
ICANN80 | PF – At-Large Fellows and NextGen Interaction
Tuesday, June 11, 2024 – 9:00 to 10:15 KGL

YEŞİM SAGLAM:

Hello and welcome to At-Large, Fellows and NextGen Interaction. My name is Yeşim Saglam, and I'm the remote 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.

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CLAIRE CRAIG:

Hello. Thank you, Yesim. Good morning to those of you in the room. And good afternoon, good evening to those of you online. Welcome to all fellows and welcome to ALAC members and everybody else in the room. As I said, I am Claire Craig. I know many of you are expecting Jonathan. But he's unable to be here this morning and so, I'm in the hot seat. Now, particularly to those of you fellows, not the NextGen so much, but the fellows, I sat in your position, so I know how you feel. I feel your pain. So I hope you enjoy the session this morning. We have some great

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presentations for you. And I now turn you over to Siranush and Deborah who will begin the session this morning. Thank you, Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Claire. Siranush for the record. Welcome to all NextGeners and fellows to this session. To provide a bit of statistics for this round ICANN80 cohort, for our At-Large colleagues, we have 39 fellows, 38 in person, and one virtual, Razoana. I already saw her joining the session as well virtually. And we have 12 NextGeners from African region. So the fellows are 39 from 32 countries, 22 female and 17 male. And we are happy to see also the results of some At-Large elections. And I proudly would congratulate those four ladies from regions who were elected to stepping into ALAC. And congratulations to ALAC as well because you are getting a really good crew from the fellowship. And Deb, would you like to add something?

DEBORAH ESCALERA: Yes, thank you for having us today. We have, as Siranush said, we have 12 NextGen from the African countries representing six countries. We have nine males and three females this round. Welcome to the NextGen, to ICANN80. And I think Ergys is going to provide some stats for us. Ergys?

ERGYS RAMAJ: Good morning, everyone and thank you for the opportunity to engage here today. It's always great to meet with At-Large. Lots of old and new friends. So we were asked a specific question before the session and that was, how can we do better when it comes to integrating the fellows and NextGeners into SO and AC structures? And from our perspective, from an org perspective, but I think I speak for the wider ecosystem, this

is perhaps the most pivotal question. It's the most important question that we can ask ourselves in terms of what is, for lack of a better way of putting it, the return on investment?

So the organization that ICANN broadly contributes a lot of resources into bringing in NextGeners and fellows and we have to have some sort of a baseline, some sort of metrics to understand whether or not we're being successful. So before I get into that, I think it's important that I also clarify some of the differences between the NextGen program and the ICANN Fellowship program. And then, we will get into the numbers and hopefully in a discussion and get any questions that you may have. So the fellowship program, most of you are aware, was established in 2007. That's a long time ago. That's about 17 years ago. Whereas, the NextGen program was established in 2014. Now, they have a common objective in that the main goal is to strengthen the diversity of the multi-stakeholder model. That means bringing in individuals from around the world into ICANN to participate at ICANN. And that is, as far as ICANN is concerned, at least all seven elements of diversity, right? That includes region, linguistic diversity, skills, et cetera.

And as I mentioned yesterday, for those of you who were at the welcome session for the fellows, if you were to just look at the numbers at face value, one would think that, that is mission accomplished, right? But that doesn't tell the whole story. So I think we need to dig a little deeper. We need to ask also questions of each other, of ourselves, what do we mean by participation? What do we mean by active participation? What does that look like?

Is being at a meeting, being at a session, is that participating or is participating being in a working group? Is participating being a pen

holder in a working group, right? So these are all questions that we as a community have continued to have over the years. We have continued to define and redefine what participation means, but specifically active participation.

So for the fellows themselves, as you all know, one can participate up to three times to participate in the fellowship program. And the expectation is that the return on investment, if you will, is more immediate for the fellows. Not only because this is a group that is considered more professional because they are age 21 and up, but also because they do have the opportunity to participate more than one time. So you get that exposure initially, and then you have a second opportunity. And the burden from the fellows' perspective is much higher each time that they apply for a second or a third time.

So initially, the goal is, what is it that you want to do at ICANN? So it's about intent. Whereas for the second and third time, it's more about proven ability and experience to actually contribute to ICANN. And that is how at least the selection committee looks at the application. So the burden of proof, if you will, is much higher for fellows, whereas for the NextGeners, it's a little different because we're dealing with university students from the region where the ICANN meeting is taking place.

And so, the immediate return on investment is not so much participation in ICANN. It's more about raising awareness about ICANN in the regions, raising awareness about ICANN more broadly. It just so happens that we also have seen over the years many NextGeners have also participated in the fellowship program, but that is not a requirement. It's also not an objective of the program. It's just how things naturally happen. That's a progression for an individual who may

apply to the NextGen program, then they may wish to become more active at ICANN and then also choose the fellowship route.

So I wanted to share here this slide specifically because this kind of tells a story about integration. So these two programs have evolved over the years, a great deal. Right before the pandemic, we carried out two public consultations, one for each program, and this was an opportunity for us to work with the community to better understand, are these programs fit for purpose? What does the community want? What are the goals? And what is it that we need to do to meet those goals, those requirements?

So the key thing that came out of this process was really this integration with the SOs and ACs from the beginning to end. So if you were to look at this chat for those of you who have access to it, the SOs and ACs define the targets for diversity. So we go to SOs and ACs every two years and we say, who are the kinds of people that you need to participate in your respective group? And we get a list from each SO and AC. We combine that list and then our outreach and engagement efforts then tend to focus on those areas, on those individuals who have those skills, who have that kind of experience.

