
ICANN81 | AGM – Welcome Ceremony
Monday, November 11, 2024 – 9:00 to 10:15 TRT

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Baher Esmat, Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement, Middle East and Managing Director, Middle East and Africa.

BAHER ESMAT: I will start my speech with a couple of Turkish words. First of all, I would like to thank ICTA, Information and Communications Technologies Authority, for hosting us in this beautiful city. Thank you very much.

Today here we have distinguished participants and I would like to extend my special thanks to each and every one of them and welcome you all again.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to ICANN's Annual General Meeting, ICANN 81 in the vibrant city of Istanbul. We're deeply grateful to our local host, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, for making it possible for us to gather in this wonderful city. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to everyone joining us from around the globe, whether in person or virtually. A special welcome goes to our ICANN Fellows, NextGen participants, and all the newcomers attending an ICANN meeting for the first time. We are thrilled to have you with us and look forward to your valuable contributions.

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It's also great to see members and leaders of Internet organizations, along with representatives of the ICANN supporting organizations and at advisory committees, gathered here today. Thank you all for being here for ICANN 81, and for those of you who call Istanbul home, it's an honor to have you host and contribute to this global conversation. Istanbul has long been a bridge between cultures, and throughout this week we will continue that tradition within our multi stakeholder community, connecting Turkey with the wider global community.

Now, please join me in welcoming Sally Costerton, the Interim President and CEO of ICANN, to the stage for her opening remarks.

SALLY COSTERTON:

Hello and welcome to ICANN 81. Thank you to our host, to the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, and our distinguished guests for welcoming ICANN. We are pleased to be joined today by Dr. Omer Fatih Sayan, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Omer Abdullah Karagozolgul, President of the Information Communications Technology Technologies Authority, and Hans Petter Hollen, ASO Chair Managing Director of RIPE NCC. It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be with you all today in this beautiful city.

` Last year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of ICANN's Istanbul office with the support of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and the Information and Communication Technologies Authority. What started as a small hub office with a handful of staff now boasts a team of 30. I am grateful to our ICANN team here and our ICANN community

stakeholders for laying the groundwork for this meeting and our hosts for welcoming us to what I am sure will be a very successful gathering.

Our Annual General Meeting provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the year's progress and to look ahead into the future. This year we have seen the fruits of our collective work in the achievement of three major milestones. In January, the ICANN Grant Program launched and received 247 applications. The evaluation and assessment of the applications for the program's first cycle is on schedule and is set to conclude at the end of 2024. In June this year, the second annual Universal Acceptance Day took place with 52 events across 47 countries and territories. These UA Day events were held in more than 23 languages and helped to create awareness on UA, featuring a total of six and a half thousand participants across the world. And next year, UNESCO is collaborating with ICANN for UA Day 2025. We received 110 proposals from 62 countries and territories already, and these proposals are currently being reviewed for shortlisting by a cross-community proposal review team.

Throughout the year we made significant progress on the implementation of the New gTLD Program Next Round. We confirmed the expected gTLD evaluation fee and two key programs, the Applicant Support Program and the Registry Service Provider Evaluation Program, which will open for applications shortly after this meeting. ICANN is now working with the Implementation Review Team to address topics such as the Base Registry Agreement, community priority evaluation and resolution of contention sets as we collectively

work towards the opening of the next round which is planned for April 2026.

Since the last AGM, the United Nations accepted the Global Digital Compact as an annex to the Pact for the Future. Within that process, we have engaged with all stakeholders. For example, we created an extensive WSIS+20 outreach network, including a very active mailing list with 540 subscribers from 85 UN member states. I urge everyone to subscribe to the list. Just go to our ICANN website and join in. We created a discussion group with SO/AC members to facilitate ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst our community in the lead up to WSIS+20 and together with the ITU, we organized two briefings for UN diplomats in New York and Geneva with more than 100 member states participating. And finally, last month we held a public forum to discuss the WSIS+20 review process and the future of the Internet Governance Forum in our Washington, D.C. office.

We look forward to continuing these important discussions in the coming year, so please do participate and share your ideas and perspectives.

While most of these milestones were executed by ICANN organization, they represent the culmination of years of collaborative effort between the Board, the community and the organization. Together we are advancing our mission to deliver a sustainable and interoperable Internet for everyone.

