
ICANN81 | AGM – GAC Strategic Planning and Operational Matters
Saturday, November 9, 2024 - 10:30 to 12:00 TRT

DANIEL GLUCK: Hey, everyone. We'll get started shortly.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Welcome back, everyone. Please take your seats. We're about to start. Let's give it two minutes.

DANIEL GLUCK: Hello, and welcome to the GAC ICANN81 Strategic Planning discussion. My name is Dan Gluck from the ICANN Policy Development GAC Support Team. Please note this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted in the chat pod. Interpretation for this session will include all six UN languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish, and also Portuguese. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in the Zoom Room. Please state your name and the language you will speak if other than English, and remember to speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand over the floor to GAC chair, Nico Caballero.

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NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you, Daniel. Welcome back, everyone. Please give me just one minute for some technical adjustments. My apologies. I'm still having some technical issues here with my connection. So in the meantime, let's get started. We have two issues to deal with today. One is operational matters, and the second is the GAC strategic planning. For the operational matters, our shepherd this morning will be Mr. Tracy Hackshaw from the UPU. Then right after that, I'll give the floor to my dear colleague, Ian Sheldon, from Australia. We're going to be discussing the GOP Working Group updates and potential decisions we might or might not make. Again, without further ado, let me give the floor to Tracy Hackshaw from the UPU. Over to you, Tracy.

TRACY HACKSHAW:

Thank you very much. Nico. My intervention today is going to be fairly brief, but I'm speaking to the Continuous Improvement Community Coordination Group, the CIP-CCG. As you can see on the slide, this is a roadmap of the activities that have been going on in this working group over the last, let's say, eight, nine months.

What is the Continuous Improvement Group doing? Really, it's trying to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of continuous improvement throughout the community in the context of the ATRT3 recommendation. It's looking to consider a range of methodologies for effective Continuous Improvement Programs and agree on the methodology that is fit for ICANN purpose, and eventually formulating a CIP framework, improvement framework, to be used by each SO/AC and the NomCom.

As an example, some of the work that we currently do, the capacity development, the strategic objectives work, etc., all of that seems to fall in the category of continuous improvement. But the GAC as an organization, as you know, is not really an easy group to just say, “Well, this is what we agree upon as the continuous improvement framework,” and how do we do the things that we do, and so on so forth.

So what I’m here to do today is to remind all GAC members that we sent around this dossier slides speaking to the framework a few months ago. We sent it, actually, twice, looking for feedback from the community, the GAC in particular, obviously, on the framework. And what has happened is that we have felt we’ve only had some, I guess, feedback from, I would say, specifically Egypt through Manal to give some guidance, and she suggested that I highlight it in a session like today, which might bring it to the attention of GAC members that this was sent to you for comment—if you could get to the next slide—work being done on a consensus call. Next slide, Fabian.

So, if you look at that slide, you’re seeing that other communities have been able to, I guess, develop some sort of work towards a consensus call. We are still in the progress. We’re in progress, I would call it, of doing something like this. The reason for that is that it’s going on to public comment very shortly, November 21, I believe, this framework. So it’s going to be either that the consensus call happens on list with the GAC or in the Public Comment period, I would imagine. But I would want to encourage all GAC members to take a look at this because it really affects the work that we do. How do you do your work? How do

you improve your activities? What Ian is going to talk about will fall, I imagine, very much into that as well. And also all of the work that we would like to do going forward into how do we improve the way that we do the things that we do. Next slide.

So just to let you know, as I said, these are the steps that have been taken thus far. I've been participating in this working group, and we are currently at the stage of formulating the framework. So it's not finished as yet. This is not a session to go through the framework. It's not designed for that, but to remind everyone that there was a couple of months ago some information sent around to the list on this. I'm going to ask the GAC Support Team, Robin and co, if you can recirculate this to GAC members, so we can get some information, some feedback, and maybe discussion going on the list as far as possible.

So that's my update. Any questions or thoughts, I'm happy to take them now. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much, Tracy. I saw a hand from Egypt. Go ahead, please, Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Nico. I just lowered my hand when I found out that Tracy did not finish yet. So apologies. Thank you, Tracy, for this. In fact, the reason I suggested that we brainstorm this within the GAC was specifically because it's a new thing to the GAC. So, previously, the organizational reviews used to be done by all the ICANN

SOs and ACs, the different parts of ICANN for GAC new members, all except the GAC. And the Bylaws mentioned that the GAC Advisory Committee shall provide its own review mechanisms. But now with the new recommendations from the Accountability and Transparency Review Team, the third version of the Accountability and Transparency Review Team, now we're getting with the other parts of the ICANN community for the organizational reviews. So that's why I was suggesting that we need to discuss this. We need to look at the criteria and see how and whether it applies or not in a governmental setup and if we have any comments. To others, it's merely a different rotation, different cycle, but to us, it's a brand new thing. So that's why I'm suggesting that we look at it. I have compiled some background information. I don't want to waste our time here reading out background, but I'm happy to share it on the mailing list, in case you find it useful for the coming discussions. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Manal. That would be good. I don't know, Tracy, is there anything you would like to—

TRACY HACKSHAW: No, that's perfect. Thank you, Manal. And I would like to encourage all GAC members to not only take a look what Manal is going to share, but again, also Rob will reshare the slides that were sent around. There are quite a few, but they're easy to go through. The content is not hard. It's not a lot of information. But the point is they're trying to get us to agree to some principles in the framework that we are accustomed to working

with, how we work together. One of them is who are we accountable to, those kinds of things. So if there's any comments and feedback on that prior to Public Comment, I think that will be very important to go in now so they can be incorporated into the CCG's work. And if not, I would suggest strongly that we develop a response during the Public Comment period, which might trigger probably a consensus call within the GAC on the mailing list. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you again, Tracy, UPU. Thank you, Egypt. Can you go back to the last slide, please? The last one. Yes. So as you can see, that's the situation as of today. The CIP-CCG is basically developing a shared understanding. As you can see, I'm not going to read the whole thing, right? But the meaning of CIP in the context of ATRT3 Recommendation 3.6—I'm sorry, but this is an acronym romance, as I always say. Kind of difficult to get used to the two million acronyms we deal with on an everyday basis. But do we have any comment or question for Tracy at this point? I don't see any hand up in the chat room. I don't see any hand in the room, which means that we're okay to move on. And for that, let me give the floor at this point to our colleague, Ian Sheldon from Australia. He is going to walk us through the GAC Operating Principles Evolution updates. Ian, over to you.

