ICANN81 | AGM – Get to Know ICANN Community: SSAC and GNSO
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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: It is my great pleasure and honor to introduce our first speaker and we are going to learn about SSAC, which is another term for us to learn. And Ram Mohan, who is the chair of SSAC, which is Security and Stability Advisory Committee, he is chairing that committee and it's my pleasure to give the floor to him to learn about SSAC, what they are doing and how we, as newcomers, can learn and get engaged in SSAC work.

RAM MOHAN: Srinu, thank you so much. Good morning. It's wonderful to be here. Thank you for inviting me. So I am the chair of the ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee and we are a group of international experts who are pulled together to look at matters that relate to security and stability of the internet and to provide advice to the ICANN board and to the ICANN community.

So if you look at what ICANN is all about, ICANN's primary mission is to ensure the stable and secure operation of the internet's identifier systems. That's what they are constituted to do. Inside of that is the SSAC, the Security and Stability Advisory Committee. And as I had mentioned earlier, we are focused on the security and stability of the domain name system, the address allocation system, the internet identifiers that make up the core of what we all know and what we all use every day.

Next slide, please. So you already understand why we were created. Let me talk a little bit about what we do, what is our role, what are our responsibilities. It's really five things. Engage with all of you. Engage with the internet community. Analyze the risks and the threats to the internet's naming and address allocation systems. Coordinate with the various entities responsible for standards and for other information relating to security and stability and technology. And then, inform the ICANN board not only about our activities but also about key developments on the internet that affect security and stability and also advise the ICANN community and the board with recommendations about security and stability and also operational insights.

This looks like a lot. So let me give you an example. Earlier this year, in May of this year, we provided advice to the ICANN community and the ICANN board about how to safely open up the next round of new gTLDs. You've all heard about the fact that ICANN is going to open up another round of gTLDs.

So when they open up that round, there are some security and stability issues that come with it. The most important one in that area is called name collision. And name collision, the idea is simple. You all have addresses. You all live in a place and you have an address. And when somebody wants to send a letter to you, they send you to your name, they send a letter to that address and the post office delivers the mail to you, correct?

What if there was another person with the same name and the same address and everything was the same, the address was the same, the name was the same and if somebody put a letter in the mail to be

delivered to you, to whom would the post office deliver the mail to? To you with that address or to the other person with the same address. If you have that issue, that is called name collision.

So we provided advice to ICANN on how to look at name collision and how to avoid name collision. So that's an example of the kind of advice that we provide. It is grounded in technology, it's grounded in facts, it's grounded in facts, if we can get the facts. If not, we provide advice saying, get the data, get the analysis to understand what to do.

So this, in a nutshell, is all the members of the SSAC. It's cool, isn't it, that everybody fits on one slide, all the photos are there on one slide. But as you can see, a large number of the members of the SSAC come from North America and from Europe. Now, this is historical in nature. We are changing that. We are adding more people from other parts of the world. So we have more people coming in from Asia-Pacific. This year, for the first time, two new members joined the SSAC from Africa and we are now looking for qualified members from the Latin America and Caribbean region. So our intent is to reflect the community that we serve. At the start of the year also, the SSAC, out of 36 members, the SSAC, 31 of them were men. We are changing that balance as well. This year, we have added nine new members. Of those, three of them are women. So we are slowly changing that model of how we are and who we are, where we all stand.

SSAC's leaders are self-elected from within the SSAC. So Tara, Tara Whelan, and myself, the two of us, I'm the chair of the SSAC. Tara is the vice chair of the SSAC. And Jeff Bedser, Barry Leiba, are also part of the leadership team. And James Galvin, Jim Galvin, is our liaison to the

board of ICANN. So he sits on the board of ICANN. He doesn't vote, but he provides ICANN's board clear advice on, especially on technical matters that relate to security and stability.

There's one thing different about how the SSAC works. Many other communities inside of ICANN have a model where the members come together and they are the constituency group or they are the advisory committee, and then they have staff supporting them. The SSAC works in a different model. In the SSAC model, the staff from ICANN are considered to be a part of our leadership team. And the primary reason for that is because the people you see there on the screen, you know, Danielle, John Emery, Kathy Schnitt, Steve Sheng, there's a bunch of people, they are incredibly qualified themselves.

