
ICANN80 | PF – ccNSO: Universal Acceptance Awareness ccTLDs Session
Wednesday, June 12, 2024 – 9:00 to 10:15 KGL

CLAUDIA RUIZ:

Hello and welcome to the ccNSO Universal Acceptance Awareness ccTLD session. My name is Claudia Ruiz and I am joined by my colleague Joke Braeken and Bart Boswinkel, and we are the remote participation managers for this session. Please note this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN expected standards of behavior.

During this session, questions or comments submitted in chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper form. As I've noted in the chat, I will read questions and comments aloud during the time set by the chair or moderator of this session.

Interpretation for this session will include English, Spanish, French and Arabic. Click on the interpretation icon in Zoom and select the language you will speak during this session. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand in Zoom and, once the session facilitator calls upon your name, kindly unmute your microphone and take the floor. Before speaking, ensure you have selected the language you will speak from the interpretation menu.

Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English. When speaking, be sure to mute all other notifications and devices. Please speak clearly and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

This session includes automated real-time transcription. Please note that this transcript is not official or authoritative. To view the real-time transcript, click on the closed caption button in the Zoom toolbar. To ensure transparency of participation ICANNs multistakeholder model, we ask that you sign into Zoom sessions using your full name—for example, first name, last name, or surname. You may be removed from the session if you do not sign in using your full name.

Thank you and with that I will hand the floor over to session chair Abdalmonem Galila.

ABDALMONEM GALILA:

Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. Wherever you are here in the beautiful city of Rwanda, Kigali, or at the remote participation. Today you have many presenters. Before all of that, for those who don't know me, I am Abdalmonem Galila, and I will share the session for today on behalf of the Universal Acceptance Committee as the chair of the committee.

Today we have five presenters, including me, for the topics that will be discussed today that are related to ccTLDs and universal acceptance. For me, I will start by giving you an overview about what is the Universal Acceptance Committee, what are the purposes of initiating this committee within ccNSO, what is our working plan, what are the ongoing activities and future activities according to the work plan?

And there is also the Vice-Chair of the Universal Acceptance Committee, who is Regina Fuchsova, who is the industry relation manager of EURid, who will give you an overview about the main focal actors in order to be

compliant with our scope at the UAC, which are the mailing list and the UAC library.

After that we will go to our colleague Dijana from RNIDS, who is the communication manager for the Serbian International Internet Domain Registry, who will speak about the UAD for ccTLDs, and of course, she will go through the required preparation for the universal acceptance today, how it is relevant for ccTLDs to organize Universal Acceptance Day or even UA events, what are the outcomes of Universal Acceptance Day that was organized by RNIDS for 2024, and what are the impacts?

After that we will go for our expert doctor Sarmad, who is the senior director of IDN and the universal acceptance program at ICANN, who will give us more insights about Universal Acceptance Day 2024 and what are the categories of the training offered workshop and what are the sessions, what are these types of sessions? And of course we will share an important thing that is related to the tentative timeline for Universal Acceptance Day 2025.

After that our colleague Regina will back again to give us oversights about an IDN awareness survey 2024 and its results.

After that we'll go for our colleague Seda who is the universal acceptance program manager at ICANN, who will give us an overview about universal acceptance readiness survey report for 2022 that was conducted in 2022 and published early 2023. What are universal acceptance readiness statistics? What are the UA support by ccTLDs? What are the motivations? What are the barriers in order to adopt universal acceptance?

And finally we will go to some of the questions that led to community consultation about conducting future survey by the Universal Acceptance Committee.

Next slide please. As a standard slide here, we should go first for universal acceptance. Universal acceptance is the concept that all domain names and all email addresses are treated equally, should be treated equally, by all Internet enabled application devices and assistants. I mean all domain names and all email addresses should be accepted, validated, stored, processed and be displayed correctly by all these Internet enabled applications.

Next slide please. The Universal Acceptance Committee was created in September 2023. The main focus for the Universal Acceptance Committee is to create a platform for ccTLD community in order to interact and share information at a global level and with groups with an ICANN umbrella for the matters that are related to universal acceptance, related to IDN, universal acceptance and internationalized domain names, whatever these domain names at the first level or the second or other levels away from formulating any standard or any policies. And it is within the scope for the ccNSO.

So the main purposes for the Universal Acceptance Committee. The first one to focus on the topics that are related to universal acceptance and IDNs. And of course we need to share information for the best practices for the universal acceptance event, for the matters that are related to universal acceptance and how to overcome these barriers to best practices.

So the second purpose will be to share information by ccTLDs for and ccTLDs in order to have some kind of knowledge transfer.

And the third purpose for the Universal Acceptance Committee is to liaise with other work groups under the ICANN umbrella—for example, liaise with the Universal Acceptance Steering Group, liaise with GAC [IDNA] Group, liaise with ICANN Board UA group. It is some kind of knowledge transfer. And this meeting for today is the first meeting for the Universal Acceptance Committee while at ICANN80. So it is some kind of knowledge transfer. Maybe we have an awareness session for the Tech Day, maybe you organize other sessions for the ccTLD event, something like that.