And then the SOs and ACs also nominate the selection committee members. And these are individuals who review the applications and they are from the community and they are individuals that take into account the targets of diversity. They also take into account the needs and wants of their specific group at this specific time but also looking forward into the future.

And the third and most important part, or one of the most important parts of this process is really the mentorship aspect of it. These are

newcomer programs. These are onboarding programs. And so, there's a need for the community, for the board, for the organization to see that these individuals who come through the ranks of these programs are actually paired with individuals who know about ICANN, who have experience, who have the know-how and really can help guide newcomers in terms of understanding where their interests may lie, answering their questions they may have, forging the right connections, making the right introductions, et cetera.

So the role that the mentors play could not be understated. It's an important one. It's one area also every time we talk with the community where more could always be done. But this is a key aspect that I wanted to highlight in terms of the integration and how we work together to make sure that these processes are embedded and that we are communicated with one another. There's always a touch point. And from an org perspective, we get our marching orders, if you will, from the community, again, from A to Z. If we can go to the next slide, please. This is the last slide. I will not bore you with any more slides. And I hope that we can engage in a discussion. But we wanted to give you a sneak peek at some of the numbers and what do the numbers tell us. I will not be interpreting the numbers. I will leave it up to you to determine whether this is good or if it's not good or it meets the baseline or it doesn't. If you look specifically for At-Large, the numbers tell a really good story. This is, again, for fellows specifically and I'll talk a little bit about the NextGeners in a moment.

But if you look at it, the fellows are everywhere, all over SOs and ACs, all over the structures, in leadership positions as well. They're on the board. They're also on ICANN org. So when we're talking about

integration, I think it's important to take into account the entire universe of fellowship participation and what they do and where they are now. And specifically, about the NextGenres, we also know that 53 of NextGen participants have also gone through the ranks of the fellowship program.

As I stated earlier, this is not a goal of the program. It just so happens naturally because of the progression that one chooses to take at ICANN and their career opportunities. But this tells a story. Again, I will not interpret it. I would love to hear from others in terms of what you think this looks like, what does good look like. And one of the questions that I have for the group, and this will touch on how we continue to evolve the programs moving forward, is, is there a need for us to change things? Is there a need for us to continue to evaluate together with you, with other groups in the community on how to do better? But what does better look like? What does it actually mean? Can we define? Can we have some clear goals and expectations? Because from our perspective as an organization, we also have certain limitations in terms of what we can and cannot do with the fellows and NextGeners once they come and participate at ICANN.

For example, Siranush and Deb, they are currently dealing with the ICANN80 cohort. Once this meeting is done, that cohort is then handed over, if you will, to the community. What is the bridge then? What is that process by which this handover takes place? And is there an opportunity to do better there as well? What are the mechanisms where we tell the newcomers, hey, listen, you're now at ICANN. You came here, you participated, and here's where you go.

One of the things you always hear at ICANN is how complex ICANN is. Well, for newcomers, it's even more difficult. I can put myself in the shoes of a newcomer. Eleven years ago, I was a newcomer. I had no idea. I was totally confused. It took me about a year to even understand what ICANN did. I'm still learning, right? So from a newcomer perspective, it's important that we think collectively as a community, as a unit. How is it that we can do better to then lead that handover from org, who manages the program. And Siranush and Deb are the faces of both of those programs? What can we do? Can we do more? Can we do better? Can we have specific mechanisms to help us get to that point?

And maybe we have them now, or maybe we need new ones. But these are some of the questions that I wanted to pose to the group, because I think they're important when we think about the future of these programs and the evolution of these programs. Because I think we all have a common goal here. We want to make sure that we build that pipeline of potential future volunteers. That sounds all good. That sounds beautiful. But what does that actually mean? What are the practical aspects of that?

And these numbers tell a story, but I'm not the one to judge whether the story is good or is not good. So I will pause here. I don't want to bore you with any more details or hypothetical questions, but I wanted to pose those to you so that we can engage in a conversation and discussion and get any thoughts that you may have. And thanks again for the opportunity to be here.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Thank you, Ergys. Thank you, Siranush and Deborah. We open the floor now for questions, comments, suggestions. Yes, Sebastian.

SEBASTIEN BACHELET: Hello, everyone. Sebastien Bachelet, I'm going to speak in French. Diversity is important. Therefore, it needs to apply every time that we can. Thank you. I have a first question. I would like to know what is the meaning of the colors on the circles, especially in the two circles that are on the top right. They have the same subtitle. Does it have the same meaning? Thank you for this presentation.

When I came to ICANN, all of these programs did not exist. These onboarding programs did not exist. Now I'm discovering that there are some demands. I am the Chair of RALO, and it's the first time that I hear about those. How do we onboard people when we were not able to have a dialogue beforehand. It's quite complicated. And as far as the job of RALO chairs is concerned, our job is also to recruit. So I'm wondering if there is a conflict here.

And I would like to add something that might be interesting and something that you should be taking into account. One of our goals within At-Large is to have a representation, participation in every country in the world. And this is something that you could take into account to help us in our task. Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ: Thank you, Sebastien, as always, for great questions. So on the design part, that's probably me doing it at midnight. So there's no meaning behind the colors. It's probably just me being colorblind. So it's not intentional. It doesn't send a message or anything along those lines. It's just a midnight type of situation.

