non-English or in IDN means the emails where the domain is more than three characters, long domains, then email should

be acceptable on all software, social media, and any other content where the emails are required. So basically these are the concepts of universal acceptance.

And the reason which we have, as I said, all valid domain names and email addresses works in all software applications. Impact, you have understood how this is going to get impacted. This organization under ICANN was formed in 2015 and we are working seriously from then. And as I said that if we are able to implement UA in organizations, in software, in governments, and all communities together, they will ensure that a comprehensive, inclusive internet community gets developed across the world. And believe me, we have done this economic study also, that once we are able to implement UA, the overall GDP, global GDP will go up and the businesses will get benefit out of UA.

Now if we see, these are the few examples where UA readiness is there. And you must have seen that there are domains which are in Japanese, domains which are in China, whether they are really ready or not. And in case your systems are not ready, automatically system will throw back saying that you entered domain in a valid domains or email, or there is an error which is thrown to you, saying that you correct your way of working or you introduce this.

Now this is a simplistic example of what UA is. Don't read the top one, let us come to the bottom one. If a system is UA ready, then whatever you are entering into local language or IDN domains, the system should accept what you are entering. Once it is accepted, then it validates with the software inside what we have entered. Once the validation is there,

then comes the processing, that is computing. And after computing, it should store and transmit to the other end. And whatever you desire the recipient to see, that recipient should be able to see what is desired by the transmitter. So this is a simplistic formula of universal acceptance in the systems, in the portfolios. Now how the UASG work, I invite Satish Babu to take us through the next slides.

SATISH BABU:

Thanks Anil. I am Satish and I am a member of the ALAC, of At-Large, but I am also active and play multiple roles in UASG. This section talks about the structure and the functions of UASG. And one thing that you might want to note is the tactical importance of universal acceptance. Because the next round of new details is coming up. We are promoting IDNs as a big thing for the next round. Now if an average person registers an IDN based domain name and generates an email ID, and if it doesn't work, then we have a problem, because we are selling this whole concept of IDNs. So that's why it is tactically very important.

So here is the structure of the UASG. We work through multiple working groups. So there are six working groups, four are actually working groups and two are programs. The first is communication, which is also handling UA Day. The second is email address internationalization. The measurement, which has recently come out with a UA based curriculum for the first time.

The fourth one is the technology working group, which basically looks at these gaps that Anil mentioned and tries to fix those things by remediation of these technical problems. So we look at technology stacks and we try to find out what is wrong, how much support is there

for UA, and what to do in order to ensure that that gap is reduced or eliminated.

Number five and number six are two programs. One is the local initiative, which you will see, and the other is the ambassador program. Now these are some of the opportunities for some of you, those that are interested, to join the UA efforts. We also have liaisons, because this is important, because UASG has to work in the ICANN ecosystem. And there it has got to work with other parts of ICANN. And these liaisons are -- we have GNSO, Christian. ALAC, I am the liaison. Qing from ccNSO, and Abdalmonem, he's sitting here, from the GAC. Next, please.

So here are some of the people. On the left you have the UASG leadership team. On the right side you have the UASG working group chairs. So we have Anil as the chair of the UASG. We have vice chairs, three of them, who are listed there. And then we have the -- sorry, can you go back one? Yeah, so on the right-hand side you have the chairs of the UASG working groups that we had mentioned earlier. There are four of us. Next, please. Here are the UASG working group vice chairs. These are also leaders of the UASG. Next.

So what are UA local initiatives? This is meant to stimulate local engagement of the UASG priorities and division. So there are five local initiatives in the following countries. We have China. We have the CIS in Eastern Europe. We have the FICCI. Now, FICCI is the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. So they are running this Indian language Internet Alliance. That's also a local initiative. We have Sri Lanka, and we have Thailand. So we presently have a little bit of a gap for local initiatives from Latin America and the European region of

ICANN, and we will be encouraging more initiatives to apply for the program from these areas. Next, please. So here are the UA local initiative leaders. We have Maria, Wei, Sarika, Anawin, and Harsha. Next.