Next slide please. So for the work plan of the Universal Acceptance Committee, we have two main activities related to timing. The first one is related to ongoing or completed activities and the other one related to future plans and activities.

We have five points here for our plans. The first one to reach out to ccTLD managers globally to increase awareness about the Universal Acceptance Committee and its activities. We already circulated an email for the Universal Acceptance Committee session here for Kigali, for the mailing list and for our network in order to attend the sessions related to ccTLDs and the important concept of universal acceptance. And of course this is the first step.

The second step to invite more and more ccTLD managers in order to join the Universal Acceptance Committee. The second thing is to implement the Universal Acceptance work plan with its items that was

confirmed during ICANN 79 [inaudible] to assist in organizing sessions on universal acceptance readiness and practice during ICANN public meetings like we are here today for and for example, other example like Tech Day ccNSO sessions or ccNSO members' meeting. And of course we need to be engaged with Universal Acceptance Day for 2025. We need to encourage more and more ccTLDs in order to be a part of this successful event that rocks the world about the importance of universal acceptance and why does it matter and why is it important in order to be adopted as soon as possible to bring the next billion Internet users to be online.

The fourth thing for the action for our work plan or the action plan to liaise with other work groups. Like I said, the Universal Acceptance Steering Group already have liaisons for the UAG that share information from the UAG to ccTLD managers in order to make something like knowledge transfer and to be up to date about what is going on for universal acceptance.

Last thing is to create an email list for all ccTLDs who are interested in universal acceptance, IDNs, and EAs as a platform for information exchange. Actually you may think that I am a ccTLD for the ASCII top-level domain name, but you could have other levels that could be IDNs, like we will see today for dot-rs for Serbia. They have an IDN for the second level, and the first level is already ASCII RS.

At this time I would like to move the floor to my colleague Regina to talk about the most important actors, to share information and to liaison with other work groups, and to share best practices and to be familiar

with all related matters that are related to universal acceptance for ccTLDs. Regina, the floor is yours.

REGINA FUCHSOVA:

Thank you very much, Abdulmonem. I would like to draw your attention to concrete steps, how to join this committee or how to be active in line with what my colleague just explained to you that is in the scope of the committee.

So first of all, we would like to encourage you to join the mailing list. You can see the ways of how to subscribe. You can even scan the QR code and join right away during the session. The purpose is to share experience with other members in the mailing list, and we believe this is one of the key elements to exchange experience and encourage each other and share the success or stories or challenges facing with dealing with ideas and universal acceptance.

Just as a very small example, together with three other colleagues, ccTLDs and CENTR members, we had a short session at the CENTR Jamboree about IDNs and universal acceptance with Israeli, Catalanian, and Faroe Island TLDs. We shared what as a ccTLD the registries have to face. And there is something for everybody, like the elements that Abdulmonem highlighted what universal acceptance is about. But it can be also very pragmatic for a ccTLD being like a bigger portfolio, more services or a bigger offer to the registrars, and also cultural elements of the language in the region. So we believe it's really important to stay in touch and exchange experience.

And then the second concrete call for action is the library, which is already up and running. It's a list of resources for ccTLDs, mainly on universal acceptance, also on IDNs and EAI, and it includes all different type of sources, links to tools, articles, reports. So it's a mix of useful information, and you are very much welcome to both go and have a look but also to submit the content. Also you can see the ways of how to contribute or how to have a look here.

I think we can go to the next slide. Thank you. So to recap, our call for action today is that you are very much welcome to become a member of this committee to use the resources which we are gradually gathering in the library of the Universal Acceptance Committee. And third element is to subscribe to the mailing list and either observe or actively contribute with sharing your experience. Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you Regina. Actually Regina, for the library, there is editorial board in order to receive submissions, review the submissions, and conduct the submitter if there is any other modification and finally they could approve this submission and inform the submitter that it is already submitted. Actually all these processes are already published at link for secure codes that you could use in order to access our library. And as said by Regina, the mailing list and library is used to increase reachability for ccTLDs in order to be aware enough about the matters related to universal acceptance that are relevant to ccTLD best practices, its challenges and how could they overcome these challenges as a kind of knowledge transfer.

Now I would like to move to the next slide, next presenter, Dijana, to talk about the relevance of universal acceptance today for ccTLDs. Dijana, the floor is yours.

DIJANA MILUTINOVIC:

Thank you very much, Mr. Galila. My name is Dijana Milutinovic. I will be speaking in English. And first of all thank you for the invitation and opportunity to share our experiences with the UAD keystone 2024 event that was held in Belgrade earlier this year on March 28. But I believe you're all familiar with that.

Next slide, please. So at the beginning I believe it's nice to introduce one to another, to each other. We already see on this picture, although we have grown since the moment it was taken, our small but dynamic registry. As you can see we have IDN dot-rs on the second level. Dot-Serbia is a [Cyrillic] domain. And what we managed to do is to provide stable and secure service to a majority of domain name registrants in Serbia. Basically, about 70% of businesses in Serbia rely on the services of our registry. Small but very dynamic team.