This AGM is also a personal moment for contemplation as I end my tenure as your Interim President and CEO. As I prepared for this

meeting, I've been reflecting on the ICANN that I met over 12 years ago when the Istanbul office was still only a concept on paper. When I joined the ICANN family, ICANN was just 14 years old. Being 14 is such an interesting time. Teenagers begin to look like adults, and if they're anything like my children were, they think they are adults. And at that age we tend to think no one has ever been through what we are experiencing and that our way is the only way. Yet beneath this confidence, there's a lack of real experience. We put on a brave face, but we haven't fully developed all the skills we need and we're vulnerable to life's challenges now.

Now ICANN is 26. Your late 20s are a time when you start to know who you really are, who you want to be, and what you need to do to reach your goals. By this age, most people have faced major obstacles and overcome them, building both skills and confidence. At 26, there's still plenty more to learn, more room to grow, but you're more capable, resilient and equipped for what lies ahead.

I believe this is exactly where ICANN is today. I'm confident that our ability to deliver on our mission is the best that it has ever been. And this is not just my sentiment. You've told me this, people from many backgrounds, with different relationships with ICANN from all over the world. This belief is rooted in the strong partnerships we have built together and the deepening trust we have fostered, trust between our community members and our staff, trust between our community and our Board, trust between different community groups, and ultimately trust with each other. This strengthened trust is empowering. It enables us to take risks, to experiment, to make mistakes, but to bounce back

quickly while learning important lessons. We have matured as a community and we need it. The world is more challenging today, but we have proven that we are ready to meet those challenges head-on. Over the past 26 years, we have earned trust in our stewardship of the mission and we will continue to demonstrate that in everything we do.

Before I close, I want to recognize ICANN's incredible staff. You are a team of extraordinary people driven by a deep and sincere commitment to our mission. I have watched you work long hours across challenging time zones alongside the Board, the community and each other, bringing your expertise to help solve complex problems. I am constantly inspired by your dedication to the multi-stakeholder process. You never stop trying to find agreement and you work hard to support the development of policies we can implement. Your resourcefulness and flexibility are boundless. I believe this comes not only from who you are as individuals, but how you work together with a shared sense of purpose.

This year in particular, we've had to make some difficult decisions to ensure we can continue to deliver our mission sustainably. Despite challenges and the unknown, your dedication never wavered and you continue to deliver consistent, high quality work, making significant progress. Thank you all.

It has been a privilege to serve in this role. I have learnt so much more about why the world needs us to keep delivering on our mission. We are here to sustain the Internet, now, more than ever, one of the world's most critical resources. If we continue to trust one another, to strengthen our partnerships and welcome new talents and ideas to our

Board, staff and community, I am confident we will continue to have what it takes to succeed.

On a personal level, I have benefited from your partnership, support and friendship. I am enormously grateful and look forward to playing my part in the next chapter. I know that together we're committed to supporting our mission and we know how to do it well.

And one final thank you. I would like to thank my wonderful and long-suffering husband who's actually in the audience today, and for all of you whose families and husbands and wives and children give up so much to ICANN because you do. And they do. Thank them too for us. Thank you very much.

I would like to introduce the ICANN Board Chair, Tripti Sinha.

TRIPTI SINHA:

Hello and welcome to this beautiful city of Istanbul. [Meheraba Bou Ghazal Shehere], Omer Fatih Sayan, Omer Abdullah Karagozoglu Hans Petter Holen, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, welcome to the ICANN 81 Annual General Meeting, whether you're joining us today in the room or joining virtually online to what I hope will be a productive meeting that is only possible through our collective participation.

It's lovely to be here in Istanbul, one of my favorite places to visit. Every time I return, I am struck by the beauty of the Bosphorus and the deep history of this city. Istanbul bridges and connects cultures. It is a vibrant city that straddles two continents, connecting Europe to Asia via the Bosphorus Bridge and others. When you arrive at Istanbul Airport, you

are greeted with the words “Istanbul, the meeting point of the world.” It serves as a model for the ICANN community, where our intent is to bridge our diversity of opinions and positions to arrive at a common understanding.

We are gathered together for ICANN's 2024 AGM, a time when we take stock of the activities of the year, what we accomplished, what we did not accomplish, what challenged us and what beckons us on the horizon. For the ICANN Board, the AGM is a time when we sunset the current Board and seat the new one. It is a time when we say farewell to some colleagues and welcome others. This has been an extraordinarily complex year, a year marked by achievements, challenges and everything in between. As a community we have persevered and kept pace on major initiatives. As you just heard from Sally, we maintained a steady cadence of work on the next round of new gTLDs, launched the grant program released for public comment, ICANN's next strategic plan, formed the much-awaited independent review standing panel in support of ICANN's Critical Accountability Mechanism. And I mentioned just a few projects. There are many others that have quietly kept pace and even picked up the pace.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that collaboration in our community has become better. Yes, we have had our bumps along the way, but in the end we listened to each other and arrived at palatable solutions.