The other program is a UA ambassador program. Ambassadors are appointed for one year. They can be reappointed, and they are people who have a background. Now, UASG is a fairly technical group. There is a bit of technology involved. You have to be -- if you want to apply for these technical positions, you have to have a background, but you're most welcome to apply for any of these positions as you wish. So this program, ambassador program, recruits leaders who are -- you know, they are well-respected articulate leaders. They have a background in UA training and adoption, so that technical background is required. They are committing to contribute to the UA programs, like trainings, workshops, hackathons, etc., and we are looking for diversity, gender, and geography, so that the whole of the world is covered. Next.

There are 18 UA ambassadors from 10 countries -- Benin, Bolivia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, China, Egypt, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Turkey, and Zambia. You will see that the numbers vary a little bit. In the case of India, the reason is that India has a very considerable linguistic diversity, perhaps the highest in the world, and that's the reason why we have, you know, some more number of people from India, but there are also others, other countries, like, for example, Nigeria. There are two. In China, there are two as well. Next, please. So I'll stop here. If you're interested in applying for UA Ambassador, then you can actually see that website and you can apply.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you, Satish, for informing us about the UASG structure and how it works. Now we are introducing a very important initiative which UASG has taken up, is the celebration of UA Day globally. So I request my colleague, Vice Chair of the UASG leadership, Dr. Nabil, to take us through the UA Day. Nabil.

NABIL BENAMAR: Thank you, Anil. It's my pleasure to be with you here, as I was a fellow like you, and starting from that day, so I stick with ICANN. Okay, so UASG is part of ICANN too, so it's an ICANN initiative to promote universal acceptance and to try to bring solutions in this field.

So one of the things that we are doing is to celebrate universal acceptance during the day, but this is for the global day, UA Day, but it's been celebrated for between two or two to three months. That was the case last year in 2023, which was the first time that we celebrated UA Day. The global day was celebrated in India, and many other events have been celebrated all over the world. So we have shortlisted 50 events last time, and this year we have shortlisted 56 events. So the inaugural UA Day was held on 28th of March, and this year it will be the same. It will be celebrated in Belgrade.

So the main reason for celebrating UA Day is to organize events and workshops for different categories, for different purposes. So first we have events related to awareness, because the majority are still not aware of the possibility to create domain names in any script, or create an email address in any script too. This is the main goal of universal acceptance.

And then the next step is to organize an event where we can do some training to see how we can implement this, how we can execute this cause, how we can solve this problem in different scripts. So we have different trainings regarding IDNs, international domain names, or email address internationalization, or other workshops that are related to programming languages, especially Java and Python.

The third category of events that we are doing, and this year we will have 12 events that were shortlisted out of 56, are all towards the adoption, exclusively on adoption. We have some successful stories of universal acceptance adoption, use cases, etc. So this is the third category of events that we have. So this is to motivate technical and government decision makers for universal acceptance adoption, encourage updates of procurement terms to include UA as a requirement. So this is done, this is requested from government and all stakeholders to encourage for UA adoption. And then to celebrate the achievement of a new universal acceptance and recognize success stories. As you can see here, these are the statistics that we have. So 15 out of 56 of the events have been for, or will be organized for the UA adoption. Next slide please.

The main event this year will be held in Belgrade. So we try to move in all continents for each year. So last time it was in India, so Egypt, and now it's in Europe. Next slide please. So this is the timeline for the UA Day event. So we announced the call for proposals in between November and December. Then we have a selection committee that will go through the proposals to select, to review, to select, to shortlist.

And then we have the shortlisted events. In the keystone, UA Day in Serbia was announced on 21st of January. UA Day materials and events are announced. For example, here in the UASG, we are developing also the material to be used by organizers. I mean PowerPoint slides and other stuff for different categories of events. So they don't need to bring their own material. We are facilitating this. We are making this easier for organizers. Depending on the duration of the event, whether it's one hour, two hours, half a day, one day, two days, so depending on the content of the events, we have slides for this. And you can find the slides on the main website. So directly you can go there and download the slides if you want to use them for your own purpose. Yes, so UA Day events are scheduled this time or this year between 1st of March until the last day of May. Next slide, please.