Steve Sheng, for example, is a PhD from Carnegie Mellon University. So we have people, John Emery has taught classes on security for a decade. So we have not just individuals who can help do our work, but we have individuals who are highly qualified. So we include them as part of the SSAC's leadership team. And if you look at the bottom of the screen, that gives you a sense of the skills, the technical skills that just this team here brings, eight people here on the screen, what they bring. We have now over 40 people inside the SSAC. The primary reason why SSAC exists is to look at various technical challenges, security and stability challenges and to provide clear advice on them. Here is a little bit of a preview of the kind of advice that we have provided. As you can see, a huge amount of our work has been on the Domain Name System's security. We have gone all the way from how to stop your domain names from being hijacked, how to preserve your own usernames and

passwords, how to make sure that you can have secure certificates on the DNS security side.

We have also talked about the next generation of technology that is coming up. We have talked about domain names that have no dots on them. It may be something that you have not experienced, but there was a time where you could go to a web browser and you could just type in a name, no dots, the address was just a name and it would look like it was using the DNS and it would resolve, so we provided advice on that.

We have also been, in the last few years, been extremely focused on registration data. This is the system that is also called the WHOIS, but we have been focused on what is the terminology, what is the structure, but we have also said it is important to preserve information about who is registering a domain name. You have to have that information available in a safe and secure way.

We work with governments, we work with law enforcement agencies in particular because when they are investigating abuse of a domain name, sometimes they are investigating it because of financial crimes that happen. Sometimes they investigate it because of harm to humans where there is, for example, child sexual abuse that is happening or human trafficking that is happening. In other cases, you have investigations because of geopolitical issues. In each of those cases, law enforcement looks to, among other sources of data, they look for registration data to try and understand who is behind these websites, who is behind these domain names.

The other area that we have also been quite focused on has been on internationalized domain names. Many of you here, English is not your first language. English may not even be your second language, but certainly you have a first language. You have a language that you are very used to. The internet and the domain name system, when it got created, was focused primarily on the Latin script. The Latin script is what is behind what you see expressed as English, the letters and the alphabet is used in there. But you know that if you want to express yourself in Mandarin, if you want to express yourself in Arabic, if you want to express yourself in another language that has special characters in it, think about it. It's called a special character, as if the regular characters are only the characters that are in the Latin script. Anything that is not in the Latin script is considered a special character.

So we sit there and we say, how do you bring all the languages, all the scripts that are underneath the languages, when you bring those to the internet, when you make them work on the DNS, how do you make sure that they actually work correctly? What are the security and stability risks associated with that? So that gives you a broad picture of the kinds of things that we have focused on.

Recently, in just the last 18 months, we have been focused on a very important part of securing the DNS, a technology called DNS Security Extensions, DNSSEC. And DNSSEC has been around for quite a long time, but there's still a lot of technical work that has to be done. So we published a report on that. We also published a report on, for registrars, how they manage specific technical records that are there in every domain name's registration, how to do it in a way that reduces security

threats to it. I already spoke about the name collision analysis work that we have done.

And the very last report you see there, SAC123, that's actually a really interesting report. It says evolution of DNS resolution, but that's our first time we have written a report that focuses on new technologies like blockchain, and how blockchain identifiers are looking just like DNS names in the domain name system, and how to responsibly integrate identifiers in the blockchain namespace with identifiers in the domain namespace, right? So that's the work that we have already published.

Now currently, we're working on two areas. We're working on DNS blocking. Now probably all of you have experienced DNS blocking in some way, shape, or form, either in the countries that you come from or in the countries that you travel to. You try to go to a particular website, and it's blocked. You try to go and send an email to a particular address, and it bounces, even though you know it's actually valid. And that is because the governments, in many cases, or the internet service providers, in some cases, have blocked that part of the domain name system.

We are doing some work on providing specific advice on, we're not saying don't block the DNS, because that's something that governments do. They have rules, they have laws, and in some cases, in many cases, they have a real reason why they want to do it. But we're trying to provide them advice. We're trying to tell them, don't be indiscriminate when you are doing it. If you need, if you only need a small knife for this, don't bring an axe, right? So that's the kind of practical, pragmatic advice that we are working on.

We're also looking at open source software that is used in the DNS infrastructure. If you look at the history of the DNS, a lot of it came from open source, and there are some interesting security and stability issues associated with that. So we're working on that as well.