IAN SHELTON:

Thank you. Nico. The GAC Operating Principles Evolution Working Group resumed its work intersessionally.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Ian, would you please speak closer to the microphone?

IAN SHELDON: Sure.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much.

IAN SHELDON: We continue to improve the working group, the GAC Operating Principles document itself. A large majority of the changes we've been discussing at this point in time were largely administrative, updating some of the numbers, modernization of some of the language, and better alignment with current GAC operations, modernizing some wording. We'd also received a proposal from Nico, which I think he had raised at the end of the Kigali meeting, to take a closer look at the leadership position duration lengths. Nico joined the last call to explain a little bit of the rationale, and the working group worked through a couple of different options. We had quite a robust discussion looking at some of the various configurations and considerations to changing the various tenures of the chair and vice-chair positions.

We put these thoughts into a bit of a brainstorming document, and we thought it warranted reasonably swift discussion with the broader GAC, given these decisions are quite important and have a lot of potential to change the way in which the GAC operates. I believe this document was shared with the broader GAC on Tuesday of last week, and I think I'd be keen to get a sense from the broader GAC some thoughts, responses,

any concerns. So before I take you through some of the proposals to date, I might pause for a bit and see if Nico wanted to provide any comments before we go through a little bit more of the detail.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you. Thank you so much for that, Ian. Thank you for the introduction. So there it is. If we move on to the next slide, you know, the basic background is that—the learning curve is, I would say, a little bit complicated for anybody who might be stepping forward for the vice-chair or chair position. The idea is for whoever is in that position to have enough time, to be well prepared, to perform well. Just to give an example, between Kigali in June this year and Istanbul in November 2024, we lost, so to say, 40 GAC representatives. We have 25 new GAC representatives. So the turnover is very high. That gets basically things very complicated, especially when dealing with other constituencies within ICANN. The level of expertise needed at that point is significant, and that's why we need some continuity. In my opinion, I might be wrong, and I stand to be corrected here, and this is something we need to discuss, but it's a suggestion. We need to come up with a reasonable way forward. So that's more or less the reasoning behind the proposal. Back to you, Ian.

IAN SHELDON:

Thank you. So I might take this through two of the proposals and one which came up on the call. So discussing the vice-chair length, there are a couple of ideas. One idea was to extend the term length from one year to two and retain the option of vice-chairs to be elected once. One of

the important considerations we were looking at here was when we would implement some of these things. Given an election is currently underway, we consider it largely inappropriate, and frankly, probably largely not possible to implement these changes immediately. So we're looking to put these in effect after the current vice-chair elections ramp up.

As Nico mentioned, we were looking for more continuity within the GAC leadership team and provide a little bit more time for the vice-chairs to build that expertise and carry it forward. I wanted to pause there and see if there are any comments or questions about the vice-chair tenure piece before we move on to a discussion about the chair role.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you for that, Ian. Before I give the floor, I saw a hand from China, but it's not there anymore, apparently. One thing to take into account is that whatever we decide will not be applied to any of us, to any of the current vice-chairs or to me as a GAC chair, in any case, right? It will take effect from the 2025 vice-chair election on for the next GAC chair election itself. So I have China. Guo Feng, please go ahead.

GUO FENG:

Thank you, chair, and my co-chair of the GOPE Working Group, Ian. I think this kind of brainstorm document now serves a very good basis for further discussion for the whole GAC. So, to me, I think the intention of this proposal is very good. I think the intention is to have a stable performance of the GAC leadership to continue our work, in case we have many colleagues leaving GAC and many new blood in. So I think I

take a very positive view about this proposal as a whole, but perhaps we will have a detailed discussion and further view from GAC members on some of the specific questions. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you for that, China. Denmark?

FINN PETERSEN: Thank you, chair, and thank you, Ian, for presenting this. I think you was looking for any guidance in this direction. From our point of view, we only think there should be changes if there's a problem. And I have not, my self-experience, in any problem, in the ways have been running. I must admit I've only been sitting down here and not up there. I see that there is, of course, a need for certain stability in it. On the other thing, I think it's also good to change, to have new energy. And Nico has been really inspiration in giving certain new ideas and certain things have come up there. Concerning the vice-chair, I think from Danny's point of view, we are able to agree to extend it to two years. That will be possible. But our general view is that we would like to see all member states or all members of the GAC have the possibility to be chair/vice-chair. So we are not against any rotation. Actually, we think it's a good idea. I heard what Nico said that it is a steeper learning curve. I know that within the EU, we have half year presidency, and you really got to be on the top when you have it and it's a steeper learning curve. But it's possible, and it gives momentum and new ideas. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Denmark. I have Egypt and then Nigeria. Egypt?

MANAL ISMAIL: Thank you, Nico, and I tend to agree with our colleague from Denmark that I'm not sure about the problem. The only thing is that I'm afraid a two-year commitment might scare new colleagues from stepping in to try themselves being a vice-chair. But again, I don't have a strong position here. I think it's more of how GAC colleagues would think, would this make them more reluctant to volunteer for a vice-chair position or is it okay? I think in terms of continuity, maybe extending the number of terms, because it gives the option to vote the candidate itself and the GAC, whether or not to vote for the same person, rather than hard coded in terms of a longer term. And I leave it at this. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Egypt. Well noted. So rest assured your opinions are going to be recorded because the whole session is being recorded. Thank you so much again, Egypt. I have Nigeria.