So if you go to the main website, you will see the events. So please join any UA Day event that is near you. Or you have local events and regional events. Feel free to check which one can be useful for you, is close to you. Yes. And engage with UASG at ICANN 79. So we have different sessions. Yesterday we had one with ccNSO. Today with GAC. It was in the previous session. Now with the fellows and NextGen. And we still have two main sessions, UASG Governance and Plans Work session on Tuesday. And the last one on Universal Acceptance Day '24. So this last one will be focused on the UA Day activities that we have. Next slide.

And if you want to get more involved, just check these links that we have here and social media. The main thing is to go to the main website, uasg.tech, so you can learn more about our activities, our structure, our working groups, and all the documents are there. We have a document

hub, so you can download any document, any reports that we have provided for the last years. Thank you.

ANIL JAIN:

Thank you, Nabil, for informing us about UA Day and inviting us at UA Day events which are close to us. Now with a request, in case we have two minutes, Abdalmonem would like to brief about the email addresses internationalization, what UASG has undertaken. Over to you, Abdalmonem.

ABDALMONEM GALILA:

Thank you, Anil. Actually, I will take one minute first before the three minutes. Sorry for that. Actually, the first time I attended ICANN meeting as a fellow was ICANN 54. This time I have conditioned in my mind what is the difference between universal access, universal acceptance, and user acceptance. Actually, you are going for universal acceptance. Universal acceptance, it means asterisk dot asterisk, anything dot anything, whatever this domain name is valid and accepted by labor generation rules. So it is this email addresses is a part, domain name is a part, major part of the domain name. Without domain names, no email addresses. So why I am talking now about email addresses is email addresses is the most popular application or software used worldwide. There are billions of emails sent and received daily or per hour. So it is very important.

At the same time, as said by my colleague Anil, that 50 percent of the worldwide population have some restriction in order to go online and have the rights to use shopping, to go have to government application,

something like that. So that is why you are going for email address internationalization. We need to have our email addresses in our own local language.

At the time that universal acceptance is not only related to IDNs or EAs, that domain names in local language or email addresses that have local domain names, local language domain names, but also for the asking you generic to label domain names. So don't be confused about the different arms of universal acceptance.

So we as email address internationalization work group have a lot of work, especially in the past and according to the plan for the future five years, we are getting to have many software providers to be universal acceptance. And one of the leaders to have email services to be universal acceptance readiness. One of this is Microsoft that have, I think, from Microsoft Outlook 2016, it started to be universal acceptance ready. That means that comply with the levels of EAI readiness. There are three levels of EAI readiness. We have silver, gold, and platinum. The silver one, it means that your application could send to EAI address or receive from EAI address. But the feature of hosting EAI address is not there at all. But for gold one, it means that could send and receive but have the feature of hosting EAI address is already there. For platinum category, it means that it enabled by default to host EAI address and is able to send and receive email from and to EAI addresses. And also the tools that affiliated for email software is also could handle EAI addresses successfully. That is the three levels of EAI readiness. In the past, there is only two levels. We stick to two level. For example, we have Gmail. Could send to EAI address and receive from EAI address but couldn't host EAI address. Now all of these are changed. But it is still

helpful to send and receive to and from EAI addresses. That's from my side. Thank you.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you very much. Back to you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you very much. Very informative session. And we have the opportunity to ask one question. One. Who didn't ask any question? Lady over there, come. Abraham, you will have the opportunity to ask your question during the break.

WINNY KOECH: My name is Winny Koech and I am NextGen. And I'm speaking on my behalf. I am a little too excited and a little unsure as well. So please encourage me. I was really very excited about the universal acceptance. And this is part of the reason why I applied to ICANN 79. My presentation is going to be on the universal acceptance. So I encourage you to ask me questions when I will be presenting. And I would love to see you there. But I have a question. So I read all the documents you put up on universal acceptance on the ICANN website and even during our training. And I did not find any part that talks about data privacy compliance in universal acceptance. I know this is going to be a very huge project that's going worldwide. And I'm a little concerned and a little worried at the same time. Because we're in the era where data privacy is picking up. And every country sort of is trying to develop laws and policies that will protect their own people as far as data privacy is concerned. I want to know if your team has considered that aspect. And

if not, would you need my input? That's the first question. The second -

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: We don't have time for the second question. Let us take this first. And then you will use the opportunity during the break to ask more questions. Thank you. I hope I don't discourage you.