For the Board, we completed two significant hires: ICANN's Ombuds, Elizabeth Field, who is on the job and with us here today. Liz? And mid-year, we concluded successfully the selection and hiring of ICANN's next

CEO, Kurtis Lindqvist. He too is with us today as he anxiously looks forward to stepping into the role on December 9th. And we look forward to Kurtis joining the ICANN family and taking us to greater heights. No pressure, Kurtis.

Also, on behalf of the Board and ICANN, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sally Costerton for serving as interim CEO. Thank you Sally.

As I said earlier, this has been an interesting year. We have had our fair or perhaps even unfair share of challenges. ICANN is confronted with a complex financial situation. It is a forcing function that has led the organization to make difficult decisions. Org continues to work through the financial stress with the view of bringing structural stability to ICANN's finances.

A serious legal action has been brought against ICANN. I assure you that the Board and Org are fully engaged and will responsibly see this matter through. Several members of the community have reached out in different ways. We appreciate the concern, sensitivity, and attentiveness displayed by you. It is proactive responses such as these that uplift our spirits during such trying times and remind us that this community cares. The Board and Org deeply appreciate the kindness shown.

As we all know, we are in the middle of many global conversations and activities that speak to the future of Internet governance. Next year, these conversations culminate with the WSIS+20 review. The Global Digital Compact is a major development at the United Nations. Last

year, when discussions around it started, there were several concerns expressed by ICANN in publications and blog posts regarding the technical community not being recognized as a separate stakeholder. There were suggestions of creating a new Multilateral Digital Cooperation Forum along with questions about the future of the Internet Governance Forum.

We are pleased that the final text of this GDC is clear. The technical community is recognized as a separate stakeholder. Internet governance is recognized to be global and multistakeholder in nature and there is acknowledgement of the importance of the [IDF]. This is a good conclusion to the GDC before the WSIS+20 review in 2025.

We need to recognize that when governing a fabric of technical infrastructure that spans the globe and whose impact is worldwide, the multistakeholder model has proven to be a highly successful one in promoting an open, global, interoperable and reliable Internet. It is a model that enables all stakeholders to come together in dialogue to share viewpoints and drive towards consensus-based decision making. This approach of broad inclusivity has yielded a system of voluntary standards, best practice, cooperation and trust. Our approach of multistakeholder governance, driven by collaboration and shared responsibility, supports a unified global Internet for us all. It has produced a working Internet for over 40 years with exponential growth in traffic and end users. It has served as a platform of innovation that has changed the world in the most remarkable of ways. The multistakeholder model has allowed the Internet and the digital

economy to flourish while protecting it against unilateral decision making or control.

Next year at the WSIS plus 20, it would be prudent for governments to reaffirm the wisdom and decisions of the WSIS and the GDC, which recognize the successful multistakeholder stewardship as the most adaptable, inclusive and effective approach to Internet governance. By giving everyone a voice, the Internet remains inclusive and trusted. Let it continue to be a platform of service, innovation and growth spurred by the human mind.

Now, before I conclude, I am compelled to remark on current events. We live in fragile and turbulent times. The ebb and flow of the world order has changed in unexpected and unpredictable ways and moved to a state not seen before in recent times. I ask each of you that while we assemble here at ICANN 81, please remember what brings us together. It is ICANN's mission that is built upon foundational core principles, and we as a community are also guided by a code of conduct. Outside of our technical and policy persuasions, we share a multitude of political opinions and postures and while we work together as a diverse multi stakeholder community, let's discourse, agree and disagree with respect. Keep our common and collective purpose in mind and strive towards it through thick and thin. Let's stay focused together on what convenes us as a community driven by shared goals. Let's immerse ourselves in doing the right thing, in preserving and imparting with fidelity our responsibility to the IANA of functions and in developing, ratifying and then implementing policies for the unique identifier systems.

Make ICANN 81 a meaningful experience. Enjoy the meeting. Good evening. Thank you for listening and again welcome to our 2024 AGM.

Now it gives me great pleasure to introduce for the first time in person our incoming President and CEO, Kurtis Lindqvist. Kurtis, please come on stage to say a few words.

