
ICANN80 | PF – GNSO: NCSG Membership Work Session
Monday, June 10, 2024 – 9:00 to 10:15 KGL

ANDREA GLANDON: Hello and welcome to the NCSG Membership Work Session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to our chair, Julf. You may begin.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Good morning, everybody. This is Julf Helsingius speaking, Chair of Noncommercials. Thank you, everybody, for being here, even though it is the first morning session of the first day, which is never the most thankful one. And thank you for everybody who joins online. For you joining online, what you can't see online is the fact that we had a bit of a hassle here trying to find a room because everybody was directed to a door that was locked. And only later, we thought, oh, you have to go around the corner. So that's why we had a bit of a delay starting because we actually had to wait for people to find this room. But we are here.

We have an interesting agenda, but I also wanted to leave some space in the end for free discussion. So if you have any items you want to bring up later, there should be time for it. Feel free to bring up whatever you want. But first, let's go through the proper program, and I'm really,

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really happy to have Chris Mondini here to talk about the Internet Governance Forum Support Association.

CHRIS MONDINI: Thank you very much, Julf. And thanks for adding us to your agenda. I'm Chris Mondini. I'm a member of the ICANN staff on the stakeholder engagement team, but here I'm in my capacity as a member of the Executive Committee of the IGF Support Association, which we'll chat about in a moment. But I'd like my fellow executive committee members to introduce themselves also briefly.

WISDOM DONKOR: Good morning. My name is Wisdom, a member of the Executive Committee of IGFSA.

FLAVIO WAGNER: Hi. Good morning, everyone. Flavio Wagner, also a member of the IGFSA Executive Committee, and also a member of NCSG.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having us here. My name is Amrita Choudhury. I'm also a part of the IGFSA EC, and I'm the chair of it. And thank you for having us here once again.

CHRIS MONDINI: So we just ask for a few moments, a bit of time at the top of your agenda to really reintroduce the IGFSA. And I'd like to start just by asking all of you around the table, how many of you already know the IGFSA? Do you know that it exists? Are you aware of it? Great. Second question, how many are members? Is anyone here a member? Yes? Okay. A couple proud members. Good. So as a heads up really, the point of this presentation will be to encourage you to join, and also, to encourage

you to help us get connected with potential sources of financial support.

So of course, recently, the topic of internet governance, the topic of the WSIS, this has all been very front of mind for this community. And everybody here knows the IGF, I presume. How many people have attended an IGF? Yeah, everybody. Okay. So now, I know you've heard this before, but really, the IGF is—we consider it really more than a meeting. We consider it a movement. We consider it an ecosystem. And we consider it as a place that, in the end, also generates benefits for ICANN and parts of the ICANN community. And really, that's the gist of the content that we have for you today. So on the next slide, if we just advance one.

You're familiar with the IGF. It existed since the era of the WSIS. The first one was in 2006. The IGF Support Association was formed in 2014, and it was really at the time of some, I think, financial crisis in the IGF world. And it was founded by people like Tarek Kamel and Marilyn Cade and other pioneers that were very active in this area. And the gist, the main focus and where we spend most of our time on the executive committee is looking at the so-called NRIs, national and regional IGFs around the world. And I know many of you are involved in them locally, where you live. The next slide, please.

These are really the proof points that we are going around to all of the different SO/AC structures to talk about, to encourage either them directly or individually or through the organizations and maybe companies that they're part of to support the IGFSAs. These local IGFs develop talent. They get ICANN-related content onto the agendas. They attract the local regulators, the local influencers, local businesses, and

they really give them a flavor of the multi-stakeholder processes so that when they come to ICANN, they already understand or have a better experience to navigate a model like ours. So it's a lot about really making it a movement and giving our content life in the eyes of local business, local governments, local civil society leaders.

On the next slide, you'll see really up until now, cumulatively, these are all of the places where with your help, we've been able to support a national or regional IGF. And you'll notice there on the slide, the grants are significant in many of the places where we make them. But from the perspective of, say, a large donor of a tech company or a global organization, it's not a huge magnitude. So it has great impact where the funds are received. However, look, a \$500 grant is really the membership dues of a group like this would add up to the \$500.

So what our group does is we collaborate with the IGF secretariat to get really pre-approval that they would be eligible under the various criteria for support. And then we evaluate their budget, their agenda plans, their organization, and provide these grants. The next slide, please.

So again, to the point that there is really ICANN or DNS relevant topics on these agendas, these—again, you've attended IGFs. And so, you're familiar with—I think, a really key aspect, which is that the governance of the internet, of the DNS, of the infrastructure is really outlined as being separate and distinct from other topics which are maybe digitally related but are the headline-making topics today. And while for all of us we're very familiar with this separation of the concept, it's hugely important that in the emerging talent around the world that's going to

work in this field that they understand that. So this is just some topics that we've had on recent NRI agendas.

The next slide, I think, really, again, is to this point that I've just made that the digital policy issues that may be top of mind around the world are separate and distinct from the underlying infrastructure protocols domain name system and our connection to that through the IGF make sure that that message gets to, again, the influential key leaders in the nation or region that are attending an IGF.

And maybe some of you even began your careers in internet governance in a local IGF and have continued to be active. And that's exactly the kind of dynamic we think is very supportive to the ICANN community. So a lot of education, a lot of talent development, and the beginning of a pipeline from a local Internet community to global platforms like where we're sitting today.