BABAGANA DIGIMA: Thank you very much, Nico. Babagana Digima from Nigeria. I think our position is also similar with Denmark. We support the extension. Being new in ICANN myself with my first attendance in Kigali 81, I think one year is too short a time for somebody to really make an impact. So this extension to two years will be quite a positive move on the part of the

ICANN. And it's also gives opportunity for people to make impacts within not one year but two years. We understand the situation maybe in the past eight months, then you have the rest of the time to make an impact. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Nigeria. I have Portugal, Australia, Colombia, and the European Commission. Portugal?

ANA AMOROSO DAS NEVES: Thank you. I'm going to speak in Portuguese. Portugal thinks that this is a very good idea, this two-year extension. But the main issue is that we do this at the same time. And in our discussions, we should follow this through in the next two years. Considering the extension of the vice-chair period for two years, and chair, there's a learning curve, which is very important. And GAC should consider the other constituencies in ICANN and work hand in hand, considering the GAC resources. And we should be empowered. We should be empowered as representatives of GAC and also the other constituencies, the other leaders. And so I think it's a good idea. So we shouldn't miss all this knowledge and lose it every two years or four years, considering the vice president administrations and work in different countries, new countries, because we're always the same. So it's very important to increase the knowledge among the representatives of the different countries in the GAC. Thank you. I think that what you mentioned is already included in our agenda. We are going to discuss this over later on. But anyway, thank you. Portugal.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Okay. Sorry, I have Australia, Colombia, the European Commission, Brazil, and then Slovakia. Please go ahead, Australia.

IAN SHELDON: Thanks, Nico. I can see the conversation starting to pick up. And I thought there might be some value in considering both the chair and vice-chair proposals together. We haven't yet gone through the chair proposal quite yet, so I guess with your permission, would I be able to go through the chair proposal, and then perhaps we can consider both pieces together before we return back to the list? And would that be okay for those in the list currently as well? I see nods. Yes. Okay. Thank you.

So the second half of this conversation obviously involves changes to the chair's tenure. We looked at a couple of different ways to approach this issue. One idea was to allow for one additional term in addition to the two current terms. So you would have the same term length but you would have a total cap on three terms in total for a total of six years.

One of the other proposals was also to increase the length of the term itself. So you'd have two terms but each term would be three years in length. Both of these would allow for more continuity in the chair position, allow the chair to get into slightly larger, meatier issues during their tenure. But each of the two proposals has pros and cons as well. Obviously, one of the things that I think Nico may have mentioned in the past was cutting down on the energy, time, and resources involved in campaigning and elections, but also the trade-off is potentially not

seeing as much new perspectives, or perhaps if the GAC becomes unhappy with any certain chair, it provides less flexibility in rotation as well.

So these were some of the high-level issues that we had discussed on the call. I think considering the chair and vice-chair positions together, how they complement, how we might want to stagger some of these roles, was also kind of big topic of discussion in the working group as well. So I might return to the queue and allow us to have a more fulsome discussion looking at both chair and vice-chair tenures as well. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you, Australia. I have Colombia, the European Commission, Brazil, Slovakia, and Egypt. Go ahead, please, Colombia.

THIAGO DAL-TOE:

Thank you, Nico. Thiago Dal-Toe for the record. I just wanted to express my support also for my previous colleagues, what they mentioned. I think from what I've seen in the last three years, maybe we've had word in the third election already, we had one election, supplemental election, where our colleague, Wang Lang, was elected, and then we had an election that was finished in Hamburg, if I'm not mistaken. We can see that there's been a lot of interest from our colleagues to be stepping up to participate as vice-chairs. I completely support my colleague, Ana Neves, mentioning that I do think that we need to have some geographical representation. Because currently, as the principles are written, there is a strong suggestion towards a geographical

representation, but it's not enforced. It's not a fixed number of positions per geographical representation. And we may be interested in reviewing that and guaranteeing this turnover. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you, Colombia. I have the European Commission.

GEMMA CAROLILLO: Thank you very much, Chair. This is Gemma Carolillo from European Commission for the record. Thank you also, Ian, for the very good summary of the discussion. I have a couple of considerations and a question, because in the discussion document, I've seen another proposal for the chair nomination to be restricted to vice-chair. Is this still on the table or not? Because I've seen it on the document but you haven't—

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Everything is on the table, even a total rejection.

IAN SHELTON: Yes, yes. It's the slide after this. It was a proposal which was tabled on the call. And I was planning to get to that point of discussion once we'd worked through the queue capturing initial responses to the chair and vice-chair tenure piece. But I also know that we were only really allocated 15 minutes, I think, for this slot. So really, in the chair's hands, as far as how much we can go into detail today.

GEMMA CAROLILLO:

Thanks a lot for the answer. So, as regards the duration, one consideration we need to look at what we want to achieve. So overall objective seems to be have continuity, stability, and ensure that knowledge is nurtured, which is really important in this role. Now, the question is how to best achieve them. I'm in favor of the idea of extending the duration of the terms, both for the vice-chair and the chair. However, I think what Manal said before is to be considered that we need to look also into commitment issues that people may have during their career, events that happen, and hence, we could achieve perhaps the same objective of ensuring stability and duration and so on by allowing that mandate is renewed more than once or twice. So if we want to say maximum four years or six years, this could be the limit, and then you could achieve it in one year per year for the vice-chair and two years for the chair election as well. So I'm not taking a definitive position but I think we should reflect also on the commitment issues.