KURTIS LINDQVIST:

Thank you, Tripti. First of all, I should like to thank all of you for the very warm welcome and very kind messages and outreach that I got from the community and also from the staff in Org after the announcement in Kigali. A lot of those warm welcomes also came with a “but” at the end, which I presume is what Tripti alluded to.

I would also like to thank the Board for the very warm welcome and support they given me and for actually for having given me this opportunity.

There is just under four weeks until I start in the new role. Until then, Sally will remain President and CEO, Interim President and CEO. I’d also like to thank Sally for the support and the very warm welcome Sally has given me into this community.

So many of you might ask, who am I? That's a good question. I'm originally from the Aland Islands, or Ax in ICANN-speak. And I really should have gotten a number joke in there as well, but I didn't. And it's a Swedish-speaking archipelago that belongs to Finland. I studied computer sciences originally in Uppsala University. There I discovered the Internet that led me to the dot-com era and startups. I went on from

there to work for one of Europe's first ISPs. I went on to work for a large carrier. In 2002 I joined Netnod, one of the 13 DNS root server operators. And there I got engaged with ICANN, with CENTR, with APTLD and some of the other organizations that are very closely linked to ICANN. I served two terms on the Internet Architecture Board. I chaired working groups in the IETF and RIPE. And so I very much come from a technical community into the current role.

In 2016 I joined LINX, and I've been serving as CEO since 2019. And so while I've been away from the ICANN community for some years where this hasn't really been part of my role, I very much look forward to re-engaging and coming back in here and to work with all of you and the ICANN Org staff. And I actually do look forward to taking up my position in December.

Unfortunately I do have a current job and so I will need to leave this evening and go back to that. So I won't be able to stay for the rest of the week. But I do hope you all have a very, very successful, fantastic and productive week and I look forward to working with you when I return. So thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Thanks, Kurtis, and we look forward to welcoming you on board in December.

Now I'd like to invite Hans, the chair of the Address Supporting Organization.

HANS PETTER HOLEN:

Thank you very much. I'm Hans Petter Holen. I'm the chair of the Numbers Resource Organization's Executive Council, and I'm here to talk about the second N in ICANN, the Numbers. And as Kurtis mentioned, he has been involved in RIPE one of the numbers communities, and we have been working together there for a quarter of a century or something in this space. So he is really underestimating his or underselling his numbers knowledge, I would say.

The Numbers Resource Organization is the coordinating body for the five regional Internet registries that manage and distribute Internet number resources such as IPv4, IPv6 and autonomous system numbers. We're kind of the invisible part of the Internet. In your browser, you see the names, but you don't see the numbers. The DNS is the bridge between us, the mapping from name to numbers. And this is also where the root name servers come into play.

The NRO serves as ICANN's address supporting organization. So why, would you say, do we have two names for the same thing? Yeah, well, we like to play with names in the numbers world, and we have been one of ICANN's supporting organizations since the formation in 1999.

The NRO Numbers Council is the policy body of the Address Reporting Organization, and it acts as the ASO Address Council and is a body established to advise the ICANN Board and the ASO on number resource policies. It consists of 15 members, three from each region. Two members are elected by the community, and one member appointed by their respective RIR boards. It advises the ICANN Board. It oversees global policy development process. It appoints two member to the ICANN Board and one member of the ICANN Nominating Committee.

And it hasn't really been very busy on global policies because we have one global policy for v4 addresses, one for v6 and one for AS numbers. And since there are no more v4 addresses to be had, v6 space is so vast that there is very seldom that there needs to be new allocation made to the RIRs. Then there isn't much to do in this space other than making sure there is a steady state here.

So the Council consists of the people that you can see here. I've added the new appointees in italics so you can see who they are, and the asterisk indicates who is appointed by the Board.

And I'll come back to the vacant spots here for AFRINIC. They are in the unfortunate situation in that the community has not been able to appoint any to this group for the last number of years.

If you have questions regarding numbers, feel free to talk to us.

Each regional Internet Registry is a not-for-profit member-based organization governed by open transparent processes developed by the community in a bottom-up manner. So how do we do that? We do not develop the policies at the ICANN meetings. We have our own policy meetings, two a year per region. And in addition to this we also have more local events in order to engage our community globally as close to home as possible, so to speak. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in policies. You can participate in person or remotely or you can follow the work on the mailing list.