On the next slide, as an executive committee, again, we are providing a little bit of, I would say, a quality control and assurance of the bona fides of the organizers. So we're supporting dozens of events around the world every year. We, as I said, will question about budgets, will question about content, will question about agendas.

And also, we do less of this, but we can begin to do more. We can be a clearinghouse to suggest speakers or experts. Increasingly, there are NRIs which have a hybrid or remote component. So if you would like to be more involved in a local or regional NRI around the world, we could help connect you to the organizers. And then we get feedback from the topics, the agendas, who attended and what the reactions to the topics were in these various places around the world. So the ask is on the next slide.

So if you're not a member, you can even do this on your phone. But please do, to go to the website, it is US \$25 annually? So again, even just this, if everyone in the room today joined and paid their dues, that's already enough to fund an IGF in a developing corner of the world. Let us know if you're interested to be more closely involved with the NRIs. Let your colleagues know. Maybe through your membership, we can put something together as a follow-up of this session. Sign up for our social media and our newsletters, which you can also do on the website. And please do encourage, if you're an employee or you're a member of a large organization that makes charitable contributions, please do encourage your leadership to consider an institutional support role. And then, I'll end with the last slide, which is your very attractive executive committee and very hardworking and very eager to hear from you any feedback you have on, as we kick off this week on sort of this road show. If you have any feedback on the messaging or anything that you think will help us to generate more membership or more leads for institutional support. And with that, I will go to the thank you slide. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you, Chris. Does anyone have questions at this point, comments, feedback? Kathy?

KATHY KLEIMAN:

I'd like to ask our NCSG representative. Can we go back to the prior slide? Wisdom?

CHRIS MONDINI:

Can we go back to the prior slide, please?

KATHY KLEIMAN: To talk a little bit about his work on this group. Sorry, no notice on that, but any words you want to share?

CHRIS MONDINI: We rely on Wisdom a lot.

WISDOM DONKOR: Thank you very much, Kathy. Yes, I've been involved in IGFS, I think since 2015. And also, during the time that I was on MAG, the UN IGF MAG, I think myself, together with Marilyn Cade and others really did push for this to happen. And then along the line, I got the opportunity to also become the executive committee member.

KATHY KLEIMAN: Thank you.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: And if I may add something out here, many times the IGF, due to fund crunches, are not able to support many of the national and regional initiatives. So that is where we step in. And the national regional initiatives, for many of you who may not know, also has the youth initiative. So we are trying to encourage everyone. And as Chris mentioned, we look at the double dipping so that, if they are funded by the secretariat, we don't fund. If we are funding, we don't. And that's one request we are making that, in case, for example, you know sponsors who may be interested. Not you, but there may be people who know if you can spread the word, we would be happy for that, because we would want to support more initiatives with more money. But obviously, for that, we need sponsors. Thank you.

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- EMMANUEL VITUS: Okay, thank you. My name is Emmanuel Vitus. So I lead the Secretariat of the West Africa IGF. And we are so happy having the IGF every year since I joined, 2017. So this year, I think the money is actually coming. It's on the way coming. So this morning, I was discussing with Mary and she told me to say, thank you to you for supporting us. It's a very big push for the region. And we try as much as possible to do our best. Now we have the school, we have the parliamentary track. We have the youth IGF included. So thank you so much. And we hope other sponsors will join so that we continue the way. Thank you.
- JULF HELSINGIUS: Great.
- UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah, thank you so much, [inaudible]. So my name is [inaudible]. I'm just curious. First and foremost, let me just thank you for the work that IGF is actually doing, funding and support in developing country. And the second part of my [inaudible] is I'm just curious about, how you [inaudible] the topics that you showed on the screen, from cybersecurity to DNS. I just wanted to hear more about that. Do you prioritize by the topic that the NRI are doing? Just wanted you to touch on that?
- CHRIS MONDINI: Hi, thank you very much for the question. This is Chris Mondini again. No, we don't. Most of the IGFs, as you likely know, have more of a bottom-up development process for setting their agenda. So we're not in a position to dictate what's on the agenda. But we do see that these topics are the top. I mean, I would say we're looking to see that these topics are on the agenda and we're reassured that they are. We've

discussed as an executive committee, and we really hesitate to try to attract sponsors by guaranteeing that they could get their content into an IGF. But I think that sponsors are also in a very good position to suggest content or a speaker and so forth.

So to the extent that we can make those kind of recommendations in line with the existing bottom-up agenda development process, we would be okay doing that. But we're not telling anybody how to set their agenda. But we're very reassured that these topics are consistent and we see them from event to event. Does that help?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Yeah, and just to add to it, what these topics were shown is indicative of the ICANN topics which are discussed by the NRIs. They also have local issues which they discuss, which is important because for the NRIs, it is important they discuss their local issues. But these are also important, as Chris mentioned, because people should know how the basic core nature of internet works, how different things have worked apart from the digital policies, tech policies, and other regulatory things. But we don't interfere in the programs. But if someone has requests for suggestions for speakers, et cetera, we would be happy to help.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

[inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:

My question is, is Taiwanese allowed to participate in IGFSa because we're not allowed in IGF? So I'm wondering if—because we have a TWIGF too in Taiwan and it's quite active. But are we able to apply funding from IGFSa if we're not recognized by IGF? Thank you.