For what concerns the restriction to the elections of the chair, I would be less inclined to consider this as a good option, not only to allow newcomers who might have a great experience even if they have not been in the GAC for long, or if they have been long in the GAC but they have never been vice-chair. I think, Nico, perhaps this was your case. I think we do not want to miss on those talents to be able to run for chairs.

Last consideration, I would support what Thiago said about reflecting on a more formal way of incorporating the geographical representation. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, European Commission. I have Brazil.

RENATA MIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Renata Mielli for the record. I'm going to speak in Portuguese. We consider that this proposal of extending the tenure is interesting because it gives a higher level of stability even in our discussions, not only in the GAC but also within the other structures of ICANN. So extending the tenure for the chairs and the vice-chairs is important. It's an interesting model.

But in the case of vice-chairs, we would need to think in mechanism, as Ana Neves mentioned, of thinking in terms of greater continuity. So instead of electing five vice-chairs together at the same time, we would elect two one-year and other two the next year, which will assure the permanent model and very interesting model.

As to the way in which the chairs should be nominated, we should consider these restrictions so we could have a context where we could have delegates of other countries, which are not vice-chairs, but which have a vast experience in this election process. So this would be our contribution to this debate. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you, Brazil.

[IVAN LIŠKA]: Thank you. I would like to just echo what colleague from Brazil just said specifically about whatever the final arrangement is, to avoid having

every position of vice-chairs and the chair elected at the same time every time, simply because it's also beneficial to have more candidates or as many candidates as possible for each position to choose from. And if all of the positions are up at the same time, that decreases the likelihood that there will be multiple candidates for each position, so a form of staggering, or maybe if the terms end up not being the same, that would not be a concern. But in any case, we would support sort of having those elections staggered as much as possible. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you, Slovakia, for that. I have Egypt.

MANAL ISMAIL: Thank you, Nico. I agree with everyone on the staggering. It's important that we don't have everyone renewed at the same time. I also fully agree with the European Commission on the commitment thing, as I initially mentioned. I think if we are to extend, it's better to extend the number of terms rather than extending the term itself. That said, I don't agree to limiting the GAC chair to only vice-chairs. We need to give everyone a chance. And looking through the past, we had excellent chairs that did not serve as vice-chairs before.

One point I think is important—and I don't see it on the slides—is the time of the GAC elections. I think we need to have specifically the GAC chair and obviously the rest of the leadership to have their elections aligned with the Board because we assume responsibility in the leadership by end of March, whereas the Board gets seated at the Annual General Meeting. And with this, the GAC chair gets to miss all the

onboarding that's being done for the new Board members and stays like this for like a year. So I think it's important to see if we can align the timing of the cycle with the Board elections. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, Egypt. That's a very important point. And as a matter of fact, that was the main reason why I suggested extending the GAC chair's tenure in order to make it coincide with the Board cycle. Because believe me, believe me, if you happen to be in my shoes, it's a nightmare to be there, lost for a whole year, trying to understand what the whole thing is about with the Board because that's a totally different world. So you end up having three jobs: your regular job, the GAC job, which is a 36-hour-a-day job, and the Board. But you miss the onboarding because you got elected in March. They were already seated in October or November last year. I mean, obviously you try to catch up and you try to find time to read and to do things and everything. It shouldn't be that way. It shouldn't be a torture for you to catch up and to get up to speed in order to understand what the discussions are all about. The same thing would happen to you even if you're not as stupid as me. That took me like six months to understand that. What is this whole thing about? Very complicated. I'm telling you. It will not be applied to me in any case or to any of the vice-chairs here. This is kind of not a warning. I wouldn't like to use that word, right? But just a heads up that you need to take that into consideration. So thank you for that again, Egypt. I have Ana. Is that an old hand? Go ahead, please.

ANA AMOROSO DAS NEVES: As to the chair and the GAC, I think that three years plus three years, or two plus two plus two, that would be too much. But three plus three, that would be ideal. As to the vice-chairs, we would have a two-year extension.

Then there's another matter. The vice-chairs could also be elected as co-chairs. What I suggest is that considering this learning curve, we should consider that there should be some alignment with the Board. And the vice-chairs are gradually and increasingly included in the discussions and they should be included, and in order to understand how this works. And these may be, not must be. So this proposal means that the applicants to chair in the GAC due to the professional experience in ICANN and overall should be taken into consideration because they know the members. What is key here is that we need to have GAC and the leaders which are knowledgeable, with high levels of knowledge, so longer learning curve is important. So this should not be a disadvantage for the GAC, and this is general. So we understand that the work of the chair in ICANN is important and we should make the most of it. So these are considerations and reflections on this matter. The vice-chair experience within ICANN, all this experience is very important for future chairs.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Denmark, Egypt, and the UK. Nigel, you requested the floor before? Go ahead, please.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Sorry, I didn't want to interrupt. I'll be very brief indeed. Nigel Hickson, UK. This is excellent. This is what GAC is about, a robust discussion. Personally, I couldn't care whether we were discussing the price of Turkish coffee or the size of oranges. We are engaging in a discussion. This is excellent. But all credit to Ian for putting such great things on the slides and having this discussion. This is important to all of us. I'm not second guessing what the chair is going to conclude at the end of this, but clearly this discussion needs to perhaps go on a while. These are important issues. Very briefly, from the UK's perspective, I think it does make some sense to extend the tenure of the vice-chairs because a year serving doesn't seem to be quite enough perhaps to do some of the things which we should be doing.

And secondly, I do support this notion of timing. I think it's important that when the chair is elected. The timing coincides with the Board. We support diversity perhaps on the form that we fill in to elect our vice-chairs. It ought to be clear that we're electing one position for one region and one position for another or whatever.

And finally, yes, I don't support this notion that the chair should only be picked by the vice-chairs. All of us have knowledge and wisdom and input to make. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, UK. Just for the record, it was not my idea to exclude or to pick the future chair from among the vice-chairs. I don't know where it came from. It doesn't matter. It's just there. In the end, it's for all of us to discuss and to come up with our decision. Is that an

old hand, Portugal? I have the Netherlands, Denmark, Egypt, and Switzerland. Please go ahead, Marco.