Next slide please. As we managed to provide not just service locally, but managed to be active in international community, as you can see, back two years, we organized a RIPE meeting in Belgrade with about 500 people, if I'm not mistaken, gathered on site. Last year, we had the pleasure of hosting a Jamboree, and the CENTR community, our colleagues from European ccTLDs, and [inaudible] members were also gathered in Belgrade. And this experience gave us a little push to apply for the post for the UA Day, keystone event.

And next slide, please. And I will be then speaking from the perspective of someone who is a communications manager and who is basically in charge in fields to coordinate the entire project and to help processes be completed and make things happen. So bear with me as this is a perspective of communications professional.

Next slide, please. I believe you are familiar with deadlines and the procedures that take place in order to apply to host some of the events related to UA Day. So in the moment when we got the information back in December that we will be the host for the keystone event, we needed to, of course, complete some internal processes, like, first of all, budgeting to get approvals from the Board, a lot of paperwork. So whether we hate it or love it, we do work with papers, whether in printed or digital form. So we need to have everything in place in terms of legal, finances and preparing the team that there would be some tasks of this sort in the future, and of course to allocate our internal resources, bearing in mind that there will be some new tasks in front of us and that some other things might not be priority at that particular moment as we had about three months to put everything into place.

Next slide, please. So when organizing an event of this scale, what we need to first of all make sure is to get the proper venue, the venue that can accommodate certain standards, that can provide good support for welcoming people, not only visitors, but also participants from abroad. And I don't know about other countries, but in Serbia and Belgrade, March is always the important month on the calendar of events, so it was a bit challenging to provide the proper venue, but we managed, although the schedule was quite tight. You need to have a good

production crew that will make sure that streaming is seamless, that translation is well heard—so someone who's in the field is well connected and able to provide good service. On this particular occasion, we basically did the branding of the event from scratch, delivered a little website where the information would be shown. And it's still active. You will see, at the end of my presentation, addresses if you hadn't had a chance to visit. And of course we needed to work on a communication plan to announce the event in local community but also internationally.

Next slide. Yes, thank you. So there's of course a lot of external communication going on. We needed to be aligned with ICANN's Comms team to make sure that the branding follows all the guidelines and everything is nice and tight. And of course, we participated also in the program creation and curation with USAG members and the regional [ASCISC], who helped tremendously to deliver good content for the event. We of course reached out to some local stakeholders and tried to provide the adequate experts who could shed a light from the local perspective.

Next slide, please. So in order to have a successful event, there are some things that need to be done unplanned to who we try to communicate, to be, in this particular case, also media program participants, visitors, and how to engage, encourage people not only to participate, but also to deliver message to others because when we were thinking about the audience for this event, we wanted to have on site people who would find this content really relevant, but would also make a step further and actually would be interested in considering implementation.

So we tried to reach the tech community, we tried to reach academia, the local authorities, and in this particular sense we were quite successful, bearing in mind that majority of people on site basically came from the tech community, a lot of them system administrators. Also, we managed to put this on the agenda of the ministry, and the minister was also on site opening the event, which is really important because we always need some kind of wind to your back ([that's a Serbian] thing] and a goodwill from governmental and non-governmental bodies when discussing topics like this.

Next slide, please. So this is how the UA Day in Belgrade looked like. In order to execute the event of this type, you really need to love the process to be able to coordinate, to communicate, and to basically put the team efforts into one spot and actually enjoy the process.

Next slide, please. And we've managed to put together four panels with some really important topics, and I know that for the local audience on site, this was really insightful, and we managed to get the insights from the top level, managed to get some beautiful examples of implementation of universal acceptance in local communities, reaching from Europe to Russia to China and so on. We also managed to showcase beautiful examples of implementation of the status of the implementation delivered in session three, and really an interesting session to [place] about academia and relations with academia and options to introduce UA into tech universities or faculties' curriculum. Of course, we had a little parallel workshop taking place, which was mostly dedicated to technical staff. So this is about the program.

Next slide, please. And we were quite satisfied with the outcome as there were almost 200 people on site, also including media representatives. From what we could have recorded there, there were about 140 people following up on sessions and both streaming links real-time. During all the events taking place, we had very diverse participants on site. We also had diverse audiences online and also on site. And we received some really nice media attention for this event because there were over 120 news pieces published in Serbia only. There were much more of them published globally, internationally, and in the countries of people who participated in the program realization.

Next slide please. What is relevant for us as an organization who has, well, basically two ideas is that we've put this topic under the spotlight, we've put it on the radar. We do a lot of activities related to promotion of our ideas, especially the Cyrillic domain, dot-[serb]. However, this gives a different perspective, and when you have an event this important in your city and in your country, it also sheds a different light on the topic of IDNs and universal acceptance in front of various stakeholder groups. And it's always important for the people locally to learn more from international experts and simply gives a different way. So we have managed to get more attention from academia, from the tech community, governmental, local authorities, various agencies, NGO's, and of course the media, because the wider population was also informed of the UA. We also get our registry under the spotlight globally. Obviously, I'm speaking in this event and sharing my experiences, so this is just part of the impact provided.