ANIL JAIN: Thank you. Of course, your voice was quite low. So whatever I have understood, I'll try to answer. First of all, all activities of UASG are available on a website called UASG.tech. Now, you can see all the work which UASG has done. You can also see all reports which are available, for example, the universal acceptance adoption in various communities. How many IDNs are adopted, how many emails, what is the percentage of the email which are UA ready today. All those information are available on UASG.tech website.

Number two, I invite you to join the UASG community to work on it. And that is you join the UASG discuss group. Where the moment you join UASG discuss group, you become part of the UASG community. And you can join any of the group, whether it is a technical group, measurement group, EAI group or communication group. And without joining also you can become a local initiative or UA ambassador. So these are some basic information I would like to give to you. But in the meantime, I request my colleague Satish, who is chair of the tech working group of UASG to supplement it.

SATISH BABU: Thanks Anil. So if you mean personal data privacy protection, then I would like to say that the way internationalized domain names work are no different from the regular domain names. So whatever privacy aspects are there for the regular email IDs and domain names, exactly the same. In fact, we are trying to make them exactly the same. So there will not be anything different. And whatever applies for the Latin today, the exact same thing will apply for IDNs and domain names and email IDs. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, sir. We don't have time, unfortunately. We need to move to another session. I would like to thank all our presenters. I know universal acceptance is a very interesting topic. But you have two more sessions coming on Tuesday. So use this opportunity to see these people. You now know the faces. Just go, show your tag, fellow, NextGen, and ask whatever you want. Thank you very much. Thank you, gentlemen. And I would like to invite our last presenter for this session. My beloved Mistura Aruna, who will talk about GAC, which is Government Advisory Committee. Mistura, please. And my colleague who supports GAC, Rob, is here as well. Thank you for joining. And our current mentor, Laxmi, is here. Thank you for joining, gentlemen. Mistura, the floor is yours.

MISTURA ARUNA: Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. So my session is going to be very interactive. And we are not going to exceed the 30 minutes allotted to us. So once a fellow, always a fellow. Yeah, give yourselves a round of applause. It's not easy to sit out there. Do you know how many people

applied for this fellowship? And just a few of you got it. So congratulations to all of you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Just to add, Mistura Aruna is one of the selection committee members.

MISTURA ARUNA: Yeah, and six-time fellowship mentor. I think Siranush, we gave birth to the first set of virtual fellows during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yeah, so -- okay. While I was sitting down there during the two sessions, some of you on the phone not listening, my session is not going to be like that. I'm sorry. So I'm going to act like Siranush here. So I'll call you randomly to read the slides and ask you questions. So that at the end of the presentation, you will have your answers by yourselves. You won't need to ask again. So thank you very much.

On behalf of Nico, the GAC chair, who is unavoidably absent, he sends his regards. And I'm sure you will see him during some of the sessions. Say hello to him. And he's also a fellow. So with me is Rob, our support staff, ever supportive. Rob is here. So all the questions will be directed to him while I speak. And your mentor representing GAC is also here. So let's start.

So thank you. This is the outline. What is Governmental Advisory Committee, the GAC? Then we're going to talk about GAC membership, leadership, and support staff, Gac advice to the Board, how GAC operates within ICANN, GAC working groups, what constitutes GAC advice, and participation in GAC.

So the GAC serves as an advisory committee to the ICANN. It was established in 1999 in parallel with the first ICANN public meetings under the ICANN bylaws. Then it serves as a voice of the government, just like the name connotes, an international governmental organization in ICANN, multi-stakeholder structures. IGOs such as UNESCO, [AU,] CTO, and co. Then it's not a decision-making body, but advises on the issues that ICANN scope, which must be duly taken into consideration by the board. Then where the board observes any inconsistencies with the advice, it gives reasons for doing so. And so attempts to reach a mutually acceptable solution. And I'm sure you know that we disagree to agree. So wherever any advice is put forward, they don't agree, then there will be a mutually agreed one.