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- SEBASTIEN BACHELET: But then you have two circles who have the same subtitle. They need to be merged, I think, or there is something different?
- ERGYS RAMAJ: Yeah. Can we move back to the slide.
- SEBASTIEN BACHELET: If we can have it, I can show you.
- ERGYS RAMAJ: Yeah, yeah. I think that would be helpful.
- SEBASTIEN BACHELET: Yes. Okay, if you take the seven on the top and right and the 100 at night, it's At-Large, ALS leaders, the same subtitle.
- ERGYS RAMAJ: So the seven is GNSO counselors, and the 109 is At-Large ALS leaders.
- SEBASTIEN BACHELET: Not the red seven, but the green seven on the top right.
- ERGYS RAMAJ: I see. Siranush, is that a typo that we may have had? Yeah, we will correct that.
- SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: No, seven is ALAC members there. So it's probably—this is ALAC member including Vice Chair, so this should be.
- ERGYS RAMAJ: Okay. Yeah, so that's a typo. We will correct it. Thank you for flagging that.
- SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

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- ERGYS RAMAJ: You have a keen eye, Sebastien. Lots of data there. So to your other question about representation, yes, that is also a goal that we share. I think from our perspective, again, there's no such thing as enough diversity in these programs, and at ICANN more broadly. Obviously, there are considerations that we need to take into account, but our engagement and outreach efforts are global in scope and nature. But I am hopeful that at some point we will get to a point where we have representation from every country around the globe.
- CLAIRE CRAIG: Thanks, Ergys. We have a few hands up in the room. Would you prefer if we get the questions, or you prefer to answer one at a time?
- ERGYS RAMAJ: One at a time.
- CLAIRE CRAIG: Okay. All right. So there's a hand there. Can you stand? And state your name, please, for the record.
- UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Hello. I'm going to speak in French. My name is [inaudible] from Chad. I am a fellow, and I work in internet governance, and it's been organized by the House of Africa. And thanks to Sebastien, [inaudible] and Pierre and [inaudible], who were able to participate to an internet governance session in Chad. And this is the first time that I come and participate in this great edition and meeting.
- And we heard about the programs, and I agree. With meeting everyone here, I want to meet the coordinator as well. And I want to know how to participate with other fellows. How can we participate to more ICANN meetings? What are the criteria? What are the different steps to

participate more at ICANN and to keep working at the NextGen and fellowship level? Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ: Thank you for the question. I just want to clarify. Is the question asking how can one participate in the programs themselves or how we can work with those who participate in the program? I just want to clarify so that I'm specific in my answer as well.

ABDOU KARIM: Yes. How to participate to the fellowship? How to participate?

ERGYS RAMAJ: Thank you for clarifying. So on our website, we have a dedicated page to the fellowship program that outlines the criteria for selection. It has all the specific information that you may need. And once you take a look at that, if you have any questions, please do reach out to myself or Siranush specifically about the fellowship program or if it's for the NextGen program, reach out to Deb, more than happy to work with you and help guide you through that process. But that information is publicly available. All the criteria are also publicly available. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG: If I could just add, for the engaging in At-Large specifically, I'll be talking about that in a little while. So we'll hear a little bit about that soon. Okay. Yesim has a question from the Q&A.

YEŞİM SAGLAM: Thank you very much, Claire. This is Yeşim Saglam speaking. We have an online question from an anonymous participant. The question is, the age group for applying ICANN's NextGen fellowship is currently 18 to 30. Can minimum age be reduced to 13 or 15 so that younger generation

can also participate who is getting tech savvy at very young age? Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you for the question. An interesting one, and I think we've heard of this question before. I think it's great to see a lot of interest from younger individuals in ICANN. The question about whether or not the age limit could be reduced has many implications, including legal implications. So for example, in a lot of different jurisdictions, individuals who are under 18 would need parental consent, et cetera. And even for ICANN, when you create an ICANN account, there's an age limit. And so, there's a lot of considerations. There's a lot of implications.

And part of the reason why we established 18 as the baseline, as the minimum age, is because of those legal requirements in different jurisdictions. So unfortunately, that would require a different type of program. Also, the purpose of the NextGen program is to target specifically, university students from the regions. And if there were to be a program that targets individuals that are younger than 18, it wouldn't have to be the NextGen program. It doesn't have to be.

I think it's important at ICANN, specifically, that we have clear, specific objectives about the programs and not confuse or ensure that there's overlaps because that only adds to the confusion about how one can participate and what one can get out of that program. So it's primarily more of a legal consent type of question and situation. But I want to make sure that it's clear that the purpose of the NextGen program specifically, is to target university students. And that's why the age is 18 to 30. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Okay. Sorry, Claire again, for the record. I acknowledge the hands in the room and online. But let me get a couple of questions from the fellows and NextGeners, and then we'll go to Amrita and Pastor Peters and some of the others. So Hannah and then—

YEŞİM SAGLAM: Sorry, they were first. Fidya.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Okay. And then Hannah. And then we'll go to Pastor Peters and then Amrita. Yeah, okay. Yes. So that's the next four questions.

FIDYA SHABRINA: Should I go?

CLAIRE CRAIG: Yes.

FIDYA SHABRINA: Okay. Thank you. It's a very interesting point that Ergys brought up earlier about how the NextGen and the fellow each have a slightly different, in terms of the process and at the end goals of incorporating new talents into ICANN. I have more of a comment to the question that is raised earlier about how is continuing look like and what is the better look like. So I've been attending a few ICANN meeting. This is my second time as a fellow. And a comment for me is that, along this many, many sessions during ICANN meeting, I would say something challenging is that whenever there's a session that clashes the timing. For example, for today, we have a compulsory session by this moment. And then after that, we will be given our preference whenever whatever session we want to attend, which is great. But the problem is that some

of the sessions might clash, like they're on during the same time, so that that gives us a challenge in terms of, oh, it seems like I want to sit in a session with the GNSO. But then at the other time—or if there's a discussion about the DNSSEC that I would want to look at. So that is a challenge that I noticed is going on, and it always has been there.