MARCO HOGEWONING:

Thank you, Nico. For the record, this is Marco speaking from Netherlands. I think for us and many people stresses and we can only echo that continuity, and I would add competence is indeed sort of the main objective in this whole lot. But I think our second primary objective here is to reduce the overhead. So I think by extending the term especially for the vice-chairs would achieve both goals.

I do and I also see Manal now commenting in chat. I do wholeheartedly agree there are many ways for people to build experience and we should be careful not to force a model. So I wouldn't like the idea of only electing chairs from the vice-chairs or forcing people to have a certain level of experience. I think it's really important that the nomination should be open to anyone.

I do agree with Manal's point that it's probably good to look at the timing, especially for the chair itself, indeed, to align with the Board onboarding. So I think that's really something we should take into account for the vice-chairs might matter less. I think if people really think that that indeed for building continuity the term limits as they are now proposed are still too short. I do like the notion of then maybe include sort of a maximum of three terms instead of extending the limits, if that's a concern. I don't really in favor of what some people suggested of having staggered elections because that would defeat the

objective of lessening the administrative load of having elections every year. So I think it's good to try to reduce that overhead terms.

Last point was regional, I think it's well worth discussing and looking at how to ensure that there is a regional distribution, especially amongst the vice-chairs, yet at the same time, we have to recognize that it's every GAC member's right to present the nomination. I see some issues with sort of how the regional nominating process would work, given that we lack those structures. So it has merits, but I think we have to really look at the modalities of how that would work. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, Netherlands. Indeed, there's no way to force anybody from any geographical region to step forward. So thank you for that, Netherlands. I have Denmark and then Egypt. Please go ahead, Denmark.

FINN PETERSEN:

Thank you, Chair. Finn Petersen from Denmark for the record. Sorry for taking the floor again. I only thought that we was going to discuss the first point, but new things have come up. First of all, I think the argument for aligning the chairmanship terms with the Board is obvious, even though I haven't seen that it was not up to speed. It seems that it was more than an up to the speed, but I think it's a good idea. We will also think that it will be good that the chairs and vice-chairs are not elected for the same two years time or whatever but are shifted. Even though there might be an administrative burden, I think it's more important to have the continuity that we do not have the whole slate of

chairs or vice-chairs at the same time. Regional participation in the vice-chair is important, and I think we should work on that. I remember that there was one time where we didn't have any candidate for one of the regions, and of course, that should be considered what we do during that circumstances. I agree also with the Netherlands that each GAC member should be able to nominate each country's organization presence here should be able to do that.

Concerning the chairmanship, we think it's good if we look at the commitments and perhaps also a longer term commitment. We think the best thing will be to have three terms. But two years will also make it more easy when we have elected chair on one year and then the vice-chair on the next year, then the calculation, as far as I can see, will fit better there. And also, sometimes it might be very hard for somebody to be ready to take three years terms. So overall, we will favor a two years term for both chairs and vice-chairs. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Denmark. I have Egypt.

CHRISTINE ARIDA:

Thank you, Chair. Christine Arida for the record. I was just going to say, if we're going to go for the staggered elections, we're automatically saying that we're extending the vice-chair terms, because we cannot elect every year and have the staggering because we will have the elections every year. So I just wanted to make that obvious because we will also have the problem of the first time we do that, if we're talking about regions, which three or two regions will come first and then the

others. So this is just practical issues that we need to take into account while we're moving or supporting one or the other direction. But I join colleagues in saying about nominations for the chair should come from anyone. In my view, we should not limit that. And also for the term of the chair, in my view, it is better to have to increase the terms, like Manal was saying, rather than having a three-year term, which seems to be quite long to my view. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much. Before we continue with the queue. Ian, is there anything you would like to add?

IAN SHELTON:

Thanks, Nico. I might jump in and just point out that I think I'd be keen to focus the discussion at a high level. There certainly is a lot of detail that the working group can take away and work out and map out and come back to the group. But I, and depending on Nico's preferences, would be keen to focus the discussion on general receptivity to high-level discussion we're having here on the length and the terms. We can work through details on staggering, on implementation, there is alignment to Board processes once we get past that initial discussion, and hopefully some level of consensus on the extension of the terms or the length. So I would encourage others in the queue to think through things at a high level and we can return to some of the details in due course. Thanks, Nico.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you, Australia. I have Denmark. That's an old hand, right? So I have Switzerland, Canada, and Mauritania. Jorge, please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO: Thank you, Nico. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. I'll try to be brief. I agree with aligning the chair mandate with the Board. So it's really about the chair because he or she is member of the Board. It hasn't to do so much with the vice-chairs. I'm more prone to the three times two years extension. I think that's more flexible. I also think that extending the vice-chair mandate may have a merit. One year is maybe too short. I don't think we should limit the pool of candidates, so not being tied to prior positions. I think we have to discuss the question of regions because it could bring other dynamics into this committee. And that brings me to the next argument which is of a more general nature. We have to be careful with what we put into the operating principles because that becomes very rigid. And what we agree as, let's say, common criteria or guidelines or things to consider as a committee, I think this discussion is very good to have to develop those agreements which are more of a flexible nature. So I think we should distinguish and maybe if there's any need to fix things in writing beyond changing surgically some aspects of the operating principles, we can always develop some guidelines, some criteria or things to consider which are more flexible. Perhaps out of experience, you put something into the operating principles with a very specific intention and that it works out differently, and it creates some side effects we don't consider at the time. So, yeah, limit it to what is really necessary and maintain the

flexibility of the operating principles would be my plea to the committee and to colleagues. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you for that, Switzerland. Well noted. I have Canada next.