Then the GAC communicates advice through either communique or a formal piece of correspondence. Then the GAC also appoints the GAC chair as a non-voting liaison to the ICANN board. So the GAC membership, like I said, it consists of distinct economies recognized in international fora, and usually in an observer capacity. Then we have 182 member countries as of March on the website, and 39 IGOs as of March. Like I said, the full list is on the website. That's the website address. It will be made available to you.

Then how to become a GAC member. How many of you are from the government here? Oh, okay. So would you like to join the GAC? Yeah. So the criteria for membership of the GAC is established in the GAC operating principles, which also specify criteria. You can be a GAC member, for those of you from the government, without your government, the person in charge writing to nominate you to represent

the country on the governmental advisory committee. Rob, am I right?
Okay. Yeah.

So GAC leadership. That's Nico, the chair, is a fellow of ICANN. So if you see him on the walkway or during tea break, you just say hi to him and let him know you're a fellow of ICANN 79. So the GAC has one chair, Nico, who is from Paraguay, then five vice chairs. We have Ola from Sweden, Francis from Burundi, Zainab from Lebanon, Nigel from United Kingdom, and Wang from China. So those are the faces. I decided to put their faces up so that when you see them, you say hello to them.

So how the board accepts or rejects GAC advice. I don't know. Can somebody volunteer to read this for me quickly? I want to know whether you guys are participating. Do you want me to call? Not Abraham. Abraham is very vocal.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. The advice of the GAC on public policy matters shall be duly taken into account, both in the formulation and adoption of policies. In the event that the board determines to take an action that is not consistent with the GAC advice, it shall so inform the GAC and state the reasons why it decided not to follow the advice.

MISTURA ARUNA: Thank you very much. So we can explain this to me. I'm going to call a name. Is it [inaudible]? What do you understand by this? No. Yes, please. Yeah. Okay. Mentor, can you help out? Hi. Help out. Mentor. So help out. Can you explain what? Yeah, I knew you were listening.

LAXMI PRASAD:

Let me start first the structure of the board, because once you start it from the, as you know, we are the bottom-up approach in order to find out the consensus. If you consider the board structure, there are nearly about 16 members who have voting rights and four members as liaison, non-voting rights. For example, eight members among of 16 is nominated by NomCom, and six members is nominated by the three of our supporting organizations. I mean Address Supporting Organization, Generic Name Supporting Organization, and Country Code Name Supporting Organization. So eight plus six, how much? 14. And one is from At-Large Advisory Committee. He or she has the voting right. It is 15. And 16, one is either the chair of the board or chief CTO. It is [inaudible]. And four liaison is the three liaison is the rest advisory committee, I mean GAC advisory committee, Root Server System Advisory Committee, and Security and Stability and Resilience Advisory Committee, as well as one of the person from IETF, Internet Engineering Task Force, which is responsible for developing the standard. So these are the total composition of the board.

[inaudible] fortunately he is my mentee too. And he loves to questions. And I had this time seven people, but I am very unfortunate mentor this time. Among of seven, five was rejected due to visa problem. Only two people are participating. And the question, GAC is only giving the advice. As I explained to you earlier, we have no voting rights. It is up to the board. But as far as concern to the public policy, GAC gives their advice, and make it publicly through with the help of communicate. So I think GAC is only the advice. [inaudible] So whatever they take decision, we have to remember two things. Geopolitics playing a very

crucial role in the implementation of any policy. So local government policy, we can't escape it. We are there representing them. So this is my response. I think –

MISTURA ARUNA: Thank you so much. Yeah, the ever supportive GAC staff, Rob, has something to say.

ROB HOGGARTH: Thank you. Can you go back just one slide? The key wording in the first bullet is something you should pay attention to. As Laxmi shared, the GAC doesn't vote on the board. The board is an advisory committee. But the key words in that first bullet are, “Shall be duly taken into account.” Governments play a very fundamental role in the multi-stakeholder model. And they were identified as a key stakeholder group very early in ICANN's history. I mean, the GAC is celebrating its 25th anniversary at this meeting.