So I just want to highlight it there that it would be great if somehow that could be figured out. So I don't know like a particular how to arrange the session so that, I don't know, the topics somewhat clash less. So yeah, that would be the comment from me. Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you, and I'm going to address it in two parts. The first part is about the de-conflicting sessions. One thing I think it's important for everybody to be aware is that the schedule itself is put together by the SOs and ACs. And in an ICANN meeting where you have north of hundreds of sessions, it's somewhat physically impossible to ensure that we have de-conflicting sessions.

Now, there are certain sessions that the SOs and ACs make sure that they are de-conflicted, but those are a handful at every ICANN meeting, if that. And I think part of the challenge there is the physical limitations of rooms and the people that are participating in an ICANN meeting, and the number of sessions at an ICANN meeting.

The other question about—or the other part of the question about participating in sessions that you find of interest. The schedule that you are given by Siranush for example, in collaboration with the mentors, it's a fixed schedule. But I think that if you were to work on a case-by-case basis, and if you were to say to Siranush for example, and your

mentors, hey, listen, I'm really interested in going to the session, I don't think anyone will say, no, you can't go to that session.

So I think it's just about approaching and having that conversation and having an open channel of communication. That is a suggested guide for you guys as fellows to participate in the sessions. These are the ones that are highlighted in collaboration with the mentors and the program staff. But there's nothing to say that you can't go to any one session that you find of interest. So I think it's important to also just highlight that. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Just to add—Siranush Vardanyan for the record, and the good thing about ICANN meetings is that all the sessions are being recorded. So if you do not have opportunity to participate in all the sessions, which is, as Ergys mentioned, it's impossible with 300 sessions going during only four days, I mean, you should not be able to be everywhere where you would like to be. So the recordings are the options for you to go back and listen. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Okay, Hannah.

HANNAH FRANK:

Thank you. Hannah Frank for the record. Thank you so much for the presentation. I just want to emphasize that at the beginning when I joined to RALO during the pandemic, it was pretty hard to me to understand what ICANN means and what ICANN talks about. My background is, I am a lawyer. The technical part was really, really hard. So I want to thank you both programs because I am part of both programs, NextGen and fellow, and that you provide all the tools in

order to be here because it's entirely different to be here and get networking, speak with the people you have been seeing through a screen, and this experience is remarkable.

Besides, I want to highlight the ICANN Learn courses in my region and At-Large and RALO. These ICANN Learn courses are not widely spread, and they are a helpful tool for all of the community. And it's so glad to see how ICANN every time is evolving with this platform, useful platform, that you can do in your phone or in your laptop or wherever you can, that are so dynamic and interactive.

And another thing I want to highlight is regarding NextGen program is when I was selected as a NextGen. Unfortunately, almost no one from the board or other multi-stakeholder, other parts of ICANN community didn't come. One of our mates of NextGen, she has the courage in the public forum to speak and complain about this situation. Unfortunately, from that time, people from the ICANN board and other parts of the community come to the presentation of NextGen. That is a very, very good point. So thank you so much.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you for the feedback. It's very encouraging. And we're lucky to have you and everyone here from these programs. On the latter point, I think it's a great observation. I believe part of the explanation for the lack of presence in certain meetings is also the schedule. Board members are often extremely busy at every ICANN meeting. So a part of it is a function of the schedule itself, so it makes it somewhat impossible to physically be in more than one place at a time.

But I think we have been more intentional. As you mentioned, you yourself have seen progress. You've seen more participation. We've

been more intentional on the program side to ensure that the meet and greets and all the other sessions that the NextGeners and the fellows are integrated together, so that we don't miss those opportunities especially for participation and engagement with the board. But thank you again for your feedback. Appreciate it.

HANNAH FRANK:

Hannah, I just wanted to add to what Ergys said. Siranush for the record. Actually, a good example of our yesterday's meet and greet, where there was no intention to have the executive or board members to be there, but you have witnessed that the interest came from the board members themselves. So the positive side of it is that people started to see the benefits of those program participants and started to come and talk to us and open the doors for us, as I usually said, for different communities.

Yes, there was work to be done yet. We are working towards that but there is definitely a positive step forward.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

If I may just add, because Siranush's comment just prompted another thought in my mind. Yesterday, for those of you on the session, Maarten Botterman from the board, who is the shepherd for the strategic plan, he talked about the importance of engaging the next generation at ICANN. So these programs are critical to the future of ICANN. They have been critical for the entire time they have been around, but even more so now that we need a new group and a new talent, individuals from all over the world. We need people at ICANN, and we need people who want to be at ICANN and we're all collectively working together to find out what is the best way to ensure that we do that.

What is the best way to ensure that you have the skills that you need, you have the knowledge that you need, the tools that you need, and that's always going to be an evolving process but this is when we rely on you to also tell us what works and what doesn't work and you have both as an organization, but also at the board level, at the community level, you have our support. You just need to tell us what works from your perspective, and we will work together and ensure that we continue to evolve these programs.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Thank you. I just wanted to add to that. I hope that you all are hearing the importance of asking your questions and commenting, especially the fellows and NextGens. I remember Siranush reminded us when I was a fellow, the importance of being in the public forum and letting your voice be heard, because you've noticed, because she stood up—well, let's not say because. She stood up and she said something and there was a response. They say that sometimes not what you do causes an action. So it may not have been caused by that, but at least we can see that it had some type of effect.