Next slide, please. So what us as the local host can recommend or from our experience, what could be done in the future to boost the visibility is to simply harness the power of the community that's already there. When communicating, keep the communication constant, tirelessly promoting the date, making it a really important date with everyone's calendar. Pick up the key points that need to be repeated. And from the perspective of what can be expected and done in your local community, make it a memorable event. So, put the topic on the agenda of organizations that are important to move this matter further.

So, I believe I'm on the 13th or 12th minute, and I'm running out of time. So I guess I'll be concluding with this. And thank you for your attention. If there are any questions, I am willing to take them. Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you, Dijana. Now I will open the floor for a couple of minutes if you have any question, any comment, to say. Any hand?

Yeah, go ahead. Please say your name, your affiliation, and speak slowly to make it clear for translator to interpret it.

LEVY SYANSEKE:

Gotcha. My name is Levy Syanseke. I'm with Internet Society, Zambia chapter. Actually I would like to recommend the Serbian team for the UA Day; that they host it. We had a similar event, except I think our target was mostly developers and academia, largely because we had less engagement from the top-level domain and the registry managers. The engagement was a bit tricky.

So my question is, what was the process of engaging the local authorities and the registrars or registries in your region to get them to actively engage in your UAD? Because in our case, it's sad to point out that Internet service providers are registries and registrars, and some of the domain managers were not interested in the Universal Acceptance Day event. So how what was the process for you to actually get them convinced to participate in your event? Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you very much. Actually, what you said will be answered shortly by the other presenter. At same time, the main goal behind this meeting is to encourage ccTLDs in order to go for the adoption of universal acceptance and be aware enough about Universal Acceptance Day and UA Day events. I know universal acceptance is really related to IDNs and EAs and new gTLDs. For IDNs, it means it's your local community from ccTLDs. So the main focal actor here is ccTLDs. So how could ccTLDs motivated to host Universal Acceptance Day or be aware enough about Universal Acceptance Day? That will be my question to Dijana now, and you will have an answer shortly.

Dijana, I have a question for you before going for that. What motivates RNIDS as a ccTLD to host Universal Acceptance Day or even contribute to EU universal acceptance events?

DIJANA MILUTINOVIC:

Well, from our perspective, things are quite clear as we do have IDNs, and we are working really hard and trying to promote them. But there are always those questions that appear and that are UA- related. So

from our perspective, from perspective of communicating the value of our domains, it is quite important to maybe clarify those questions, but also offer to solutions to those problems that [users tend to] point of finger at some point. And that is one of the reasons that we've decided to step further as we are very much involved into the universal acceptance story, especially in our area. Our team members are actively working with the UASG regional working group. So that's one part of the coin.

And the other one is, from our side, to offer support and help in promoting the matter of universal acceptance. And bear in mind that being a domain name registry with a Cyrillic domain and working with universal acceptance ... Let's say that we are the ones who needed to translate the terms into Serbian. So from that point we felt not just obligation but also desire to step in and contribute this way.

ABDULMONEM GALILA: Thank you, Dijana, for your answer. Actually—

BART BOSWINKEL: Abdulmonem, there is also a question online.

ABDULMONEM GALILA: Okay.

BART BOSWINKEL: May I read it?

ABDULMONEM GALILA: Yes.

BART BOSWINKEL: Hi, Djiana.

DIJANA MILUTINOVIC: Hello.

BART BOSWINKEL: This is a question from Ai-Chin Lu. The question is, “It’s a great event, but what have you learned from it, and will you adjust your UA strategy as a result?” Thanks.

DIJANA MILUTINOVIC: Well, actually this is great question. And from my personal perspective, I believe that the lesson learned is that we should maybe address a bit more on adjusting our strategy in terms of being a bit more towards academia and education of young people at the beginning of their career. If they are familiar with these terms, it would be at some point where they are at the position to make decisions to build the systems. They would be at some point already equipped.

So the answer to your question is yes, we would definitely slightly adjust our UA strategy, bearing in mind that we already are working a lot with academia and do put a lot of emphasis on the matter of the question of

UA. But I believe there is room for the further and more intense activities in that specific regard.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you, Dijana.

Could we move your question to the end, as we are out of time? Thank you.

Dr. Sarmad, your turn is now. Go ahead, please.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you. Abdulmonem. So, I'll be very briefly talking about UA Day, which was organized in 2024, and then also share some tentative timelines for UA Day 2025.

As was shared by Dijana just now, we organize and support Universal Acceptance Day annually now with the collaboration of the community. This includes a call for proposals, and we receive proposals from across the globe every year. And then we work with the community members to shortlist the proposals to finalize the events. And then we support and organize those events, or support the organization of those events with different stakeholders. For more details, please go to [universalacceptance.day], where it currently lists all the events which have happened for this year. This is the second time we have organized this. The first UA Day was organized in 2023.