DAVID BEDARD: Thank you, Nico, and thanks, colleagues, for this rich and robust discussion. I think there's certainly a lot of interest here, and that's really great to see. I'll be brief. Especially just to build on what Jorge said, I think the flexibility, let's look to see what actually needs to be changed in terms of the principles. I think it's good that we remain nimble where we can and flexible where we can. I think that's a good path going forward.

In terms of support for the vice-chair, I think that we would be comfortable—I think it makes sense a one-year term is very short. I think two years to make sure that we can ensure a diversity of candidates who want that experience and a good roster of folks, I think two years would make sense. Three years, again, the two plus two plus two, I think makes the most sense. I think it sort of touches on Thiago's diversity of regional representation too. Because I think if you're looking from the capacity issue, if you want to make it—three years is quite a big commitment. So I think that two years, two years, and two years makes the most sense to make sure that you get a diversity of folks who might be interested in that role. But yes, thanks again. This has been good.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Canada. I have Mauritania and Trinidad and Tobago. Mauritania, please.

MOHAMED EL MOCTAR MOHAMEDINE: Thank you, Chairman. I do support most of the proposals already discussed today, including the increased number of terms as proposed by Egypt, the open nomination and the diversity as well with regard to the nature of the committee. But the reason why I raised my hand, Chairman, is maybe for you guys to provide us with clarity on how these choices are going to be decided up by the committee so that newcomers and the rest of us would know whether we are going to end up voting on it or how it is going to be. Thank you, Chairman.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Mauritania. Right off the bat, I can tell you it's by consensus. We don't vote in the GAC except for some exceptional operating principles but not regarding these kinds of issues. It's basically going back to your question, it's consensus. Thank you, Mauritania. I have Trinidad and Tobago.

SHELLEY-ANN CLARKE-HINDS: Thank you, Chair. For the record, I think we would want to support the extension of the terms for vice-chair and chair and we like the two plus two plus two. Definitely agree with aligning the election of the chair with that of the Board, and thanks to Manal for raising that. We can also support staggering. I think that would allow for retention of leadership and continuity and regional representation would be nice to have but I

don't want us to get caught up in that because that may impede as well having the numbers for the election. Thank you, Chair.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Trinidad and Tobago. I don't see any other hands in the chat room. Anybody else in the room? If not, let me give the floor back to Ian.

IAN SHELTON: Thank you, Nico. Sorry, I did see... Was that was another hand that just popped up, Morocco?

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Sorry, Morocco. I just saw your hand. My apologies. Go ahead, please.

[REDOUANE HOUSSAINI]: Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. As far as I'm concerned, everything that was mentioned is great. This is an important change in terms of GAC operational principles. But there is one thing that I would like to draw your attention to, the question of the chair. Up until now, we had no issue if the chair was unable to act as chair of the GAC, but at this point we need to think about what would happen. The vice-chairs might need to be ranked in case the chair is unable to act as chair. So we would have the first vice-chair who would replace him or her. And if we reduce the tenure, if we move to the election of a new chair, how do we proceed? And then there would be time lost. There would be a

duration that is lost in terms of the management of GAC affairs. So I just wanted to mention that. Thank you very much.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Morocco. Ian, over to you.

IAN SHELTON: Thank you, Nico. Just to address the final point, I believe it's currently at the discretion of the chair. If he's unable to fulfill his duties for a certain meeting, it's at his or her discretion which of the vice-chairs he would like to appoint to fulfill that duty. I think the introduction of a ranked system complicates the voting process quite significantly. It moves into perhaps issues beyond the scope of the discussion we're looking at here today. But it's certainly something that I'm very happy to pick up and work through as broader discussions in the Operating Principles Working Group. I would encourage you to come to our next call and table that proposal for us to talk through.

From my perspective, I think this has been probably one of the most robust discussions we've had on GAC operating principles for quite some time. Echoing Nigel's thoughts, I'm thrilled at the robust discussion and engagement we've had here today. To my ears, it sounds like we are starting to coalesce around some level of comfort around a two plus two plus two model for the chair position and a two plus two for the vice-chair position. That's kind of my takeaway that there seems to be a certain level of comfort with the broader GAC as a sensible way forward.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Let me stop you there, Ian. Do we have an agreement there? Just to get a sense of the temperature in the room, anybody against the extension? We're not voting. I have Portugal. Go ahead, please.

ANA AMOROSO DAS NEVES: I'm going to speak Portuguese, of course. We are against two plus two plus two. It's very short. Because we should learn first the different administrative matters, so it's very short as regards the elections for the Board and the councils. We usually have a further year for the vice-chairs. We think that three plus three makes more sense than two plus two plus two, which would mean too many elections. We need to have some sort of tranquility here in the processes. I don't know if the members of the GAC agree with this, but I think this solution is more important and more elegant also. We need some sort of stability and this learning curve should be good and longer and solid in terms of knowledge and in terms of capacity building. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Any other comments, thoughts? I see Spain. Sorry, is that an old hand, Morocco? Okay. I have Spain. I'm sorry. Spain?

ANA ISABEL MALDONADO CID: Thank you, Nico. It was just to say I agree fully with what Ana from Portugal has just commented on. I think the term for the chair especially should bring more stability for the committee. I think a three-year term would be in my opinion, provided that the Board also renovates per three years. That's a question. It renovates per three

years. Given that, I think a three-year term for the committee chair would be, in my humble opinion, more adequate than having two renovations in terms of two years, that I think will bring more stability for the committee, more follow-up in the topics discussed. And I think for the committee would be more beneficial. Just to say that. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Spain. Ian?