So let's remember to use this time, this question time as well, to make your comments so that they can be heard. Now we have Pastor Peters and then Amrita.

PASTOR PETERS:

Thank you very much. Pastor Peters Omoragbon for the record. I started as a fellow in 2010. That was in Nairobi, and that was the time of Janice Douma, and the four days was kind of an induction for those of us who were there, and we were exposed to the rudiments of what ICANN is. At the end of our four days, we had the opportunity of interacting, though

we met with a board executive president at the end of our program. But three things I want to draw out from my involvement, which I also want to supply here, is that when people apply for the fellowship program, so there you apply as an individual, or you apply as a leader of a group.

So when I applied, I applied as a leader of an organization that was already in existence. And as an end user, not as an expert in IT. And I discovered that at the end—during the process, leaders from various communities, the RALOS and others, they came to address us, to introduce their various programs and then I became—I mean, I was interested. I [inaudible]. I had to meet with the AFRALO leaders. And I asked, okay, how can I take my involvement further? And the question is, do you have an organization? And I said, yes, I lead. They said then, I should apply for my organization to be a member of AFRALO. And that was how Noise Across the Borders was admitted into AFRALO, and I've been engaging and been involved with the ICANN activities as an ALS leader under AFRALO. That is one aspect.

Now, between 2010 and now, ICANN has evolved in a way that now you will not have opportunities for individual members. You don't have to be a leader, or you don't have to belong to organization to be involved in ICANN. So you can participate as an individual member, apply, whatever region you are coming from. So my advice to my co-alumni, because I'm an alumnus, I've used two of my fellowships. I have yet to use my last fellowship.

I don't know if such program still exists. If it's not existing, then the current coordinator should make sure those programs that were in place in those days are incorporated so that people are invited to come and talk to the fellows, and they are introduced to the various activities,

so that at the end, they are given rooms to go out and interact going further. So that is my contribution. Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you very much for sharing. For everyone else, this was a perfect example of what a stakeholder journey might look like from one specific individual. Of course, each one of you have unique journeys, but we just got a primer of what the stakeholder journey looks like. Thanks again for the comments. One of the key things that we've been trying to do over the past years is, specifically what you mentioned, is to lower the barriers to participation, and whether that includes removing the requirement to be a leader in an organization or in a group, that is a part of that process as well.

And it also goes to the question or the comment that Sebastien made earlier about representation. Lowering barriers to participation goes a long way to ensuring we have representation at ICANN across the board. So we will continue to work again with all the parties that are—all the stakeholders that are involved in this to ensure that we continue to lower the barriers to participation to make it as easy for people to apply to this program, to ensure that everybody is given a fair chance at the opportunity to do so. I don't know if you want to add anything else, Siranush?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Yes, Peter. Hi. Good to see you here. I think that there was also—the doors were opened by At-Large for individual members. That helped also more fellows to get engaged, and one of the numbers there, 63 At-Large individual members and observers supports what I said. So those who are not leaders of any regional organizations can become a part of

end-user's community. So this is mutual collaboration, the result of mutual efforts to be in place. So not to highlight only the leaders of particular organization, but to expand the participation and engagement. So this is one of the efforts also being in place so far.

PASTOR PETERS:

There was also the process whereby past fellows were invited, selected fellows were invited to come and speak to fellows or the current fellows, a fellowship program. If you have any old fellows, they are invited to come and also share their experiences with the fellows. So I don't know if that program is still in place.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

I know what you mean because I was one of those alumni who were invited to speak and share my experience with other fellows by the time we both together were fellows. The program is evolving. By the time we were fellows, there was no mentoring program in place at all. So now, the program has extensive mentoring process in place where eight weeks prior to the meeting, all the selected fellows and NextGeners are assigned to a mentor who is nominated from different SO/ACs and they are going through the extensive preparation stage prior to coming to ICANN.

By the time we were there, there was no this type of program but we usually have this exchange among alumni and the newcomers, not as an official session, but we usually use this opportunity during the networking events. We try to use the SO/AC engagement more so those who are newcomers learn more about the community. ICANN multi-stakeholder model in general.

That's why we have this onboarding for newcomers, onboarding get to know ICANN community in place now where prior to the main four days of ICANN, the fellows and the NextGeners have the opportunity to learn about every community. So the evolvement of the programs is in place. Some of them stayed, some of them improved, and we work from there.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Thanks, Siranush. The conversations are really good, and we have a list of persons. So I'm going to close the queue now and what I want to ask you, everyone will be given one minute to respond, so that we can at least get to most of the people who have had their hands up for some time now. And this includes our responses to the questions and comments. So next we will go to Amrita, who's been waiting a while, and then [inaudible].

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you, Claire. I'll be very brief. I am a proud fellow. So welcome to all of you. And yes, the ICANN fellowship has evolved, and it has to evolve with time. So I don't see anything wrong. I was thinking of speaking something else. I guess, I liked the numbers you showed but sometimes there are gray areas. For example, there are many in APRALO, who are the young team who are there, but they may be of some ALS, et cetera. So they are not individually represented, so that number doesn't count here.

Now, at APRALO, I'm sure it happens in other RALOs, we welcome all the newcomers, the next gen if there is one in our region or the fellows who are coming, we work together with them. They may be interested in different SOs or ACs, but we welcome them in our WhatsApp group because we think that is effective. They can be there, participate there.

If they feel they want to contribute, they could do so, or we guide them to the places they are interested.