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- AMRITA CHOUDHURY: The answer is yes, because we are supporting APriGF and the youth IGF even though they are at Taiwan, and it has been requested by TWNIC.
- ANDREA GLANDON: Julf, did you see Stephanie's question in the chat? She asked, is CIRA involved?
- CHRIS MONDINI: Hi, this is Chris. I did have a slide that showed all of our supporters over the years, and CIRA, who runs the Canadian registry, has supported in the past. And so, that's exactly the kind of idea we need, Stephanie. Thank you. We will reapproach CIRA, and if you have suggestions or want to help in that effort, we'd be delighted. But yes, we'll add CIRA to our lead list and consider it a suggestion. Thank you.
- JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Since we have run out of questions—well, Chris, go ahead.
- CHRIS MONDINI: I did also want to say, I did put in the chat the info at IGFSa.org email. If you have any other leads or even just ideas of organizations we can or should approach, let us know. And if you're in a position to help us approach them, that makes it an even more powerful ask. Let us know that too. Thank you.
- JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Chris. Thank you, the whole team. This is really useful, and I hope you get a lot of contacts from our members. Moving on with the program, our next piece is actually going to be presented online. It's about the CIP-CCG. So Larissa and Jean-Baptiste, sorry that we have kept you waiting, but please go ahead.

LARISA GURNICK:

Thank you very much. Hello, everybody. I'm Larisa Gurnick, and I'm joined today by several colleagues from the GDS team. We're a part of the GDS team, and we're the Review Support and Accountability Team. And you probably know us best because we facilitate and support the various review efforts at ICANN. So today, we're here to talk to you, give you just a very quick overview of the Continuous Improvement Program and the work of the Community Coordination Group on Continuous Improvement, and hopefully with the introduction and the work of all your representatives that have been diligently working on this implementation effort since the start of the year, we can keep going and demonstrate really good progress.

So for those of you that may not be totally familiar with reviews, just a very, very quick introduction. What are reviews at ICANN? Reviews are conducted to assess how certain aspects of the ICANN ecosystem are performing including how the ICANN organization, the board, and the community fulfill various commitments to global stakeholders. ICANN Reviews include reviews of ICANN structures that are known as organizational reviews, and these have been conducted by independent examiners.

And also, there are reviews of various commitments that stem from affirmation of commitments that are known as specific reviews, and specific reviews are conducted by members of the ICANN community. No matter which type of review, essentially, each review is a multi-stakeholder effort in which community or independent examiners make recommendations. The board considers these recommendations, and then either the org or the community, depending on the type of review, implements those recommendations.

So needless to say, reviews are an important aspect of ICANN's checks and balances. So please, let's go to the next slide.

Apologies for so many abbreviations, so I'll try to spell things out for a bit more clarity. So accountability and transparency review is one of those reviews, the checks on the commitments that ICANN org has made in the area of accountability and transparency. And that community-led review issued a recommendation that called for evolving organizational reviews into a continuous improvement program. So, again, what they asked to evolve is the individual reviews of each structure that in the past had been conducted by independent examiners.

And the reason for that was that when the community-led review team looked over the history of organizational reviews and spoke to community members, board, and org, everybody had a general agreement that there's a way to accomplish the task of organizational reviews in a more efficient manner, a more lightweight manner, but also in a way that gives each structure more self-determination and more flexibility to focus on the kinds of improvements that make the most sense to each of those organizations.

So we were delighted to see very strong community support to this effort of evolving organizational reviews with 21 of 22 groups across the ICANN community being represented in this effort in the Continuous Improvement Program as part of the coordination group that started its work in January of 2024. The primary task for this group is to develop a framework for continuous improvement, which will eventually be published for public comment and with support from the supporting organizations, advisory committees, and the NomCom will eventually

be the way forward in place of organizational reviews. Next slide, please.

This is just a map, a quick roadmap to give you an idea of what's been happening this year. The group considered a variety of different approaches to conducting continuous improvement, and since April, the various representatives from different groups have been working with their respective groups, and hopefully the same is the case for your groups, to really introduce the concept of Continuous Improvement Program and the framework, and in particular, to focus in so far on getting agreement and input from the community on the principles that would guide continuous improvement framework.

The later part of this year will be spent on collecting similar kinds of information and input from community on the other aspects of the framework, which will involve criteria and indicators with the goal of having the continuous improvement framework published for public comment shortly after ICANN81. Next slide, please. Thank you so much. So taking a broader perspective of how all of these pieces fit together, once we have a continuous improvement framework that has the support of the ICANN community, then the various groups can begin doing continuous improvement assessments that were envisioned to last for about a three-year period, and those assessments would essentially collect information through surveys of the members of different groups to identify areas that each group would like to prioritize for improvement, and then work toward identifying ways to improve a particular area. Once again that fits into the various principles and criteria that have to do with how effective each

organization is, how accountable it is to its members, and various other elements of its operations and its effectiveness.

The idea is that—oh, I should have said that while this implementation effort is underway, the board with the agreement of the community had deferred all the organizational reviews to give a chance to the Community Coordination Group to complete this implementation as well as implementation of several other recommendations that came out of the Accountability and Transparency Review.