And so from the very beginning, there was a recognition that governments, while ICANN is a non-governmental organization, while ICANN is a multi-stakeholder community, governments play an absolutely critical role. So when the GAC speaks and offers advice, which is not as common or as often as many people understand, the board really pays attention to it. And if they choose not to follow the advice, they have to explain why. In many circumstances, in the case now for the GAC, it is consensus advice, which means there's no objections from governments. And so if the board does say, “Ah, sorry, appreciate the input,” they have to by more than two-thirds vote to say

we aren't accepting the advice. So the critical element that Mistura and Laxmi are sharing is that it is a very considered and thoughtful approach that the GAC has to take when governments give their input into any decision. Thanks.

MISTURA ARUNA: Thank you so much. And actually, there was a question in the chat that, "What is being done to get on board the other 13 countries? Is there anything, any steps?"

MISTURA ARUNA: Thank you. Okay, so you mean when you look at the numbers, you say, "Wait a second. 195, 182, what's going on?" When you look back 25 years from this meeting, we only had 22 members and about eight observer organizations. And so over time, governments throughout the world have recognized, obviously, the importance of the Internet, but also the importance of the DNS and the public policy activities that take place here at ICANN.

Individual governments, sometimes you have -- let me step back. These are governments and distinct economies. So the operating principles of the GAC don't limit membership to just governments, but also to distinct economies. And consequently, whoever asked the question, the number is not 195. It's probably north of 200. And it's really a reflection of what governments are in a position to be able to support an individual representative or to participate. And so if you do the numbers, there are a number of developing or underdeveloped regions of the world that still need support to come to ICANN, to participate in

ICANN activities. And the question you should have been asking is, "Well, okay, you have 182, but how many are active participants?" And that's also an issue that needs to be considered because, again, once you become a member of the GAC, you don't typically then leave. I mean, it's a government. It's a distinct economy. Consequently, the real issue is, are governments able to support the work of their representatives here at ICANN? And so the number of actual participation is somewhat less than 182. The GAC has specific quorum requirements and other processes to ensure active and ongoing participation, but it is a constant focus of the GAC leadership and of the committee generally to make sure that there is active and ongoing participation throughout the year in the participation of the GAC in the activities of ICANN. I hope that was responsive. Probably way too much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: There is also a question. Can we start taking questions, or you have some slides?

MISTURA ARUNA: We have some slides to go through.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Okay, let's finish and then we'll get back.

MISTURA ARUNA: I'm going to hurry up with the remaining slides. I would like to state that 77 communiques so far have been issued in form of information and advice to the board. This diagram shows the process for board

concentration of GAC advice. So this is just a summary of what has been explained by Rob and the mentor. So this is also how the GAC operates within the ICANN. So it determines its own principles as set out by the GAC operating principles. Then it's all face-to-face meetings like we're doing. But also since COVID has been hybrid, so in line with the public meetings which are held three times a year. Then advice from the GAC and ICANN is determined on the basis of consensus. We've said a lot about this. Then it works intersessionally on priority issues that brought to fore. Then benefits of member countries. Amina Ramallan, can you please read the benefits of member countries? Can you be fast about it, please?

AMINA RAMALLAN:

Okay. Benefits of member countries. Opportunity to provide advice directly to the ICANN board on public policy aspects of the operation of the Internet domain name system, contributing at an early stage of ICANN's policy development processes to ensure consistency with laws and public interest, access to face-to-face meetings and online discussions with other GAC members and observers to be informed on the development of GAC advice, access to relevant subject matter experts within the GAC and across ICANN, enabling GAC members to remain informed about technical innovation in the domain name system and its future evolution.

MISTURA ARUNA:

Thank you so much. I'm sure that's well explanatory. So the functions of the GAC support staff. Rob, can you take this, please?

ROB HOGGARTH:

Thank you. Should I be reading the slide? No, I won't. I'll just summarize. The GAC used to have its own support system for many years, probably a good 15 of the years of the committee's history. They would gather funds together and fund their own secretariat. For those of you who do research on ICANN or maybe the GAC and wanted to do that, consequently, if you look back into the records of the committee, some of them don't exist or are missing. And it was only in the last seven or eight years where the committee approached ICANN and said, "You know, we see that you support the other community groups. You offer ICANN staff and resources to support the work of the community. Can you do that for us too?" And so that's sort of when I came on board in support of the Governmental Advisory Committee, and we basically brought things in-house, if you will.