IAN SHELDON: Thank you, Nico. There seems to be a little bit of division here. I might return to Operating Principle #53 which actually outlines the mechanisms to review the operating principles themselves. A member or members may move in a meeting for these operating principles to be open to revision. If so moved, the chair shall call for the movement to be seconded. If seconded, then the chair shall call for a vote to support the resolution. Given there seems to be a little bit of division in your hands, perhaps we may move to this step to seek some clarity on a way forward, at least for the chair and vice-chair tenure mechanisms, setting aside the specifics and details to be picked up at a later stage. I guess I'm in your hands at this moment, Chair. There seems to be two proposals on the table for the chair piece, two plus two plus two or a three and three. Formally to make the amendments to the operating principles, a vote must be called. We can do so by raising hands, roll call, or using an online voting mechanism and shall constitute a simple majority of the members who are present at the meeting.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: That's a good point, Ian. That goes back to Mauritania's question regarding this specific issue, which is Principle 53. I didn't understand your question, and my apologies, Mauritania. Were you referring to Principle 53? That's voting that's up to the GAC chair to decide. Let's do just that. Actually, we have three options. We have the two plus two plus two. Again, it will not be applied to me or to—just for the record. We have the two plus two plus two, we have two three-year terms or we have nothing. I mean, everything stays the same and we're all friends and we'll go drink coffee together. No problem, right? Sorry. Lebanon?

ZEINA BOU HARB: This is Zeina Bou Harb from Lebanon. I just want to ask, is it feasible to, for one time exception, delay the election of that chair until the next Board nomination? I mean, you will start your new term, and after this, the next election can be delayed until the new Board is formed. Is it feasible to align the two?

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you for that, Lebanon. It's for us to decide. As a matter of fact, I would say I would shorten the term in order to make it coincide with the next. I don't have a problem with that. I will be very happy to resume my golf and having my—Ian?

IAN SHELTON: I believe, as we've seen in previous elections, nobody's hands are bound. I guess should the chair choose to step down early or cut their tenure short, it is within their realm of power to do so. We certainly had

seen one of the previous vice-chairs have to step back from their responsibilities as well, which triggered one of the interim special elections we had a little while ago. There certainly is flexibility here to explore those options.

I guess returning to the issue at hand, I think Nico had outlined three options and I think I'd be keen to at least land the chair decision and then perhaps we can return to the vice-chair piece as well. As Nico outlined, we have no change, a three and three, and a two and two and two. Perhaps back to you, Nico.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

The way to deal with it would be like Option A would be no change. We stay the same and everybody's happy with the status quo. Option B would be three and three, and option C would be two, two, and two. I would be equally unhappy. No, no, I'm joking. I'm joking. I'm joking. There it is. Sorry. I have Chad and Sudan. Chad, go ahead. Sorry, Chad and Switzerland. Chad, go ahead, please.

[FARADJ MAHAMAT DJADDA]: Thank you very much, Chair. I would like to go backwards a little bit and support the idea of geographical representation and the respect of the principle of rotation for the position of the chair. The idea of rotating the chair, I would like to just support that. Thank you, Chair.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much, Chad. As we said before, the idea of the regional representation, we all agree with that. We all agree. The only thing is

that there's no way to ensure in practical terms that that will actually be the case. There's no way to force anybody from Asia or from Africa or from Latin America or from anywhere in the world to step forward for the position. If you have three candidates from Europe, so to say, or four candidates from Africa and one candidate from Latin America, [inaudible]. You see what I mean? Sorry, I have Switzerland.

JORGE CANCIO:

Thank you, Nico. Just to thank everyone for this robust discussion. I just wanted to make sure that if we are now kind of polling the room on options A, B, and C, that we are mindful that this is a polling that before we trigger the mechanism under Operating Principle 53, we would need really track changes texts on the table so that we are not rushing into that before we know what the exact proposals are. Just maybe out of caution and out of my lawyerly mind, which is in the back of my head, that we keep it now at the more general informal level before we go into the moving, seconding, voting along the lines of Operating Principle 53, which is a very heavy process. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

I totally agree with you. As a matter of fact, I was going to suggest going ahead with the whole process online so that GAC representatives can have the chance to go back and consult and talk to their capitals in order to see if they're comfortable with the procedure, and so on and so forth. Would that be okay? Or you prefer to do it right now? I don't have problem either way, but I think it would be more rational, more logical

to do it the other way. I'm not a lawyer, but from a mathematical point of view, that might make sense. I have the UK.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Mr. Chairman, I'm very happy either way. I mean, I think there is some benefit to tapping to the enthusiasm we have here physically and our colleagues online. I just wondered, I mean, given that, for many people, perhaps they've read and heard this for the first time, whether we could actually make a decision at the plenary at the end of the week because I know there's other business to do in this session as well in terms of the strategic plan. That might just give other people in the room that haven't 100% understood all the ramifications to talk to their colleagues, but it's only a suggestion.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you for that idea, UK. That's actually a very good idea. In order not to lose the momentum, so to say, we can do it at the end of the week. Maybe we can do it during the Wrap-Up session on Thursday, if everybody agrees, in order not to wait until after Christmas, which would still be okay. But I agree with my distinguished colleague from the UK if you agree. Ian, please go ahead.

IAN SHELDON:

Thank you, Nico. The working group will draft some proposed text and circulate it as soon as we can so that the GAC can see specifically what it is we'll be deciding on at the plenary. For clarity, we'll be drafting text to look at the no change, three plus three and two plus two for the chair

position. I'd also like to table a decision around the vice-chair's piece as well. Similarly, for no change, two plus two. I'm not sure there was a third proposal there, but we can—

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: And the staggering. The other one was choosing the GAC chair only from the vice-chairs, which I didn't see that much. Let's not include that because, as a matter of fact, nobody agreed with that as far as I understand. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

IAN SHELTON: Nico, for the sake of clarity, I think it would be sensible to keep it to the tenure and term length discussions for the chair and vice-chairs. We can tackle some of the implementation and some of the further details through the working group and push through some of those discussions if you are amenable to this. The working group will draft some text supporting these proposals. We'll circulate it, and then we can revisit this discussion at the closing plenary.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: And the regional representation as well. There's no mechanics to enforce that unless somebody steps forward from the Asia Pacific, from Africa, from Latin America, and so on, right? But we can include it. Of course, we can draft some language in order to make sure that at least it's mentioned. Sorry to keep you waiting, Morocco. I have Morocco and then Argentina. Morocco, please go ahead.