So by June of 2025, the board is expected to check-in and see how the work is progressing on the Continuous Improvement Framework with the idea that provided sufficient progress and good momentum, then there would be a determination on the part of the board not to revert back to doing organizational reviews, but rather continue with the work and the effort of evolving organizational reviews into a continuous improvement program.

So the Accountability and Transparency Review envisioned several assessment periods where each organization would collect information, identify areas for improvement, implement improvement, and then publish the results. There would be a couple of those cycles, and then there would be eventually an opportunity for these results to provide input, so to speak, into the eventual holistic review, which would then reflect on how well the continuous improvement efforts of the various structures have been conducted.

So I just wanted to call your attention to the fact that the eventual holistic review is subject to community support, board approval, and incorporation of that effort into the ICANN bylaws. So this is what you see on this roadmap. It's kind of a pretty long-term effort of continuous

improvement that would eventually culminate in the holistic review.

Next slide, please.

A nice picture. Always good to see the faces of hardworking folks that are doing the work on the CIP-CCG. And there was a meeting at the last ICANN meeting and a combination in-person and a virtual meeting, and we captured this wonderful photo. Next slide, please.

So when we talk about principles and criteria framework, the principles are essentially the components of what the bylaws mandate for organizational reviews to look at. And I'm wondering if my colleagues could maybe post into the chat some of the draft principles that the group has come up with so far. In the interest of time, we didn't include this information in the presentation, but this is ongoing work, and I'm sure you'll be hearing more about the specifics of this effort, including how each of the five principles would be applicable to your work, and how you would work through each principle to define the criteria and indicators to help with this effort.

So at a high-level, a principle describes the objective of a Continuous Improvement Program, and as I said, there's five of them, including things like efficiency of a particular structure, the accountability of it to its members, and so on. For each of the principles, there would also be criteria, and criteria are conditions that need to be met in order to comply with that principle, and criteria define how a principle would be achieved. And then there would be indicators that would be ways to measure how these achievements of the principles are being accomplished.

So I know at this point, it may sound a bit theoretical, but the idea is to really focus in on aspects of your organization's operations and work

that is considered to be most ripe for improvement that could provide the greatest benefit to the effectiveness of your organization, and then to prioritize those work areas in order to be able to demonstrate through measures and benchmarks how progress is being made toward a particular area of improvement.

I believe the next slide just provides a number of resources for you to refer to, if you'd like to. And I also wanted to acknowledge and mention the names of several of your members that have been very helpful contributors and participants in the process, and these include Caleb, Wisdom, and Benjamin. And we appreciate their efforts and everybody's contributions to this continuous improvement effort and the kind of evolution of the mindset from organizational reviews into something that would be more flexible and beneficial to the ICANN community. I'm happy to take questions. Thank you very much.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you, Larisa. Questions? Caleb?

CALEB OGUNDELE:

Caleb Ogundele for the record. Thank you for the presentation that you just made. Now, a quick one. One of the reasons why we did ask staff to come for this presentation is we want to help socialize our NCSG members and NCUC as well as NPOC to understand what the continuous improvement process really is all about. We want to socialize you and we also want to ask for your feedback all the time when it comes to things like this.

Now more importantly, there's been several issues that we've raised and have concerns. Some issues, although might not necessarily be totally connected with the continuous improvement process, but

there's been some concerns, maybe we should just ask staff, about the process of making sure that NCSG and NPOC has in the new—or probably the bylaws that would be affected by this continuous improvement process if we'll possibly have some form of NomCom representation in that. That is not an answer for me to give to the community, but it's also something I'm directing to staff perhaps to help socialize our NCSG members if there is a possibility around that area and how much or how far we can go with that.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you, Caleb. Anyone else? Go ahead.

LARISA GURNICK:

I wasn't sure if you wanted me to reflect on that. I certainly acknowledge and appreciate the concern, and that certainly has been something that's been really important and noted in the continuous improvement work as well as something that the NomCom itself as a structure is also part of the continuous improvement efforts. So we have a very interesting dynamic of looking at how to improve various aspects of different structures, including NCSG and NPOC and representation and structural considerations very much could be a part of that work for your structures as well as the NomCom itself is likely to consider ways that it and its work could be made more effective.

And finally, there is also an effort underway and discussions at the board level to address the previous recommendations that came out of the NomCom organizational review that pertain to composition of the NomCom and the idea of the rebalancing of the NomCom. So that is also ongoing discussions that the board has taken up and we expect too that will continue to evolve in the months ahead.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Yes, I think it will be very much an ongoing discussion. Caleb, do you want to comment?

CALEB OGUNDELE: Yes, sorry. This is not a rebuttal. The earlier NomCom review that was done, the RIPWG that was done had recommendation 10 that in a way excluded NCSG and NPOC and that's the reason why we are trying to use this continuous improvement as another opportunity not to reflect totally on that recommendation but to rather improve on this current working group and see how we can infuse that into what the board can probably help vote on when it comes to the amendment on the bylaws. So that's a concern from the community that I understand and it is a form of feedback also to staff to maybe help us take note of for the recommendations. Thank you.

LARISA GURNICK: Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Any other questions, comments? If not, thank you, Larisa. This was very useful. I appreciate you taking your time to explain this all to us. Thank you very much. Our next point is about something that's been a sore issue for the NCSG for quite a while. There's always been a pretty long lag between somebody applying for membership and us actually approving the membership. Part of it has been because of our procedures where the executive committee really has to have a consensus on the decision. But part of it has also been because of the software we're using that has not been always really helpful in this and had major bugs.