So we don't want to have an inhibitive place. We wanted them to grow out there. So we are aware of it. We are happy to support all of you. If any one of you want to have any questions, you can come up to us. I know my time is up, but one more thing which I would add is, we are here to help you, but you also have to help yourself. The hand has to come from our side as well as yours. If the hand doesn't come, sorry, it doesn't work. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: That's exactly what I said. If you don't ask, we don't know what you need. So ask us questions so we come up with the response.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Thank you, Amrita. [inaudible]?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Thank you for giving me the mic. Hello, everyone. So my question is what is required to succeed for the third fellowship program?

ERGYS RAMAJ: Thank you for the question. I don't know that we can specifically answer that question. Obviously, it's on a case-by-case basis, and the selection committee is the entity that makes a determination. But essentially, at a much 30,000 feet view is someone who has shown that through the opportunities, or the two previous opportunities, they have taken full advantage of their participation at ICANN. And that have shown in a clear way that A, they want to be involved, and that they have continued to carry on the work, and they have continued to be active participants.

That's essentially at a high-level what I would suspect the selection committee will look for. But this is such on a case-by-case basis, and it really depends on the specifics of each situation but the burden is much higher for a third-time individual to participate again because of those reasons that I've just outlined.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Thanks. We had two hands. Yes, we see you. There were two of you in that corner of the room.

ALEX OKABO: Hello, everyone. My name is Alex Okabo. I'm from Kenya, a student from Vtech University. For me, I took a little bit of questions and some recommendations maybe. First question, I had to ask, how does ICANN work with fellow members, and what are the transitioning procedures of transitioning from the NextGen member to the fellow member? Because I am a new year. Okay, it is one year since I joined ICANN through the ISO Kenya.

And the next part, I wanted to recommend is the materials for maybe learning, if it could be a little bit specified, because for me, I'm more into cybersecurity and networking. If you could specify for those in cybersecurity or in development, we would follow those part, and for those in the other part of their interest, to love their part. Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ: Thank you, Alex. I will take the first part of the question, and Siranush can help with the second part. I mentioned this earlier when I was talking about the differences between the NextGen and the fellowship program. Amrita just summarized it perfectly. We're here to help you, but you have to help yourself. So essentially the burden on applying for

the fellowship program is on you as an individual. You obviously have to look at all the criteria. You have to look at whether or not you're interested, and then you have to apply to the program to be considered. There is no direct link between the NextGen and the fellowship program.

It's also not a stated goal of the NextGen program that one ought to then move on to the fellowship program. So obviously, having participated in the NextGen program, I would suspect is helpful to you as an individual in putting together a much more informed application for the fellowship program. But in terms of the specific links, that's really up to the individual to also make a determination as to whether or not they do want to consider applying onto the fellowship program.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Yeah, just to add, these are two different programs with two different objectives in place and two different application forms. Two different opening grounds even with different objectives in place, so please follow. My first suggestion will be as a NextGener to sign up for ICANN newsletters to find out and to be on the loop what's going on. This is where also you can see the announcement for both programs. And if you go and see you are eligible, that's definitely the place for you to apply.

The fellowship program is a global capacity development program, unlike the NextGen, which is regional-based. So you don't need to be only from Africa where the ICANN meeting is in order to apply for fellowship, but you can be from anywhere to apply for the fellowship program. The only limitation is for policy forum where only alumni can apply. So those who had been at least once a fellow can apply for the

policy forum, but definitely you need to go and review ICANN for Beginners website. If you go to ICANN.org and put ICANN for Beginners, you will find a lot of information where to start and how to proceed. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Okay, thank you. We need to now stick strictly to time. Is that the second person? There was a second person in that corner of the room. Yes, go ahead.

ABDOU KARIM BADJIE:

So good morning, everyone. My name is Abdou Karim Badjie, and I am from the University of Gambia. So my question is, what is next for the NextGen participants? For some of us, yes, the goal is to come here to get the awareness, the knowledge and the skills that is required to contribute to ICANN's mission and vision but beyond that, we want to have direct engagement with our community because there was a question that was actually raised on bringing down the age limit to, let's say, 12, 13, 14 to 15 but some of us could actually contribute to that mission after the program.

We can go back to our community to organize forums, workshops and so on and so forth so that we can mentor and guide those people before they reach that particular age. So is there any kind of mechanism or, let's say, approach or strategy in which ICANN is actually applying and providing, let's say, funding mechanisms or support for individuals that are working on initiatives within their own local communities to complement ICANN's mission?

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you. That's a really good question, and it's an important question. I think it's important for everybody to understand, essentially, how things are organized. In terms of the specific question about the funding, I think I would encourage you to reach out to your regional vice president or to the regional team, the engagement team in your region, to ask about opportunities for engagement in your specific region. There's a lot of programs within each region that take place, and you may find some programs in those activities that are of interest to you.

So I would highly encourage you to reach out to your RVP, to the regional vice president or his team to ask about those opportunities in your region. I think I already addressed the question about age. Again, there are certain legal requirements and jurisdictional issues that we need to take into account, but we want to make sure that we are very clear about the objectives of each one of these programs, and they're quite different. Although they complement one another, they're different from one another. Thank you.

ABDOU KARIM BADJIE:

Thank you too.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Thank you. In the interest of time, let me just go to [inaudible] and then Megan. I know we have [inaudible] and Greg also, but let's just get them. and then Natalia.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Thank you. [inaudible] from Nepal, for the record, a second time fellow here. So I think it was great this time during the inception of fellowship. We have a session on how this can be done better. So there also I had

recommended this. I think there is a lack of a digital platform for networking between the fellows, as we have seen from the numbers, there are a number of leaders in the ICANN. We have come from the fellowship. So if we can have a special group of fellow [inaudible] and we can share the stories from the leaders, how they navigated from this complex landscape.