You may have noticed from the previous slides that AFRINIC has been missing. This is because the AFRINIC board no longer has a quorum to make decisions, and the CEO contract has expired. Let me assure you

that the NRO is fully committed to supporting the AFRINIC Community in its path ahead to restore functional governance. We publicly welcome the reappointment of the official receiver and the decision to organize elections, in accordance to AFRINIC's constitution. This gives us a clear path ahead, which is very important because the RIR system is fundamental for the health of the global Internet.

The criteria for establishment of new Regional Internet Registers, also known as ICP-2, is a document that was created in 2021. LACNIC and AFRINIC were established using this criteria. The NRO Executive Council asked the Address Council to help update this document developed over 20 years ago. We want your input into the principles that will form the basis of the updated ICP-2. And if you want to take part in this and learn more about this, please join us tomorrow, Tuesday, 16:30, in the Hamidiye room.

Lastly, I want to thank Paul Wilson for 26 years of service as APNIC Director General and Oscar Robles-Garay for 10 years as service as LACNIC CEO and give a warm welcome to Jia Rong Low, the new APNIC Director General, and Ernesto Majo, the new LACNIC CEO. And I also and I also want to do a special shout-out for the AFRINIC staff for their unwavering commitment to their members and community. They have maintained uninterrupted services and operations through challenging and uncertain times.

And with that, I want to thank you for your attention and wish you all a successful ICANN meeting. Please join us at our upcoming RIR meetings if you're interested in shaping Internet numbers policies. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you, Hans. Now I'd like to welcome Mr. Omer Abdullah Karagozoglu, the President of the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, the Republic of Turkey.

OMER KARAGOZOGLU: Honorable Minister, distinguished ICANN executives, esteemed guests, valued members of the press, welcome to the ICANN 81 Annual General Meeting hosted by our institution. I greet you all with respect and affection on behalf of myself and my institution.

Esteemed participants, the development of information and communication technologies has brought about profound changes in many areas from our lifestyle to how we conduct business. Today, with just one click, we can access information worldwide and instantly interact with someone on the other side of the globe. We're witnessing the tremendous transformative speed of the Internet in almost every field, from business to education, healthcare to entertainment. The rapid growth of the Internet and domain name system has made it imperative to produce more robust and localized solutions. Every country that wants to establish a stronger presence in the digital world must now secure its domain name system, representing its identity and sovereignty, and align it with national security standards.

Currently, the registration and management of dot-tr domain names in our country are carried out by TRABIS within our institution. Since 1990, the management and coordination of dot-tr domain names, the fundamental building blocks of the Internet in our country, had been

conducted by the Middle East Technical University. However, with the rapid advancement of technology, it became unavoidable to address the regulation in this area more comprehensively.

To meet this need, with the Electronic Communication Law 5809 enacted in 2008, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure was tasked with determining the strategies and policies regarding Internet domain names. With the Internet domain name regulation prepared by the Ministry, the authority to carry out tasks related to allocation of dot-tr domain names was transferred to our institution.

With the support of our Ministry, we established a new structure called TRABIS to play a more active role in the digital future. With the launch of TRABIS, domain name management in our country was secured through legislation brought up to international standards. Under the policies set by the Ministry, we adopted the Registry Registrar Registrant Model, briefly known as the ["Three R"] model, and authorized 19 registers to facilitate domain name transactions. Before TRABIS, there were approximately 450,000 registered dot-tr domain names. Since the activation of TRABIS on September 14, 2022, this number has reached around 1.3 million. We anticipate that this figure will continue to grow exponentially in the coming period.

Distinguished guests, as BTK, today we continue our efforts uninterrupted with an awareness of the critical importance of the Internet infrastructure. We aim to simplify allocations by allowing dot-tr domain assignments online and without documentation. following the First Serve Principle to increase the number of domain names.

An alternative mechanism was created to address disputes, enabling the quick resolution of domain name disputes through arbiters or arbitration boards. Since the activation of TRABIS, over 400 disputes have been resolved by the three authorized dispute resolution service providers within approximately two years.

Another significant initiative is the phased allocation of the flat names such as Turkey.tr, which began one year later from the launch of TRABIS. With this regulation, domain names with the direct country code extension were made available, and over 170,000 domain names have been allocated to date.

In the future, we aim to minimize potential issues, as BTK, ensure that allocation processes are fast, easy and secure, keep fees at reasonable levels, and increase the number of dot-tr domain names to achieve global reach.

