
ICANN80 | HLGM – Closing Ceremony
Sunday, June 9, 2024 – 18:00 to 18:15 KGL

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you to all the speakers and participants. I will now proceed to the closing ceremony. As we conclude our meeting, I'd like to invite Mr. Nicolas Caballero, Chair of the Governmental Advisory Committee, to share his closing remarks. I realize we finished a bit early. Yeah.

NICOLAS CABALLERO: Well, that was a surprise. Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished ministers, vice ministers, delegates, esteemed GAC colleagues, and honored guests, as we draw the curtains on this High-Level Government Meeting of the GAC, held in the beautiful city of Kigali, I stand before you with a sense of accomplishment and optimism.

Over the course of our sessions, we have engaged in profound discussions, forged consensus, and charted a path forward for the stewardship of the global internet domain name system, the DNS. Our deliberations on the multistakeholder model reaffirmed our commitment to a governance structure that is inclusive, accountable, and reflective of the diverse tapestry of stakeholders. We recognized the critical role of ICANN in coordinating this model, ensuring that the Internet remains a public resource that serves the global community.

In our session on cooperation and governance, we underscored the importance of collaboration among governments, private sector, civil society, and technical experts. It is through such synergy that we can

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address the complex challenges of Internet governance, including policy development, security, and stability of the DNS ecosystem. This dialogue was particularly poignant.

We acknowledged that while the Internet has been a catalyst for innovation and growth, there remains a digital divide that must be bridged. Our resolve to promote policies that facilitate access, literacy, and capacity building in underserved regions is stronger than ever.

Lastly, in our focus on a meaningful connectivity for Africa, we highlighted the continent's burgeoning potential. We discussed initiatives to enhance infrastructure, foster local content, and empower communities through technology. The spirit of Ubuntu, I am because we are, correct me if I'm wrong, I'm not a native speaker of the language, resonated deeply as we pledged to support Africa's journey towards a digitally inclusive future. As we conclude, let us carry forward the key takeaways from our sessions.

The multistakeholder model remains our guiding principle, cooperation our method, digital inclusion our goal, and meaningful connectivity in Africa our shared responsibility. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants for your insightful contributions and collaborative spirit. Together, we have laid the groundwork for a more secure, resilient, and inclusive Internet. Let us continue to work hand-in-hand with unwavering dedication to uphold the values and principles that underpin our collective efforts. Thank you, and I look forward to our continued engagement in the service of the global Internet community. Thank you.

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you, Nicolas. Now, please welcome Miss Sally Costerton, the Interim President and CEO of ICANN. She will deliver closing remarks.

SALLY COSTERTON: Your Excellency and Chair of the High-Level Government Meeting, Minister Paula Ingabire, Distinguished Ministers, Heads of Delegations, GAC Chair Nico Caballero, Excellencies, GAC members, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon, everyone.

As we draw to a close this High-Level Government Meeting, I extend my sincere appreciation for your strong and active participation. Your engagement has been invaluable, and it emphasizes the significant role that governments play in shaping the future of the Internet. This gathering is particularly meaningful because it is the first High-Level Government Meeting since the pandemic.

The kind invitation by Minister Ingabire to host the meeting in Rwanda was an opportunity for ICANN and for our community to show our engagement with Africa. We are committed to continuing our support for the continent's digital transformation by helping the technical community to improve security, stability and resiliency of the domain name system.

One of ICANN's priorities is to increase digital inclusivity, ensuring that everyone can benefit from the opportunities the Internet offers. Initiatives such as the Coalition for Digital Africa, in which we partner with organizations such as the ITU, the Association of African

Universities, Smart Africa here in Rwanda, and the Africa Telecommunication Union exemplify our efforts. Today's discussions have highlighted our shared goals.

I extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Rwanda and our Meeting Chair, the Rwandan Minister of ICT and Innovation, Paula Ingabire, for the gracious hosting of this event. Your hospitality has been outstanding and your contributions have been instrumental to the success of this meeting. As we move forward, it is important more than ever that we commit to maintaining the ongoing dialogue and collaboration we have discussed today to achieve our shared goals.