Next slide, please. So, just to give you some statistics, just bear in mind that we've actually just closed the UA Day events on 30 May. So we're

still gathering the numbers, so some of these are tentative. We will issue a final report soon, towards the end of June, and with that, we'll also close or finalize these numbers.

So we received 133 proposals for the UA Day 2024 event from more than 65 countries. And with the help and support and guidance from the community committee, we shortlisted 56 proposals out of them from more than 50 countries. And then we went out and started the contracting process. Eventually, 51 of those event organizers contracted with us for the support. So those were the events which were eventually finalized.

The keystone event was hosted by RNIDS, the Serbian ccTLD manager, and you heard details about that particular event by Djiana. It was a great event, a great collaboration, and you can see more details at the UA Day webpage hosted by RNIDS (uaday.rs).

We were also able to organize (actually, UNESCO organized) the UA Day event this time as well for its member states, which was hosted in Paris and France on 6 May.

We compiled these numbers on 27 May. As I said, not all the final reports from all the UA events have been come in yet. So we'll be finalizing this report. But based on the 32 reports which were received from the 32 different events by 27 May, these events were held in more than 30 countries. Already, more than 5000 people have reported to have attended these events, and they were conducted in 17 different languages across the globe.

And on the right you can see the shortlisted events and how they're actually distributed across the five regions.

So with that, let's move on to the next slide. Okay, so going into a bit more detail, last year we had, in 2023, organized three kinds of events. There were UA awareness events, UA technical training events, and then UA regional strategy events. This year we organized all those three kinds of events, but we added two additional kinds of events. One was to promote the UA curriculum, which has been developed. And so we actually had a UA academic curriculum events, which we basically encouraged the universities to perhaps organize to look into if they can update their curriculum, to make it integrate more UA- and IDN-related concepts.

And then we also added a UA adoption event. This has been a very interesting event. What we required or asked for the event organizers in this case was that, before the event, they had to make their website UA-ready and their email server UA-ready. And then during the event, they would share the technical details and their, I guess, experience of making those website and mail services UA-ready with the audience, bringing in some very clear learning to the audience based on their own, I guess, journey through this process.

And what we did was we were not only evaluating these. So one of the prerequisites was that whoever organized such an event had to actually, once they had updated their website and email service, demo that to the ICANN team. But in practice, what happened was that there were a series of discussions, and we actually had the ICANN team doing almost multiple sessions, in some cases, of hands-on training of these

event organizers. And they went through the journeys and actually put in a lot of hard work and made their systems UA-ready.

So it was very challenging for most of the organizers, but eventually we're happy to report that all the events which were organized as UA adoption events succeeded in meeting those goals. And actually there was a very significant on-the-ground capacity which was built. The US adoption events were done successfully in Brazil, India, Laos, Panama, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Uruguay, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and, and China.

And if you look at the chart on the right, you'll see that we actually had a good mix of all the different kinds of events organized through the globe, with eleven UA adoption events, but also a couple of strategy events and many more awareness and training events. We also had three events which were for on the UA curriculum.

Next slide, please. Okay, this just gives you a quick view of what happened on UA Days across the globe. We had organizers bring in a lot of different kinds of stakeholders, from strategy discussions to technical training, to curriculum across the globe.

Next slide, please. So finally, we are now closing UA Day 2024. We'll be issuing the final report towards the end of June, and we are already starting to plan for UA Day 2025. Realizing that time is always tight for the organizers, we want to pull the deadlines even further up or earlier so that we can give organizers more and more time to organize these events. So we'll get started, instead of late this year, right after July actually [O]r in July, we'll set up our internal team and then announce

the call for papers in early August with the 30 September as a last day for proposals. And we would like to shortlist by end of October so that we can potentially announce all the UA Day proposals before the next ICANN meeting and then try to contact everybody in this year so that they can have plenty of time to prepare and plan and host the events next year.

This is a tentative timeline. We would request you to provide any input you have, especially if you have hosted a UA event this year and you have any feedback based on your own experience. We'd love to hear back from you. Please share your feedback by emailing us at UA programming.

And with that, thank you very much. Happy to answer any questions. And back to you, Abdulmonem.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you, Dr. Sarmad Actually [inaudible] could have one question. If no question, I have my own question here. Actually, Doctor Sarmad, I have one question. How could you rate the involvement of ccTLDs for the UA Day events, or even normal UA Day events? Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN:

Thank you Abdulmonem. So I think ccTLDs have already done a great job in participating in UA Day events. Interestingly, the first keystone event which was held in 2023 in India, was hosted by NIXI, which is their IDN ccTLD manager and ccTLD manager in collaboration with their

government. Also, the second keystone event was also hosted by an IDN ccTLD of Serbia as we just heard.