Honored guests, while considering the opportunities presented by the digital world, we also prioritize digital security to the risks it brings. In this regard, we cannot overlook our country's cybersecurity. In this framework, the National Cyber Incidents Response Team, USOM, which operates within our institution, has become one of the pillars of our country's cybersecurity strategy since its establishment in 2013.

Additionally, through our Cyber Incidents Response Team, [SOMAY], and solutions developed entirely with local and national software, will further strengthen our cyber defense.

With the activation of TRABIS, we are reinforcing our country's cybersecurity. By integrating USOM and TRABIS, we have established a

swift, effective solution mechanism against phishing attacks, utilizing our strength in cyber defense to combat domain name misuse. Furthermore, with the artificial-intelligence-supported application we use, we detect and take precautions against domain names susceptible to misuse immediately after allocation, thereby continuously enhancing our country's defense capacity against cyberattacks.

With our century of [true care] vision, we are advancing towards being a country that not only follows digital transformation, but also guides it. For this reason, we are taking strong steps in every area from cybersecurity to artificial intelligence, big data to cloud technologies, ensuring the security of our digital future.

In conclusion, I would like to thank first and foremost the distinguished ICANN executives, the ICANN Istanbul office and valued ICANN employees, as well as everyone who contributed to organizing this event bringing together ICANN community in our beautiful city of Istanbul. I hope the ICANN 81 event will be beneficial for all.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Thank you, Mr. Karagozoglu. We're very grateful to you and your team for the incredible support and hospitality. Thank you.

Now please join me in welcoming His Excellency, Dr. Omer Fatih Sayan, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, the Republic of Turkey.

OMER FATİH SAYAN:

Dear ICANN President and ICANN Board members, esteemed stakeholders of the Internet world, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished members of the press, I greet you all with respect and love on behalf of myself, my ministry and my country. Welcome to the ICANN 81 Annual General Meeting.

First and foremost, I would like to express my pleasure at hosting ICAN's Annual General Meeting in our country for the first time in our beautiful city of Istanbul, the crossroads of civilizations, where Europe and Asia meet with each other. We also welcome our guests from six continents. Welcome to Istanbul. Welcome to Turkey.

Dear guests, before I begin my speech, I would like to share something with you. I would like to focus on this sound for a moment. *dial-up Internet sound *. This is a sound that serves as a voice that reveals age. For those like me, in their 40s and older, it's a familiar and nostalgic sound. Yet it means little to younger generations. This sound symbolizes the introduction of the Internet to our lives. I remember very early years when the Internet began to be used in our country. It coincided with my high school years. It wasn't as easily accessible as it now. It was only available at universities. But we followed its developments through media and were amazed. Over the time it became more accessible, the ability to connect from one computer to another without leaving your seat. It was a development that astonished us—not only us, but also our elders who didn't have a close connection with digitalization due to the period they came into the world. Everyone believed that this innovation was the final point.

Questions like “What more could there be?” echoed in our conversations. Since I started my career, we have witnessed advancements that surpassed the “what more could there be?” outlook and we will continue to do so. In fact, due to my role, I have seen and have been involved in some of these advancements. The Internet and all the innovations it brings hold special significance to each of us distinguished guests. As you would agree, the Internet has revolutionized access to information, offering unparalleled opportunities in fields such as education, healthcare, commerce and social life. Today, there is hardly anything we can do without connecting to it. Thanks to this digital network, we can access any information in seconds, stay informed about events in the most remote corners of the world instantly, and follow technical technological development step by step. This vast ocean of information provided by the Internet accelerates not only developments by individuals but also entire societies.

Allow me to share some of the statistics regarding the information and communication sector in our country. The number of broadband Internet subscribers has reached 91.6 million. In terms of population, the fixed broadband penetration rate is approximately 23.3%, while the mobile broadband penetration rate has approached 85.1%. The number of the fiber subscribers has exceeded 7 million, showing annual growth rate of over 20%.

And on the main theme today in today's meeting, Internet infrastructure, specifically DNS and IP addresses, are concepts brought into our lives by the Internet.

TRABIS, as my colleague Omer Abdullah Karagozoglu has also told us, is Turkey's Internet Domain Management System. Through TRABIS, we regulate the central registration and management of TR domain names, ensuring a faster and more reliable domain registration process and simplifying domain name management. Through this governance approach, our Ministry and ICTA, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, have ensured the participation of private sector, civil society, academia and government representatives in the domain name management. The multistakeholder culture was fostered through meetings to gather views from local Internet community during the regulatory work on domain names. The results of these efforts include securing domain names through legal regulations, facilitating fast, easy, and secure registration progress and processes, automating transfer processes between registration institutions by improving technical infrastructures and monitoring domain names with artificial intelligence to prevent abuse under the BTK ICTA framework.