ICANN is keen to support you through capacity development initiatives by offering technical expertise to your participation in Internet-related discussions. Together we can ensure that the Internet remains safe, stable and resilient. I invite all of you to join us at the ICANN80 Policy Forum over the next four days, in this venue where we are now. This event will bring together stakeholders from governments, businesses, civil society, academia and the technical community.

Participants will discuss key issues impacting the Internet's domain name system, including the need for improved DNS security, the expansion of the DNS to support more languages and scripts and changes in the domain name registration policies. Thank you once again for your participation and commitment. I look forward to our continued collaboration and the positive impact we will create together.

BAHER ESMAT: Now I'd like to invite our last speaker of the day, Mr. Charles Gahungu, General Manager ICT Regulation, Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority and Rwanda GAC representatives.

CHARLES GAHUNGU: Honourable Ministers, the Secretary General of ITU have been with us in the morning. Ambassador Claver has been with us. The ICANN Board Chair, the Government Advisory Committee (GAC) Chair. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very, very happy personally as a GAC representative. From last few years, what I called as a dream has become the reality today.

And first of all, I would like really to appreciate all colleagues, especially from the ICANN group, who we worked together for the preparation of this meeting, especially the HLGM as well as the ICANN80, which will start tomorrow morning. It is a great opportunity for Kigali to host HLGM. We are here from different parts of the world with different expertise, discussing mainly about the internet governance. And having all of you on this continent, I'm sure this continent is going to benefit more and there will be changes as well as fruitful.

I remember in one of the sessions we had this morning, it was very highlighted to say that we need to move from plans and vision and we do the implementation. What we have learned, the ideas provided in this session, I believe we're going to implement it, all of us, and the whole world, not only Africa as I said, will definitely benefit.

I would like to appreciate, I know ministers and others, CEOs, who have committed to attend this session. They are having heavy workload, but you have made the plan and you prioritized to be here in Rwanda. We really appreciate. Internet governance cannot exist without multi-stakeholder collaboration, as we always highlighted in different sessions. And as we know, the High-Level Government Meeting serves as an excellent opportunity for the participating government to discuss important issues related to the development of the internet.

I'm not going to repeat again, especially the GAC chair has almost summarized what we discussed in the different sessions, but to summarize, I would like to bring everyone from different challenges which has been mentioned, to take this as an assignment for each of us so that we can work on it and resolve, especially to close the gap of the 2.6 billion of people who are still offline. And as you have seen, 63% of those, they are on African continent. For this to happen, definitely we need a very well-coordinated effort and as the colleague said, avoiding resources duplication. Those challenges which have been highlighted, I'm sure they will be solved. We are the one to work on it.

For this evening, I know for some of us, it is the beginning of the week on which we are going to spend four days again here in Kigali, digging deeply in some of these topics and discussing technically how we can do much better. For others, yes, some may be leaving this evening or tomorrow or across the week. I really want to appreciate you and again, welcome you to Kigali. For those who are going to stay here especially, enjoy the climate, enjoy the environment, feel at home. I believe for those who come for the first time, it is not going to be the last time.

We're going to have other different sessions as well as meetings in the coming years.

I really wish all of you a good stay, have or enjoy. Some of you I have seen, they have been booking, visiting different parts of the country, including our national parks. We do have different area and some have visited, even they plan to visit the Genocide Memorial. It is our history, even though it is quite sad. But for those who are not aware, we are still in the 100 days to remember our brothers, sisters, parents who were killed during the Genocide. From 7th April, within 100 days, more than a million of people were killed.

So, for those who will be still here, I will also invite to visit some of those Genocide Memorial. We have a couple of them here in Kigali, different areas as well as even across the country. So, I would like once again to thank you all and enjoy. Murakoze, Murakazaneza, you are welcome. Thank you so much.

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Charles, and thank you everyone for your participation. There will now be a reception for all High-Level Government Meeting participants. From the floor, please exit to your right. This is my left, but it's your right. And follow the ushers' directions to the terrace. Have a good evening. Thank you.

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