We had a team with Caleb and [inaudible] really working on the issue with the software vendor, and I think they had come with some solutions for some problems. So Caleb, do you want to explain a little bit about what's been going on and what has been done?

CALEB OGUNDELE:

Okay. Thank you very much. Caleb Ogundele for the record. The portal that we've been using has been challenging for a number of months. I wouldn't want to say years. Probably it's because of the old software that was used to develop the membership platform. It's probably maybe for those who are into web development will understand that it was probably an old PHP framework that was used to develop it. What did we notice is that when some members apply and we want to vet them and we want to do a background check, we don't see even their visions. We don't see website. We don't see certain information. They are just missing. It's not like these things don't drop into the database but the frontend application doesn't just seem to accommodate it.

And so, membership approval has been very, very slow. Extracting information also has been very slow. More recently, [inaudible] and I met with the vendor that has been working on the platform and then we raised a couple of issues. We went through a couple of things that was actually affecting the effectiveness of the platform. More recently, we've been able to at least fix a few issues, not all the issues. And we do hope that membership application can be expedited more such that we don't have to wait every three months, every ICANN meeting to approve membership applications as the case might be.

So we are hoping that things will be faster and efficient this time around. Thank you everyone for the patience. And to my previous chair,

also, I need to apologize because the assumption is that maybe the NCSG-EC isn't working or doing anything on membership, but we are actually doing something. But we've had lots of technical challenges and we've retreated this over and over and over. That only when we resolve some of these issues, we can move with the speed that is expected of us. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Caleb. Any questions on this issue, comments?

ANDREA GLANDON: Rafik has his hand up.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Rafik, go ahead.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Hi, everyone. Rafik speaking. Thanks for the update about the membership database system. I understand kind of the assessment here if it's an old version and so on, but following this issue for many years and hearing all the struggle because it's not the first executive committee to go through. I do believe it's more than just a version issue and maybe something to work out and another alternative. CiviCRM maybe was not the right choice. I'm not going to open that topic again, but it's more to think about in the future and something more sustainable.

Going to solution that you need to host, you need to manage, you need to ask for someone to do upgrade development and so on. It's not something I would advise for a group like us because as you could see for many years, it's consumed a lot of energy and attention of executive

committee members they could spend on other matters. That's what I wanted to highlight. Thanks.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you, Rafik. And let me assure you this is something we've been discussing a lot in the executive committee, whether we should actually just scrap the software we are using and go into some better solution or whether we can survive with the existing one with the fixes we need. We haven't actually reached a decision on that because it's moving to something else. It's also a pretty complex issue. Unfortunately for you, I will actually have to punt it to your watch. It's going to be partially your problem too.

RAFIK DAMMAK: Yeah, it's fine. It's just kind of a circle of life, I guess, because how it started it was after my first term and I followed how it was created and it's just coming back to me. It's life laughing at us, I guess.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Exactly. Okay. Then we have Jean. Jean, you're next and then Benjamin.

ANDREA GLANDON: Jean, you can open your line. Now it's open.

JEAN FRANCOIS QUERALT: Hello.

ANDREA GLANDON: Go ahead.

JEAN FRANCOIS QUERALT: Yes. I couldn't see my microphone button on the app. Jean Francois Queralt from the IO Foundation and also, current Comms Chair for NPOC for the record. I would like to support the consideration about

whether we look into a different platform moving forward, and I understand that that comes with a number of difficulties, and I'm happy to support with a few ideas as to where could the direction go, and help as well with the migration if that ever happens.

On the other hand, I would also have a question for Caleb considering that some difficulties have been already sorted out. Would it be possible to have a list of the current members for NPOC, which is something we've been needing for quite some time to be able to have an assessment as to where do we have to increase our efforts for membership? Thank you.

CALEB OGUNDELE: I believe that—okay, thank you.

JEAN FRANCOIS QUERALT: And I'm sorry, Andrea, can you please cut my microphone because it's really on my app. There's no way for me to open or close.

ANDREA GLANDON: Yes, will do. Thank you.

JEAN FRANCOIS QUERALT: Thank you.

CALEB OGUNDELE: Okay, thank you. So we welcome you to also join the tech committee that is working on some of the issues, and if you want to have some of your imputes, we welcome that. Now on the issue of NPOC membership, I believe that has been sorted out. The chair is here and we've been able to extract all those information that is needed. I'm not sure you've been updated about that, but the chair, one, has been able to reach out to our members and communicate with them. So I think

it's an update that you need to be aware of outside the scope. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS: Thank you. Benjamin and then Peter.

BENJAMIN AKINMOYEJE: Thank you. Good morning. My name is Benjamin. First of all, it's interesting to see that we are addressing this problem because over time, we've had members after we go and do outreach and they apply and they tell us, "Oh, what are you doing with my membership?" So you start getting emails [inaudible] one person after the other. So this is good, but I think we should take it a step further by being—I mean, let's see what is the platform that is being used. Let's see what the problems are. It's really good for the community to see where the situation is, so that we can maybe empathize and understand the limitations.