I hope that as a result of these innovations and improvements, the demand for TR domain names and the number of TR domain names will continue to increase, allowing the domain name sector in Turkey to reach its deserved levels.

Esteemed participants from all over the world, using current and advanced technologies, strengthening cyber incident response capabilities, and enhancing knowledge and preparedness levels are of critical importance to ensuring cybersecurity. To this end, our Ministry has developed a national cybersecurity strategy and action plan from

2024 to 2028 and to continues to combat and mitigate risks posed by increasing and evolving cyber threats.

Our action plans on cybersecurity is focused on enhancing the security of DNS services by encouraging the widespread implementation of DNSSEC. This includes the registry and the registrar implementing DNSSEC, activating DNSSEC services on the Internet Service Providers infrastructure, and setting an industry standard by promoting the use of DNSSEC-signed domain names within the public sector.

To implement DNSSEC, which I can also give a special importance to within the TR domain, a deployment process was initiated at the end of 2022 and completed at the end of 2023. This allows for the signing of a TR domain name with DNSSEC, creating a chain of trust and ensuring the security and integrity of TR domain names. I am proud to say that our Ministry is at the forefront of national cybersecurity, implementing robust regulatory measures and initiatives. Our commitment to cyber security is evident in our recognition as a model country in the 2024 Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) report by the ITU International Telecommunication Union.

Turkey has achieved full marks in all categories including legal measures, technical infrastructure, organizational structure, capacity development and international collaboration. This achievement is more than just statistics, but it's a testament to our commitment to securing the future of our nation. We are dedicated to safeguarding our digital sovereignty and ensuring the safety of every and each citizen in the cyber realm.

As we forge ahead, we strive to make maintain our position as a global leader in cybersecurity and amplify Turkey's voice on the international stage.

Dear guests, the connection possibilities provided by the digital world have also fundamentally changed the way that we do business. Today, there is no need to travel long distances to collaborate with an international company. Businesses can operate beyond borders, globally and seamlessly, through the Internet. Even a small startup can find a place in the global market. So this not only fuels economic growth but also spreads innovative solutions worldwide. This commercial transformation power of the Internet opens doors to unimaginable opportunities and it lays foundations for the economies for the future.

Looking at statistics, we see that Internet and social media usage is increasing daily. Today there are over 5 billion social media users worldwide. Last year, 266 million new users joined in the social media world, meaning that social media networks gained an average of 8.4 new users per second worldwide. These users spent approximately two and a half hours a day on social media. It is doubled in Turkey. I ask in many international conferences ... Until now, I mean, we can have everything with us, but if I ask our participants, “Who doesn't have a cell phone with themselves at this conference?”, there will be no one. So we are dependent and we are using our cell phones. We are using social media. And the screen times that we have been spending using Internet has been doubled in the recent years. The rate increases every year and the age of the users decreases. The highest usage rate is seen among those aged 16 to 24.

So social media has evolved beyond just a medium for sharing information and entertainment. It has also become a breeding ground of cyber bullying, substance abuse and fraud. Another threat on the Internet is the spread of harmful content. The gradual disappearance of safe virtual spaces for our children is a course of concern. In our country, we offer a safe Internet service free of charge to anyone who requests it to ensure that our children can use the Internet more safely. So we have three packages. One package is for children. The other package is for the families. The third package is free for everyone. Every content is allowed in the third package.

Aligned with our goals of advancing communication infrastructure and services, we are actively pursuing cutting edge technologies like cybersecurity, AI, big data and cloud computing to secure our digital future. We could consider that the Global Digital Compact is a comprehensive framework for global governance of digital technology and AI. Twenty years after the World Summit on the Information Society, it charts a broad map for global digital cooperation to harness the immense potential of digital technology and close digital divides.

We'll all here to contribute GDC further and our ultimate goal is to establish Turkey as a global leader in the digital realm. We are committed to driving technological innovation and ensuring that Turkey plays a pivotal role in shaping the future. Remember, those who shape technology shape the future. So it's you. You will be shaping the future.