I think it would be a better inspiration for us, even for asking our barriers how to reach that person. But once we have that platform, then I think we can reach out to them directly. We can read their stories. For example, let's say once a week or once a month, a leader's story is shared, who is [inaudible]. I think that inspires us, the new fellows, to actually work with the community. Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you. That's a great suggestion. There's one thing that I think it's important to also highlight is that there are privacy concerns in terms of how much we can share information and people's individual contact information. So that's an important thing that needs to be considered. But the beauty of the bottom-up model, multi-stakeholder model is that, you guys can do this on your own. The fellows themselves can self-organize and say, let's create this group and that group and you do not need ICANN or ICANN org in any way kind of serving that big brother role and seeing and paying attention to what you're doing, right?

You have that ability to self-organize and you have the ability to share that information proactively with one another if you so choose. From our perspective, there are limitations in terms of what kind of data and personal data we can share with people across the various ICANN cohorts. So that's one limitation. But I do like the suggestion. We also

used to have a while back a series of blogs where we would highlight certain individuals and their accomplishments. I think that's something that we can take back and consider reinstating potentially that because, to your point, it's good to ensure that people are motivated and have that inspiration. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

Okay. I saw Megan take her hand down. So we would go to Natalia.

NATALIA FILINA:

Hello, everyone. Very welcome. My name is Natalia – sorry. It's not so comfortable. Maybe I would try to visit. Hi, I'm not [inaudible]. What I can do. I'm so sorry for this mess. Again. So welcome, everyone. My name is Natalia Filina. I'm Secretary of EURALO, and I'm very, very happy to see all of you here. And it is not only 1.4 conversation in exchange with us. We will do that during this week and after, after, after. Now, I would love to share you my happiness because we are more than half of the year now working on very great projects with a great support from ICANN, ICANN org, Department of Communications, if I use this right. We are working on the project which will help our current members and new ones to understand not so easy structure of our At-Large life. ICANN, ICANN bubble, maybe someone can say it like this. We will gather all of our links to different resources, to ICANN website, to At-Large website, to our Wiki pages because we have a huge amount of information for you and for us too about how can we go through all of this work step-by-step. Where we can find the learning courses. Where we can find the mentors. Which kind of stream of work we may choose for first step for main working stream, et cetera.

And we will have today a presentation, short presentation about this project at the ICANN engagement booth at the middle of the day, I think something. I will give you details about the time and we will show you how it will look like. All of our—

CLAIRE CRAIG: Nathalia?

NATALIA FILINA: Sorry, all of our graphics, our information, we will give you a lot of information for usage and for easy way to be with us. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Thanks so much, Natalia. Heidi also put a link in the chat. I think we need to close now. I know that some of you have been waiting. We need to get to them. I think we are out of time. So if there are questions or comments, can you please put it in the QA pod and we will respond to it. Thank you. Okay. I think this was really a very good session. There was quite a lot of engagement. Really terribly sorry that we couldn't get to everyone, but that's what happens when people really engage and contribute, so thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We don't have 15 minutes left?

CLAIRE CRAIG: We still have another 15-minute presentation and then we have the—okay, I can—

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's your presentation.

CLAIRE CRAIG:

My presentation, I'll have to cut down on that if you wish. What do you want to do? Okay. Sorry, I will try to go as quickly as I can, but in the interest of—I'll have to go a little bit slowly as well for the interpreters. So my name is Claire Craig, as you would have seen in the first slide. I'm just going to talk to you a little bit about the At-Large and the regional At-Large organizations.

And I will say many of us, I wouldn't say many of you, it can be quite confusing to understand the difference between the At-Large and the ALAC and the regional organizations. So we just wanted to share some of that with you. Then I'll talk about the At-Large and the ALAC. Let's talk a bit about my journey and then some ways that you can participate. Next slide, please?

Right. So about the At-Large and EURALOs. Some people say RALOs, so it depends on your region. The At-Large community is made up of independent organizations and we would have heard about that in this discussion this morning and these are called ALSs or At-Large organizations, At-Large structures. You have also heard that there can be independent members. So persons can apply to be an independent member within their regional organization. Now what is the regional organization? There are five geographical regions with recognized organizations.

And when we say recognized, they are recognized by ICANN through the signing of an MOU with ICANN and these organizations, there's the AFRALO in Africa. So AFRALO is actually hosting this particular meeting. There is APRALO, Asia Pacific, which will be hosting the next meeting. There is EURALO in Europe. There is Latin America and the Caribbean, which is the LACRALO and the fifth one, the color is, if you're a little bit

colorblind, you may not be seeing it properly, is NARALO, which is in the North American region.

And as I said before, these railers are made up of the ALSs and the individual members in their geographical regions. So depending on the geographical region to which you live or belong, you can be part of one of these RALOs. Next slide, please.

So the ALSs are accredited by ALAC. So they go through the RALO, but the RALOs recommend them to ALAC and ALAC will give them the accreditation. This is to ensure and promote that regional users participate in matters within the ICANN's remit. So there's really a need for regional people to be part of your RALOs so that your voices can be heard and your regional concerns shared. It is recommended or advised that all interested civil society organizations are invited to apply and join the RALO in your region.

No? Okay. The RALOs connect to civil society organizations representing the interests of individual users and end users in each region. The RALOs help to get the end user's voice and opinions heard within the ICANN bottom-up consensus-based multi-stakeholder approach in ensuring stable and secure operation of the internet's unique identifier system. Next slide, please.