And also, it can be an instrument to seek support. If we're asking for support that this is the area where we need support. This is where our strength currently is. And then if we need to migrate, I mean, we had similar troubles with our website. By reaching out, we've been able to resolve to some point. But the way it is, it's making the issue of membership, number of people available. And it also plays a significant role in something that is very important to all of us, which is like the elections and things like that.

So I think it's fair that we deal with this issue in a very transparent way that helps everybody to be comfortable. So I would encourage that we bring this issue out and identify the issues that need to be addressed, where the difficulties are, and the technical issues that need to be. So that's what I would encourage at this point. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Before I let Caleb address something, let me first just point out that, as I said in the beginning, it's not just the software that's the delay. It's also the fact that our structure is the way it is. And we actually need consensus from all executive committee members. So if there's some executive committee member who's slow in responding, it holds up the whole process. And it's just something that's in our by-laws, so we have to live with it.

CALEB OGUNDELE:

Yeah. Outside the consensus issue, one of the other issues I wanted to raise is that there is a transparency level to this. At some point in time, if you go back to the mailing list, there was an advertisement and asking for tech community support of this platform. And we asked volunteers to please signify if they have technical skills maybe in programming or web development and stuff like that. We asked them if they were interested in being part of this committee so that we can help improve some of the processes that we are having.

So it's been out there, but the volunteers are not coming up. And so, if the volunteers are not coming up, some people will just still have to take up that responsibility and get the job done either way. That's on the one hand. And aside the consensus issue, there are also background check issues that we do go through with our members. And part of the background checks that we do takes a couple of periods for us to close on some of those issues.

Take for example, we might have to ask them, what exactly is your non-commercial interest, right? We see people apply arbitrarily without really saying that they are having any non-commercial interest. And

then, you don't just expect us to just say yes to you without that. So there needs to be a consensus after the background check. Sometimes we even ask staff to follow-up emails. And before that person responds, right, it takes a couple of times. And sometimes we want to treat all the issues in batches and because we are waiting for one response or two responses, we can't treat all those issues in batches.

But I do agree with you that we need to apply an agile manner in approaching some of these issues. And thank you, we will try and improve on the efficiencies that we are doing internally. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Peter?

AKINREMI PETER TAIWO:

Yeah. Thank you so much. Peter, for the record. Actually, you touched on all the points I want to raise. What I'm just looking at or just want to recommend is for us to continuously review our processes and come up with strategy to improve the technical, because these are tools for us to be effective as non-commercial. We need to be effective from our technical standpoint as well. Holistic review, our processes and strategy, and understand where we're lagging. We're lagging behind, and we need to put strategy in place.

And if need be, for us to seek for support, like staff support, where we're lacking those skills, then we need to do—what we must understand the strategy behind to come up with effective mechanism to be able to be effective in our admin operation for us to be effective as well. So we need this. And from what Caleb actually raised, it seems that we are putting this together. But we need to have this strategy or maybe like yearly review or two years review on these processes because from

what I heard, month and month, we have had challenges in approving membership, our technical software not really up to speed.

We need to review that and these are the things that we need to visit, because we need membership. We need people to join this group. So I will recommend for us to have an [inaudible] committee to review this. So if it is synergy between our stakeholders, so we need to address this so that we can move forward. Thank you.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. That's very useful input and we'll definitely take that into consideration. Thank you.

JUAN MANUEL ROJAS:

Thank you, Julf. This is Juan for the record. Yes. As Caleb said, we have updated the NPOC database. But yes, it was not easy to extract the information from CRM. I had to do many tricky things to just get the list from members. So it's not easy to navigate this platform, as you already said. So yes, it's updated. But also, I need to say that we have to send a personalized email for each member in our list. And then, that's the way that we have an updated, I think, database right now.

But we have updated that information in CRM, but in the publishing, when the list is published, it's not updated. So we have the information updated in the platform, but not in the website when we call the membership list. So it's a kind of a synchronicity in those things, but I think that it can be manually thing that we have to do. So it's not easy. And another thing about the membership database, we need to check what members do we have, because I have seen many people applying for fellowships saying that it's part of NCUC or NCSG members, but we have [inaudible] them. We don't have CM here around known even in

the list. So we need to check that, because I have seen many fellows that put in their application that are members of NCUC or NCSG, but we have no clue who [inaudible] are them. That's it. Thank you very much.

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Thank you. Good points. Okay, I'm going to move on. Our last agenda item is actually—well, as we actually are here and have board members, Chris and Becky here, will definitely take the advantage of starting a discussion that will probably continue in the policy forum but I'm going to kick us off. Kathy, introduce the issue.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

We're going to be sharing some slides if we might and I will be passing this to you in a second. So I would like to welcome board members, Becky Burr and Chris Buckridge to our table today and thank you for responding when there was virtually no notice on this. But the board, I'm Kathy Kleiman, by the way. The board has put out a—

JULF HELSINGIUS:

Kathy, can you speak into the mic?

KATHY KLEIMAN:

You want me to speak into the mic and probably slowly too, huh? Okay. Let me start again. I am Kathy Kleiman welcoming board members, Becky Burr and Chris Buckridge, to our meeting today to talk about a straw man that has been put out for discussion. A straw man is an idea. It's a proposal and this straw man comes from the board and they've asked for community consultation.