So, so far, both the main keystone events for the two years have actually been hosted by ccTLDs. We've seen this year many other events which have been hosted by ccTLDs in Armenia, in Thailand, in China (they participated) and in other places as well. So there's active participation from ccTLDs across the globe. Not saying that there couldn't be more. So we welcome more participation. This is a topic which is close to ccTLDs, especially IDN ccTLDs, and we'd love to get more and more support from the ccTLD community as we move forward. Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you Doctor Sarmad. Let's go for the next item on the agenda. Regina, the Vice-Chair of The Universal Acceptance Committee, the floor is yours.

REGINA FUCHSOVA:

Thank you very much. I will now take you through our survey which we are regularly running on IDNs, mainly on IDNs among the ccTLDs and more organizations, and also how we use the outcomes for the IDN World Report.

Next slide please. Just a quick overview for what IDNs mean for us as the European registry, we are managing dot-eu in Latin script, but we have also a Cyrillic version and the Greek script version which we introduced gradually since 2009.

For us, IDNs account for just 1% of the total portfolio, around 40,000 out of 3.7 million of registration. But it's a very important part of our strategy because the support for European diversity and culture and usage of official languages is part of our also of our obligations towards the European Commission.

We introduced IDNs under dot-eu in 2009 and shortly after, from 2012, we started to publish the IDN World Report together with the partners at the beginning. UNESCO and more organizations joined later, and then in 2016 and '19 we introduced the Cyrillic and Greek version.

Next slide please. So since we were already since 2009 in this field, we started the IDN World Report which turned into the idnworldreport.eu website after the beginnings in printed form. You can check the website and see the results of the surveys, which we ran on a yearly basis, but also more information. The focus is on ccTLDs, and we are trying to show also some broader context and include case studies about the adoption and the challenges of adoption of IDNs.

Some numbers, the very fresh ones. We released the new version just two weeks ago. You can see that among ccTLDs it's like negative zero; the year-to-year growth. With gTLDs, it's even a decline. But it's important to say in general that reaching out to TLDs is very challenging. So the statistics should be interpreted as estimates, but still we believe it's a good source of information.

Next slide please. So when it comes to the data sources, what we collect on a yearly basis is first of all, an IDN awareness survey. And I listed on the lefthand side the questions which we are asking. I will not go

through them in detail, but maybe also you filled in this survey. It's from identification to the number of registrations, and also some questions about awareness and importance of accessibility of IDNs, for example. You can see on the righthand side just a screenshot of two of the questions. So it's a form which we distribute the link to, and then it's quite easy to fill out just by clicking the answers or with open questions, writing comments.

So this is one of the main sources of data on the IDN World Report webpage, and then other sources include CENTR data, where there's the so-called CENTR IDN form to be filled in by the members, and I will show it in a moment. And for gTLDs we use ZookNIC data.

Next slide please. So as I mentioned, the second important part is the CENTR form on IDNs. Again, I included a screenshot for your information. The nice thing is that the data of the CENTR members are stored there. So once you choose your TLD, the previous answers are automatically filled in. So you can quite easily go through it and correct and update if there is something changed or missing.

On the righthand side, for reference, should we consider to run a known survey? I also listed what questions we are asking, so it reaches from scripts which are offered and characters. It's a bit more into detail. We also ask for links to the supported characters. For example, we ask about homoglyph bundling, but also some technical information about the display of IDNs. Also what is quite interesting are the questions about if you can use the Unicode mailbox address as a contact in the registry database, and also about the version of implementation.

So it's this variety of questions which are filled by CENTR members, and they can go there and update it anytime. But also with the help of CENTR, once a year we actively invite the members to go to the form and update it.

Next slide please. I think the best is if you have a look at the website yourself, and you can click on the map or browse through it. But just a few highlights. We see awareness and adoption of IDNs like a need to increase awareness of them. One of the measures to show it are user awareness of IDNs where we are in the middle, or the registries see it as a middle, 2.5 out of five, on how users are aware of IDNs. And when it comes to what the registries think of how the support is of registrars to IDNs, it's a bit higher at 3.2, but still there's a significant space for improvement.

And what we asked this year for the first time was also how IDNs are important for Internet accessibility for local native language speakers. And here 33% of registries saw it as important or very important. And even a higher percentage, 68% of registries, considered the concept of universal acceptance to be the most important driver for IDN uptake.

So the next slide is already the concluding one. So thank you very much. If you have a question, you can ask either now or you can also reach out to me via email. Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you Regina. Really interesting. I think it is better to postpone the question till the end of the meeting due to time constraints.

And now we need to go for Seda to give us an overview or insights about UA readiness 2022. Thank you, Seda.

SEDA AKBULUT:

Thank you very much Abdulmonem. Hello, everyone. Welcome. My name is Seda Akbulut and I'm in the IDN[A] UA Programs team. So I will be briefly talking about the UA readiness survey for the ccTLDs that was published by ICANN Org in last year March.

If you can go to the next slide please. So from December 2022 through January 2023, ICANN reached out to all country code top-level domain managers to participate in a UA readiness survey. And the objectives were to create a baseline to understand the UA readiness status of ccTLDs, their motivation to become UA-ready, their progress, and the challenges faced by the ccTLDs in becoming UA-ready. And there is also another objective: how ICANN can actually help support them in becoming UA-ready.