The RALOs consist of—I spoke about the ALSs. They are also unaffiliated individual members, and these are members who are not affiliated to an ALS, but they can be an individual member. An internet user may join the At-Large community independently without being a member of an ALS, and they are known as unaffiliated individual members. In one of the RALOs, there are also observers who can be part of the RALO, and that is just in one of the regions. Next slide, please.

Okay. About At-Large. How is at-large different from the At-Large community? At-Large is a small subset of 15 members of the At-Large community, which has approximately 260 ALSs and approximately 160 unaffiliated individual members, and they also—that it represents. There are also approximately 17 observers. Well, this is not ALAC. There are also four liaisons selected to be part of ALAC, but they are not part of the ALAC structure. So that needs to be corrected, but the ALAC chair can select four liaisons to the GAC, the Government Advisory Committee, the GNSO, the CCNSO, and the SSAC and those are people who sit on those organizations, but come back to the ALAC and report on what is going on in those SOs and ACs.

The ALAC advises on activities of ICANN, including—well, they normally advise the board, and on activities in ICANN, including internet policy and operations. And the ALAC appoints delegates to the NomCom based on the recommendations of the RALOs. It is also important to note that seat 15 of the ICANN board of directors is selected by the At-Large community. So, this is not just the ALAC, but the At-Large community participates in, and this is a voting seat on the board of directors. Next slide, please.

Now, just quick. So this is what the ALAC looks like, the At-Large organizations. You're seeing the five regional organizations. There are two members each that are elected by the RALO to sit on the ALAC, and one member each selected by the NomCom to sit on the ALAC as well and you will see seat 15 selected by the At-Large community to the board. Next slide.

Okay, just quickly, my journey. I came in as a fellow in ICANN58, which was the meeting in Copenhagen. My second fellowship was ICANN59,

Johannesburg in 2017, and then Panama was my third fellowship in 2018. I then was a mentor in Kobe and for ICANN26. That was before we had the community mentors. Next slide, please.

While in that time, I also joined the non-commercial stakeholder's group, specifically the non-commercial user's constituency and I participated virtually in ICANN71 virtual policy forum in June of 2021. There's a little picture of me up there. I don't know if you can see me in kind of a little—yes, that's me there. And so, that was a plenary session, ICANN multistakeholder model within the internet governance system. Next slide.

So, you see, I was even able to contribute. This was during the pandemic. Next slide, please.

So then my journey continued. I was voted as secretary of the Latin America and the Caribbean RALO in 2021 and then at ICANN72 AGM, I was appointed into the post of secretary and someone mentioned the fact that all of this was happening during COVID. So I was still able to participate in COVID. My first face-to-face ICANN meeting as a contributing in the RALO was in ICANN74, which was a hybrid meeting and it really was different participating face-to-face than being at home and on the screen and following the meeting. I really understood some of the important work that happens in relating to people face-to-face in the meetings.

Then I decided after my two years as secretary ended, I applied to the NomCom and was selected to be on the ALAC and that's the one seat for the LACRALU that I now hold and in that position, I was selected as one of the Vice Chairs of the ALAC. Next slide.

Okay. What are the upcoming opportunities for you to participate? There are working groups, active working groups in ALAC and At-Large, sorry, that you can participate in. The working groups are the Consolidated Policy working group and I've highlighted the word policy, the CPWG, which meets weekly and that deals specifically with ICANN policy. Then there's the operations, finance, and budget working group, the OFB.

Right now, we also meet regularly, and that deals with ICANN operations. We are now looking at the strategic plan as well as the CIP, continuous improvement process and I'm one of the co-chairs of that committee. There is also the At-Large Campaign and Engagement Subcommittee, which is currently--you're going to hear a little bit more about that at some point in time.

Other opportunities to participate, ICANN81, the AGM, November 9th to 14th. Well, I know deadlines for fellowships and NextGen is closed, but as soon as reminded us, we can all participate online at some of these sessions. Then ICANN82, the community forum, March 8th to 13th 2025. The programs are open, fellowship program deadline is July 15th to August 18th. That's available on the website. I hope I have the correct information there.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Just to clarify, ICANN82 announcement will be for the fellowship program, will be posted on 18th of July. So the application around will be open from 18th of July till 18th of August and the names will be announced on 31st of October and the deadline for applying for ICANN81, as you mentioned, has passed.

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- CLAIRE CRAIG: Right. And then the NextGen application round, that opens August 16th and runs until September 27th. As again, ICANN meetings are hybrid and recorded and everyone is invited to join and participate. So thank you for the opportunity to share with you this morning. I hope that this was valuable. We now move on to the other next steps.
- As part of ALAC, the ALAC leadership team will be hosting a webinar later in the summer, sometimes July or August. We haven't decided on the dates yet to meet with the NextGeners and the fellows just to talk about what are some of these next steps. So I think we're out of time, but I don't know. Heidi, yes, please, go ahead.
- HEIDI ULLRICH: Hi, Claire. There's one more action item, I believe and that is that At-Large will continue holding these sessions at ICANN public meetings. So the next one will be at ICANN 81. Thank you.
- CLAIRE CRAIG: Thanks for that, Heidi.
- SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Just to add to this, at ICANN81, we also will come to At-Large as to all other SO/ACs to invite them for the specific session for all newcomers actually, to learn about At-Large and how to get engaged.
- CLAIRE CRAIG: Thank you, everyone. Thanks for being here. Thanks to Siranush and Ergys and Deborah for sharing. Thanks to our interpreters, everyone online. Enjoy the rest of ICANN80. Thank you.
- UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]