And so, I am the subject matter expert to a group that we talk about occasionally called the SubPro. Let me get it right, Paul. SubPro small team plus, chaired by Paul McGrady, who's in the back. You're welcome

to join us at the table, Paul. And it's working to work through questions that the board had about rules for new gTLDs that came out of a group called the Subsequent Procedures Policy Development Process Working Group, or SubPro for short.

So the straw man that's been put out for community consultation came out in early May. I think most of us learned about it. Some of us learned about it in mid-May and it is a new proposal for Singulars and Plural new gTLDs and Frank Anati and Emmanuel Vitus are going to walk us through just five short briefing slides so that everyone knows what we're talking about and we can jump in.

Tomslin, the chair of our policy committee, Tomslin, you want to wave? Just wave. Has given us time tomorrow to also talk about this in detail. So right now, we'll just show a few quick slides so everybody kind of is up to speed on where we are and since a picture is worth a thousand words, we'll show some pictures. Over to Frank Anati and Emmanuel Vitus to quickly walk us through this.

FRANK ANATI:

Yeah. Thank you, everyone. So I'm Frank Anati and we like to just give you a briefing on the new proposal for singular and plural new gTLDs. So Emmanuel?

EMMANUEL VITUS:

So thank you very much, Frank. So my name is Emmanuel. And we work on this together. So the proposal that the Chairman is putting on the table, saying that it should be a mechanism established during the next and subsequent round of the new gTLD program that will prevent singular and plural form of the same words in same language from both

being delegated at top level if and only if so, requested by an end-user, applicant, or other community member.

They want it when the request is made, the requester must inform ICANN of the applicable string, including the language in which, according to the requester, the two strengths are singular and plural form of. So in case those strengths are found to be singular and plural of the same word in the same language, ICANN org will place them in a contention set or reject in case one of the strengths is already ligated or held in case one string is under process from the previous round until it is processed.

So what is new in this? The deviations from what the server is proposing is that it's a novel approach by the board because we are all used to the bottom-up approach. But in this case, in this particular case, it's a top-to-bottom approach. It's introducing its own policy proposal, and there's no detailed research or evidence supporting the someone proposal. So it deviates from the SubPro recommendations and conflicts with the GNSO decision. So those are the deviations that we identify from what the board is proposing. So I will let Frank explain the intended effect that that will have to you.

FRANK ANATI:

Okay. So these are some of the unintended effects. So some words have different meanings, and yes, they spell the same. So we look at cricket as in an insect, then cricket as in a game. So if you spin, you can spin a top, you can go for a spin, you can spin a yarn, maybe, and even spin different spins and you can clearly see that these are different meanings. This has different meanings even though they are the same words.

We also have different words, singular and plural, that have different meanings. So let's look at spring as in the season, and springs as in the elastic object springs. We have words, so we can have the word of God. We have words which can be a blog or anything. When we come to come in French, it's spelled as comments and we have comments that can mean two different things even though you can look at it as maybe a singular or a plural. So these are some of the unintended effects this can cause when this proposal is taken into consideration. Okay, Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL VITUS:

So the SubPro recommendation that the board has rejected is saying that application will not be automatically placed in the same contention, because they appear visually to be a single [inaudible] of one another, but have different unintended uses. So we actually try to identify some existing examples. For example, if you look at docs, which is like a technical documentation, is actually [inaudible] by Google and we have docs for professionals like medical professionals. We have fan as a fan base, as a cultural event, as a blog, spot blog, et cetera and we have dot files. So both of them have been delegated, and they coexist. So those are some of the examples that we try to identify to explain to the board that the SubPro recommendation is very comprehensive, and we feel that work can be done to look at the contention sets instead of rejecting it and proposing a new, complete proposal. I mean, I won't say out of the blue, but yeah, something like that.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Great. So back to me for a second, and then hopefully over to the board in a discussion but thank you for that presentation. One of the things we've been encouraging in NCSG is to put things in words so we can see

the slides and see the proposals. I'm coming back to this slide—Kathy Kleiman again for the record, to ask the question in the third bullet point. I mean, we'd love to know anything you'd like to share about the straw man. But also, is there a detailed research or evidence about it? I mean, what were you thinking as you created it? Of course, by background, some of this has already been discussed in the SubPro small team, but as the board adopts this and puts it out for community consultation, it rises to a whole new level of attention, of discussion, of implications. So one of our many questions is, could you tell us what you were thinking and some of the research and background? And also, the idea of a straw man, I looked it up, is a kind of a very tentative argument. One put out there for the purpose of generating responses. So one of my questions is, by using that title, is this something you're committed to or something you're floating so that we can respond and work together to create a different type of proposal?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:

So I'm going to look to Paul to make sure I get the process here. I describe it properly. The SubPro recommendations contained a recommendation regarding singulars and plurals with this spring and springs caveat. The board rejected that proposal, or maybe we said we were going to reject it. So the GNSO Council went through the process specified in the procedures and it came back to us with a revised recommendation. I believe this is completely consistent with the process. That related to singulars and plurals and it dropped the spring and springs distinction, which I'm not going to hide behind anything. The board was happy with that because the board is very concerned about these things that appear to us to turn on content.