So let me give you some also background information here. In fact, similar to the survey we conducted for the ccTLDs, around the same time, we also conducted the survey for the registry service providers, RSPs, and contracted parties, namely registry operators and registrars as well. And around the same time we conducted these two surveys, ICANN Org had also published an important document that explores a methodology to address the UA readiness of systems that are used by domain name registry and registrar operators, also ccTLDs and RSPs, developers and technical managers.

So I see some interest in the chat as well on the UA roadmap. So this is called a UA roadmap for registry and registrar systems. So we have shared the link in the chat. And that study was published just last year in January. And I will share the link again after this one.

So these two surveys helped us actually socialize the UA roadmap. And if we come back to this ccTLD survey, this table shows the number of ccTLDs that responded to the survey and the percentage they represent in each category and in each region, which is a good kind of geodiversity proportion. And we received responses from 63 ccTLD managers that represent 75 ccTLDs. So if a TLD manager oversees both ASCII and IDN ccTLDs, they were asked to complete a separate survey for each. And we asked to provide response to all questions for each ccTLDs. And so 75 ccTLDs represent about a quarter of all the ccTLDs. And I would like to thank all ccTLDs who contributed to this survey and to help us [inaudible] of this survey on this link on this page.

And next slide, please. Next slide, please. Next one.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Seda, I'm currently displaying the slide with the UA readiness status.

SEDA AKBULUT: Okay. It actually turned a little late on my end, probably. Okay. So most of the ccTLD managers who responded to the survey are UA- ready or partially UA-ready. That makes 69% in total, of which 56% are partially UA-ready and 13% are fully UA-ready. And at the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked to select their level of UA readiness by

choosing “yes,” “yes, partially,” and “no” based on the definition we provided, which was also mentioned by Abdulmonem in the beginning. And the definition for the UA readiness means: all software applications, including for example, email and web forms, accepts, validates, process, store, and display correctly and consistently for all domain names and email addresses using short and long new gTLDs and IDNs. This refers to the UA roadmap for registry and registrar systems as well.

So here the bigger pie chart shows us the responses from 75 respondents. And 13% which accounts for ten ccTLDs, are UA-ready, and they mentioned that it takes about twelve to 24 months of time to become UA-ready. And 56% are partially UA-ready. And we will see what portions are UA-ready so far. And 23 ccTLDs, which accounts for 31%, are not UA-ready.

The smaller charts on the side shows us the status of the ccTLDs in the APAC and Europe region. We have excluded a couple of regions here as the number of participants from the Latin America, Caribbean and North America region were a little bit lower, which was just eight of them. So we just captured here two regions’ status in addition, for more detail.

Okay, we can go to the next slide to see the level of support that the two ccTLD managers who responded to being partly UA-ready had. This is shown in this figure. And 83% support IDNs, 52% of them support gTLDs longer than six characters, 57% support short new gTLDs, 50% support email address with long new gTLDs, 57% support email addresses with short new gTLDs, and 14% support email addresses in the ASCII

label[@]IDN form. And also there are some other partially UA-ready options.

And one thing just I would like to note here, in addition to these shown on the chart, is that six ccTLDs mentioned that they only support the email address internationalization (EAI) in their local languages only rather than all languages.

Okay, in the interest of time, we can maybe move on to the next slide to see the motivation to become UA-ready. And so 50 ccTLD managers actually responded to this question, and respondents could select more than one response for this question. And the main motivation amongst these ccTLDs showed us that to become UA-ready was to gain more customers, especially international customers, to be more competitive, respond to customer needs and to implement UA before the next round and new gTLDs and also support local language communities. Those were the main motivations. And also staying compatible with recent standards and developments are amongst the motivations that we captured.

In the next slide we will see the barriers to becoming UA-ready. And we all have kind of barriers when we try to become UA-ready, and the responses show the same. Everyone, whether they have the ASCII or IDN ccTLDs, experiences some barriers. And 58% of the responses are other responses in which we have: lack of demand, the local community language uses only ASCII characters, local language uses more than ASCII characters but no request for customers for IDNs. The political situation in the region might be another barrier. And not trusting the currently available open source is another issue. And maintaining the

EAI mail servers requires more power. And there is also another thing here you can see: on the 11% and 15% bars, the critical third-party vendors who support their services are not UA-ready, even if they try to become UA-ready.

And there is some detail we captured in this survey under this question, which was also for ccTLD managers that are not UA-ready or only partially UA-ready. 31% include the UA readiness in their roadmap, and 69 do not. We hope that this ratio has been increasing or implementing the UA road map within the ccTLDs. And if a ccTLD manager has UA readiness in their roadmap, 50% indicated that they will start working on UA readiness within the next twelve months.