[REDOUANE HOUSSAINI]: Thank you, Chair. As far as Morocco, we agree that we need to continue the discussion. We need to prepare a text. The working group could do that and submit it to the members of the GAC for discussion during the week, and we could work on it during the next meetings. As far as one point that we mentioned regarding the chair, Mr. Ian spoke about a chair that might be able to choose the replacement if he or she becomes unable to chair. I don't agree because the chair should be chosen by all of the members of the GAC. When that person is unable, it could be physically or morally. It's not just a punctual thing, a momentary thing. I think this is important. Also in terms of continuity, we need to ensure continuity.

The next thing is that we are talking about regional representation and diversity. We believe that even if a region does not have a candidate for the election of the chair position, that region is still legitimate. This is a question of principle. Even if we don't have a candidate, we can move to the next region if there isn't a candidate from the one region.

In terms of ranking the vice-chairs, I think we need to think about that a little bit more, to have a first vice-chair, second vice-chair, third vice-chair. It gives you better visibility in terms of the work of the team. If you don't have a captain and a vice-captain, you don't really know where you're going. I think it's logical and I think we need to reflect upon that a little bit more. Thank you so much.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you, Morocco. Well noted. I have Argentina next.

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- MARINA FLEGO EIRAS: Thank you very much for this interesting debate and discussion. In my humble opinion, giving the relevance of what we are discussing, it might be useful to have, as Morocco said, a proposal written by the working group and maybe some not substantive but a considerable time to consult with our capitals, mostly considering that in some cases there are lines of instructions, so it might be convenient to have more than just a couple of days to make a decision as regards this extremely important matter. Thank you.
- NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Argentina. Well noted as well. Lebanon?
- ZEINA BOU HARB: Just a note on the regional representation. Actually, this is something on the Strategic Objective #2, the regional collaboration. It's our responsibility to collaborate within our region and to nominate maybe someone. This might be one cause to more collaboration. We can meet at regional level, nominate someone for the vice-chair position, and then we will see what will happen. But this is a responsibility on each one of us as members of that region. Thank you.
- NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you for that, Lebanon. Any other comment or question? We still have four minutes before—actually, three minutes before our lunch. I don't see any other hand up. And we absolutely run out of time. We had a lot more material to cover today. It will be sent to your e-mails. Fabian,

can you explain what the internal mechanics will be for that? I'm talking about the GAC Strategic Planning. Please go ahead.

FABIAN BETREMIEUX:

Thank you, Nico. Indeed, the GAC leadership had prepared at least a minimum of 60 minutes of update on each of the strategic objectives in the Strategic Plan of the GAC. However, we won't have time to go through that content so we've sent that via e-mail so you'll find everything, the background, the slides, all the materials that was prepared. But maybe a key piece of information that is somewhat new is the role that each of the GAC chair and vice-chairs have taken with respect to the strategic objectives as caretakers. Maybe it's important for the GAC membership to know of this distribution of roles so that if there are any questions with respect to the implementation of the expected outcomes in the GAC Annual Plan in relation to each of those strategic objectives, at least members know who to talk to.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that. Indeed, that's the case, Fabian. As you can see, you have the nine strategic objectives on the screen. That way, you're going to be able to identify who the caretaker is for each one of the SO or strategic objectives. Any questions or any suggestions you might have in that regard, please feel free to approach the caretaker. I'm talking about not only the working group chairs or the subject matter experts, etc. Anybody from the GAC with whatever concern, issue, comment or suggestion, please, again feel free to reach any of the caretakers, including myself for Strategic Objective #7 which is new

technologies, blockchain, artificial intelligence and all that kind of stuff. I would be more than happy to talk to you about that and domain registration data. You have the rest of the list there.

Ian, I don't know if you want to wrap this up. For sure, during the Wrap-Up session, we'll come up with a final decision or no. It's up to us to decide. Over to you, Ian.

IAN SHELDON:

Thanks, Nico. Just a final point. We'll draft up a summary of the proposals today and circulate them. If there are any comments, we can look to address them in the text themselves and then hopefully we can revisit this later in the week, depending on everybody's comfort levels with what we're proposing in the actual text specifically. Look, it's been a fantastic discussion. I think we received a lot more interest than perhaps we were expecting, but I think this is, like Nigel said, fantastic conversation. Thank you all for taking such deep interest in this important issue and really looking forward to talking about this a little bit more across the week. Because we certainly have quite a number of days here together so we can talk through some of these things. Have a closer look at the operating principles yourselves. What's in there? What else might need to be amended? We can hopefully make some decisions as a group on this before we wrap up and all go home. Thanks, Nico.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Ian. Any final words, my vice-chairs? Anybody on the floor? I have Argentina. Go ahead, please.

MARINA FLEGO EIRAS: Sorry. If I got it straight, we will be deciding on the extension of tenures by the end of this week. Okay. Thank you.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Thank you. Argentina. Anybody else? I see Morocco. Go ahead.

[REDOUANE HOUSSAINI]: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We already mentioned that actually a decision by the end of the week would not be good. We mentioned that we should continue the discussion until the next meeting. Thank you so much.

NICOLÁS CABALLERO: Operating Principle 53, Morocco. You can check it. We can send you the link. That's exactly what it says.

We need to wrap up now. It's 12:05. We'll reconvene at 1:15. Enjoy your lunch. If you have the chance, get some excellent Turkish coffee. Thank you so much. See you at 1:15.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]