Finally, I find it highly valuable that one of ICANN's four regional offices is located in Istanbul. And I hope our close cooperation will continue to

grow. As I conclude my speech with these feelings and thoughts, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to realization of the event and wish ICANN 81 to be released in the most efficient way. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the famous poet Yahya Kemal Beyatli, who wrote, “There is no place that I have not seen, no place that I have not traveled, no place that I have not loved. Even to love just one neighborhood is worth a lifetime.” I say he lived in the most pleasant and longest dream. I greet you all with my sincerest love and respect and the hope that you will accumulate late beautiful memories in our beautiful and unique Istanbul, which he described with the lines “who lived in you for many years, died in you, slept in you.”

Dear colleagues, I wish you a very successful and productive week. Of course we have also some social activities, but please do not miss the opportunities to feel Istanbul. Once again, welcome to Istanbul. Welcome to Turkey.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Thank you, Dr. Sayan, for your insightful remarks. You reminded us of the power of the Internet, but you also brought some memories from the old Internet. The sound effects were amazing. Thank you for that.

Now I'd like to invite back to the stage Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board Chair, to announce the recipient of the 2024 Dr. Tarek Kamel Award for Capacity Building.

TRIPTI SINHA:

So it is my pleasure to announce the 2024 Tarek Kamel Award for Capacity Building. This award honors the late Tarek Kamel, an Internet pioneer and a beloved and respected member of our Internet community. Established by the ICANN Board in 2020, this award recognizes members of the ICANN community for their significant efforts in building capacity related to ICANN's mission.

The recipient of this year 2024 Tarek Kamal Award is Rodrigue Guiguemde. Rodrigue Guiguemde is a Regional Advisor for the development of Content and Communities of Practice under the Smart Africa Initiative as part of a World Bank program on digital integration in West Africa. A longtime member of the ICANN community, he served as a Government Advisory Committee (GAC) vice-chair from March 2020 to March 2020 and has been an active member of the GAC Underserved Regions Working Group. Rodrigue served as the General Secretary of the Information and Communications Technology Initiative for Citizens in Burkina Faso, Initiative TIC et Citoyenneté. As General Secretary, Rodriguez facilitated the operations of the Train the Trainers effort on Internet governance and information systems. During his tenure with the Burkina Faso government, he collaborated with stakeholders including the Africa Network Information Center, AFRINIC, ICANN Internet Society and the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Post of Burkina Faso. Rodrigue coordinated the groundwork for the implementation of IPv6 in Burkina Faso through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Burkina Faso government and AFRINIC.

The ICANN Board recognizes Guiguemde's significant efforts in capacity building on a local and regional scale. Particularly notable is Guiguemde's key role in the development of a new Coalition for Digital Africa Capacity Building Initiative, for which the ICANN Board expresses its sincere and deep appreciation.

Congratulations, Rodrigue, and thank you for your remarkable efforts in support of ICANN the multistakeholder model and the Internet governance ecosystem.

RODRIGUE GUIGUEMDE:

Wow. Thank you so much. And really, I'm very grateful for this recognition, and I need to say a few words. It's important. Ladies and gentlemen, it's with a great gratitude that I accept the Dr. Tarek Kamel Award for Capacity Building today. First and foremost, I wish to honor the memory of Dr. Kamel, a pioneer of the Internet whose contributions to global governance will continue to inspire us all here. I would like to thank my family and especially my wife for her unwavering support.

I also remember with the emotion and [mantle] Mr. [Pierre Dandjinou], whose legacy in Internet governance in Africa continues to guide us. A big thank you to the NGO Initiative TIC et Citoyenneté in Burkina Faso and her President, Mrs. [Ajawatara], for their support during my term at the GAC. I received a lot of support during my mandates in GAC. Thank you to this NGO.

I'm also grateful to Smart Africa and his director general, Mr. Lacina Kone (he's here with us today) for allowing me to pursue essential project. Thank you as well to the ICANN leadership and team. Your

contribution has been invaluable. Thank you all to the community for this energy and this engagement. All of you, thank you so much.

Finally, I want to emphasize that our work has only begun. We must continue to work towards a stable and secure Internet in the spirit of cooperation. Together, let us honor Tarek Kamel's legacy and build an Internet that serves everyone. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE:

Well deserved, Rodrigue. Congratulations. Before we close, I'd like to invite you to this evening's welcome reception hosted by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority from 6:30 to 8:00p.m. Following the reception, we're honored to have a performance by the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra from 8 to 9pm. Both events will take place at the Ataturk Cultural Center.

Now I invite you to enjoy an inspiring cultural performance by Devlet Halk Dansları Topluluğu one of Turkey's premier professional dance groups. Thank you for being here, and have a wonderful meeting.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]