So the final slide is about our support at ICANN and the next steps. And we are happy that you know that the ccNSO is working towards UA now. We have the UAC, the UA Committee, and more participation in UA Day that are showing all good progress. And around 35% of ccTLD managers actively promote the UA updates via local events, including collaborating with other ccTLDs via regional or global platforms. And we continue to support UA-related efforts within the ICANN community. And we see that the training is essential, and we develop training materials and programs to meet the needs of ccTLDs and everyone who wants to become UA-ready.

So there is another study I mentioned before, for the contracted parties, registry service, registry operators and registrars. And all these surveys help us to socialize the UA roadmap. We also would like to reiterate that we highly encourage you to look at the UA roadmap to start with the UA-readiness journey. So our outreach to tech providers and open

source communities also continues to promote and support the UA locally and globally.

And that's all from me about these stories, and I'm more than happy to answer if have any questions.

ABDULMONEM GALILA:

Thank you. Seda. Actually what you said for me and for ccTLDs means that it is important for ccTLDs to respond for the future universal acceptance readiness surveys. It is very important. And at same time, what you said most of the time was, “ccTLDs, ccTLDs.” It means that ccTLDs are the main actor for these surveys to respond about that. And what I see as well, there are more updates from the Universal Acceptance Steering Group regardless of universal acceptance adoption. So it is important to have, from time to time, surveys like you conducted for 2022. Actually the response for that was very useful. Thank you, Seda.

Actually now we need to break our minds to have some questions using the Mentimeter application. For the first thing at the screen, you scan this QR code. I will give you 20 seconds to scan the QR code. Or even if you can't scan the QR code, you could use the URL www.menti.com and use the code that is played on the screen.

So let's go for the next slide. The first question is, are you aware about the ICANN universal acceptance roadmap? I will give you one minute. Still 20 seconds. Thank you.

Let's go for the next question. Have you implemented or do you plan to implement the ICANN universal acceptance roadmap? Still 25 seconds. Thank you.

Next slide please. Is there a need for a future universal acceptance survey by ccNSO UAC? Still 30 seconds left to answer the question. Thank you.

Next slide. My ccTLD would respond to a future survey on universal acceptance. 20 seconds left.

Next slide. How would you rate this session? Ten seconds left.

Next slide. Yeah, I have a hand here at the remote participation from Hossein from the Governmental Advisory Committee and the Chair of the Universal Acceptance IDN and GAC Hossein, the floor is yours.

HOSSEIN MIRZAPOUR:

First of all, thank you, Abdulmonem and others, for this informative session. Two quick questions, first for Seda, and second, maybe to anyone who would find it related. My first question is, although ccTLDs are more of public interest, and people find it more toward governments, still, based on my experience, we need business cases. We need to have more information to empower them with how they can foster this UA IDN business inside their territory. I would like to know if there is more resource materials in this regard.

And my second question. Quite recently, in some UA-IDN-related events I have participated in, I faced this challenging question from youth generation, that gen AI may change a lot of things, including UA IDN

adoption as well. People ask me, if after the gen AI era, still we need to adopt such a UA IDN initiative or not, because maybe it can help us, everybody, and maybe it changes the world. That was my second question. Thank you.

ABDULMONEM GALILA: Thank you, Hossein. Seda, could you respond for that?

SEDA AKBULUT: Yes. Thank you for the questions. We have some case studies, so I will just type in the chat about the link. We have some case studies from governments, also from the ccTLDs, but we are still working on a new type of business case studies. And there's also a white paper that shows the business opportunity for becoming UA-ready, which dates back a few years ago. But we will also work on this to update it. So I will also share that business study that we have currently, so you can take a look at those things.

And with the UN, ICANN and UNESCO is collaborating, especially in the UA Day. Recently we have also conducted a collaborative session, so they also showed interest in UA and the UA curriculum as well. So hopefully there will be more synergy between ICANN and the UN on the UA matter. I hope that answers your question.

ABDULMONEM GALILA: Thank you, Seda. I hope that answers your question, Hossein. As a matter of time, let me wrap up the session. And actually we have a lot of questions even here from the session. All these questions will be

[grabbed] up and back to you again after the session with the answers for all of what your question are, even here in the remote participation. We'll answer all of that.

So let me wrap up the session now. Actually it's the community for universal acceptance that is already in action now implementing the work plan, and there is end-date surveys, one related to IDNs by EURid, and the other one for ICANN's universal readiness for these. And it is important for ccTLDs to respond for the future surveys for your universal acceptance readiness as ccTLDs are the main actors in order to respond to these surveys. As IDNs need universal acceptance, AI needs universal acceptance. And at same time it is important to be engaged as ccTLDs for the future Universal Acceptance Day events, and I hope we could have a good number more than the previous one, more participation from ccTLDs for UA Day. Even your local community could organize UA Day events.

And thank you very much for that. And all the questions will be answered through email. Thank you.

Before ending the session, there are flyers here for you. Don't be confused about the colors. The orange one is related to [UASG] universal acceptance, and the other one for ccNSO, as it is another flyer for [inaudible] that have different colors. So don't be confused. There are two different flyers. So you will have it now. Thank you very much. That's the end of the session.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]