And so we have a team of five, five and a half people, depending upon the trimester of the year, to work with and support the work primarily of the policy and operational work of the committee. So from soup to nuts, you know, we schedule calls, we make sure that the meeting room has lights, we work with our colleagues to ensure that Mistura, Laxmi, their colleagues, really simply have the opportunity to focus on the issues, where they don't have to worry about the logistics.

And for those of you who aren't involved in governments but in other aspects of the community, that's essentially the philosophy that ICANN has. Many people who come and participate in ICANN do it voluntarily. Many government representatives are paid by their governments, but the budgets don't extend beyond, you know, making sure that they can

be here for a meeting or participate when they can. And so our job is to really make sure that we leverage those contributions and that individuals can really be here to focus on the issues and not worry about whether there's coffee in the back of the room or whether there's the preparations for a specific agenda. So we hope we do a decent job on that, and we'll look forward to continuing to do that for many years to come.

MISTURA ARUNA:

So thank you so much, Rob. How does a country nominate representatives? I think mentor already took that, so we're going to go forward. So the working groups on the screen are where GAC members are participating, on the sub-region working group, the universal acceptance, and internationalized domain names, the session before this, and I think Amina is the Nigerian ambassador of the UA. So if you have questions on that, you meet her there.

We also have the board GAC Interaction Group, the Operating Principles Evolution Working Group, Public Safety Working Group, and the Human Rights Working Group. So working groups and participation, mentor, do you want to take that, please?

LAXMI PRASAD:

As far as I'm concerned to the working group, the GAC member participated on the behalf of the GAC, and if the working group, the issue, the scope of the issue within the working group, they are searching some support or some, how to say, some misunderstanding about the matter, then GAC put their view over there through their

member. And if anything, within the working group, concerned more detail, which the working group can't deliver at the given time, but they can ask their superior, I mean they can share their view in the GAC, then the GAC will decide what to do, and then they will convey to the working group. This is the working group mechanism for working.

And apart from that, there is another GAC issue I think we are missing, customer standing committee. The customer, we more focus on the public issue as per the respective of the, once you try to. Actually I think you know about the customer standing committee. It is the more technical group where the IANA and PTA function are looking. And there is the 64 threshold in order to get the service from the PTI. Based upon that PTI performance, that customer standing group identifies the satisfactory of the service provided by them or not satisfactory of the services provided by them. Currently they are working on some thresholds and some additional criteria. It will be helped better in near future considering the unique Internet, secure and stable, as per the ICANN mission, to make Internet more accessible, more resilient, more secure, more stable, and more user oriented. Anyhow, how we are here for the sake of the end user. Once you are talking technically end user, it means for the sake of the people, for the human. So I think GAC are coordinating in all respect towards the public interest, or better to say towards the end user interest, through sending their liaison in respective working groups. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Please sum up because we only have one minute to go.

ROB HOGGARTH:

Thank you. I have one final commercial for this. Mistura put up the participating in GAC meetings. And there's a lot of work that individual governmental reps do at GAC meetings. For ICANN 79, the GAC is conducting an experiment. On Tuesday morning at 9:00, we are having an open mic session, which will essentially be a listening session for governments to hear from the community. We have a sign up and I'm going to share the Google form link with Siranush. If any of you are interested in making a presentation to the governments, three minutes, not a 30 minute presentation, but a short statement or comment to governments, questions you want to ask, they won't be immediately answered, but government representatives will hear your input or your perspective. So if you're interested in that, please go to the sign up sheet and give some consideration. There are a lot of slots that have already been taken up, but who knows, maybe first come, first serve you can get on the list. Thanks very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you very much. I have like seven questions from Abraham Selby only, so I will give the opportunity for you to talk during the networking break, so not now. But I cannot take more questions for now. I know there are people here who would like to ask questions. Please, use Tuesday as constituency day when GAC will be having their working sessions. Go there, try to participate as an observer at least to see how they work, and probably many of your questions will be answered. But Mistura is here for the break, you can ask the question now outside of this session.

With that, I would like to thank our interpreters. I know it's hard to follow all the speakers, all the sessions, all the questions, but thank you for all the efforts. And I would like to thank my GAC colleagues and presenters, Mistura, Laxmi, Rob, thank you for coming. With that, this session is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]