And then we looked at the revised proposal that the GNSO Council came back to us with in terms of singulars and plurals. Nothing is changing about the string similarity review. It is still visual similarity. We have simply said, in order to accommodate the policy recommendation regarding singulars and plurals, we had concerns about how it could possibly be implementable and org thought long and hard about it and came up with a mechanism that they believed would be reasonably feasible to implement with respect to singulars and plurals. Now it does not preclude singulars and plurals. It simply says that if you have a singular or plural right now of a string and somebody else applies for the alternative, whether it's the singular or plural, you have a right to ask that it be put into a contention set. If you apply for a word and somebody else applies for a singular or plural of that word, you have the right to ask for that to be put into a contention set.

My understanding is that the GNSO Council is now contemplating a mechanism that would allow somebody to object to that, putting things in a contention set and demonstrating why they should be taken out. Do I have that right?

PAUL MCGRADY:

Yeah, sort of, yeah.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Paul, Paul, if I might, Kathy Kleiman again. Can we narrow down to the question of, did the SubPro small team make a recommendation to the GNSO Council on singulars and plurals that was then passed to the board?

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- PAUL MCGRADY: Hi, this is Paul McGrady. It's actually an interesting historical point and I don't want to get it wrong, but it either went to the board and was rejected or we were told it was going to be rejected. I can go back and check.
- KATHY KLEIMAN: It's my understanding that the small team did not—the small team is an advisory group that the GNSO Council did not vote on the proposed supplemental recommendation, so it hasn't gone up to the board from the GNSO Council.
- PAUL MCGRADY: I'm sorry, I thought you were asking a question that was further back in time. That is correct. The small team plus that is the GNSO Council small team plus all the community members that were invited to participate, GAC and others, put together a supplemental recommendation that went all the way through the community process through Puerto Rico. It made its way to the council. At that point, the staff came back to us with the straw man and asked that we consider that.
- We sort of told everybody in the small team plus, the staff has asked us to consider the straw man and the supplemental recommendation that's already been through community process and was ready to be voted on. It's still sitting there and we're now looking at the straw man proposal to see if that does whatever it is we're supposed to do better than what the council has before it right now. But yes, there's been no council vote.
- KATHY KLEIMAN: But the council never passed a revised singulars and plurals up to the board.
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PAUL MCGRADY: Correct.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: This process I think is the way it's supposed to work. We basically said to the council, we see where you're going with your supplemental recommendation and we're going to reject it. We're probably going to reject it. And therefore, and at that point, and it was because it was not practically implementable. At that point, the council has the option to engage the small team or do whatever it wants to come up with—to contemplate whether it wants to modify the current draft of its supplemental recommendation. So I think we're all just following the process, right?

PAUL MCGRADY: So Paul McGrady again. So the part that I understood that was not practically implementable from the staff point of view was having to take out the dictionary and look at every word in every language everywhere. And so, the part of the straw man, I think that was the important part to the staff was essentially outsourcing that function. So if anybody in the community anywhere wanted to put one of these into a singulars and plural—I hate the word contention set because it's already taken for a different meaning, but that's basically what it is. That the crowd could do that rather than staff having to do that. And so, I think that was the primary concern about it. From what I understand, from the small team plus calls that we've been having is that, one of the concerns with it is that more will end up being—more strings will end up being rejected by that approach and that's why we've been kicking around this idea of how to get strings out of those

singular and plural contention sets and that's where the work is now. Yeah.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

If I might, this is the first meeting since Puerto Rico, to really talk about this. There was a supplemental recommendation floated, but I just want to tell you, I think we've lost 99 percent of the table. We are now in the weeds of process and so, if I might, and that's where we kind of asked for it, but based on my question, but if I might, let's go up a little higher. A lot of ideas were floated and discussed in Puerto Rico. There was a supplemental recommendation that went out on singulars and plurals.

I've got to share that some of the rest of the world works a little more slowly and that also when the board creates a straw man, it gets a lot more attention in the world than when the GNSO SubPro team floats something to the GNSO council, which we have to say has not been formally adopted yet. So let's talk about the big picture issue, which is we're at time. Okay, we've got everybody here.

ANDREA GLANDON:

Two minutes, hard stop.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

Okay. The potential for thousands, hundreds—Becky, sorry. The potential for hundreds or thousands of non-commercial new gTLDs to be dropped in this process is enormous, right? Singulars and plurals coexist in—I mean, not singulars and plurals, but words coexist in the real world and some of those words are going to be words, non-commercial organizations. I'll just spell it out for everyone else who doesn't live in our group.

Once a non-commercial, legitimate singular or plural non-commercial new gTLD application with different intended users from whatever the other one is, let's say we're plural and they're singular. These are words that coexist in the real world. SubPro recommended they coexist. If they go into a contention set, what's likely to happen when a non-commercial application is alongside a brand or an open gTLD run by Identity Digital or anyone else? Let me pass it back to Becky. Thank you.

BECKY BURR:

So I just want to say I understand all of those—the points you're making. That conversation belongs with the GNSO right now. That's where it belongs. That's not where the board is. The board understood it was going to receive a recommendation from the GNSO council that was not going to be acceptable in an effort to be responsive to the community. We let them know that we were likely to reject it and we let them know that we thought we had identified a way that could make their recommendation—

ANDREA GLANDON:

I'm sorry, Becky. We have a hard stop.

BECKY BURR:

Implementable, but talk to the council.

KATHY KLEIMAN:

What would you like from us now?

ANDREA GLANDON:

Thank you. This concludes today's conference or today's meeting. Everyone have a wonderful rest of your day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]