So I want to invite you, one of the things that the SSAC has done is we have, we used to be a closed group. We used to have all our sessions only in private. We have changed that. Now all our sessions are in public, unless there are some sessions that are very sensitive in the security area, and then we close the sessions. But otherwise, we are an open, we run in an open way. Please come to our open forum. In that forum, and please make a note of it, Thursday, Block 1, Room 3B01. And when you come, you can meet all the members of the SSAC. You can see people who look like you, who talk like you. You might even be able to talk to them in your own language. But in addition to that, you might be able to speak about issues that are happening in your country, issues that are happening in your part of the world, or even general purpose questions or concerns that you have about how security and stability is happening on the Internet. Open to you for questions.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Ram. This was really great presentation. And thank you for making announcement about the open session. So those who are interested in that, to learn more about security and stability advisory committee work, you are just welcome to go. And yes, I see the question, Lily. Emmanuel, can I ask you to help with the mics over there? Thank you. We can take a couple of questions for Ram.

LILY EDINAM BOTSYOE: Hi, Ram, and thank you for walking through what the SSAC stands for. I'm also a Ph.D. candidate in IT. My focus is on privacy. So the content here is really rich and exciting to know. So two questions actually for you. I know in the initial module we took as fellows, one of the things we learned is SSAC members are usually elected. I'd like to know what you personally did, Ram, to catch the eye of the Board of ICANN. Number two, this place is constantly evolving. So how does the SSAC stay updated? Yesterday we learned from the OCTO, they have a security and research lab. Is there any connection?

RAM MOHAN: Absolutely, thank you so much, great questions. So to answer the first one, the story of SSAC is that in 2001, the terrorist bombings happened in the US, the 9-11 attacks happened in the US, and that was in September of 2001. October of 2001, there was a meeting that ICANN had in their headquarters in Marina del Rey at that time, and I was the chief technology officer of a domain name registry that was running the .info top-level domain. So my own background, I have a background in electrical engineering and computer science, so I have a deeply technical background, and I was running a technical operation for one of the crucial resources on the internet.

So at that time, the people at ICANN were thinking, would it not be a good idea, what if the terrorists who have bombed actual physical buildings, what happens if they came after our internet infrastructure? Is anybody looking at this? Is anybody providing advice on this? So at

that time, Vint Cerf was involved in it, so I got a call from him saying, we're trying to start this new committee up, would you like to join? So that was early days. We have evolved from then. Right now, if you want to join the SSAC, in general, you have to have some kind of good technical background and some good technical expertise. That is what is essential, because we're looking for experts.

But if you go to the SSAC's website, which is right off of ssac.icann.org, if you go to that website, you will see an application form to apply to become a member. That application form asks a bunch of questions. It asks, what do you know about computers? What do you know about technology? It asks you to self-assess yourself. Your application then comes in front of a membership committee that is consisting of SSAC members. There are five members in that committee. They will look through your application. If you look like you have qualifications, they will call you for an interview. And typically, the interview is anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes, something like that.

And in that interview, they'll ask you deep questions. They'll ask you about the things you said you know. And they'll check whether you actually know them. That's one thing. The other thing that they do is they then assess, okay, you know these things. Do we already have that knowledge and expertise inside of the SSAC? Or will you be able to add some extra value, extra knowledge and expertise in there? If those things pass, you get invited as a member. And you get selected to become an SSAC member. All SSAC members are officially appointed by the board of ICANN. But in general, because we have a very strong process and a rigorous process to select members, the ICANN board

generally accepts our recommendations. So that's how that process goes.

Great second question on how do you keep up with the pace of technology changing. In fact, this is one of the things when I became chair of the SSAC I was really worried about because it was taking the SSAC about 18 months to produce a report. And my concern was by the time you produce a report, what you're reporting on is already gone. It's already become a different thing.

So we are actually working on improving our speed of work. You know, I had showed on an earlier slide that we are doing work on DNS filtering. We began that work in May of this year. We're hoping to get that published before the next ICANN meeting in March. So we're trying to shrink that time from 18 months to maybe eight or nine months. But it's a real challenge because you have people from all around the world. Even finding a time to meet together is a challenge. Most of our work is done offline. Most of our work is done, you know, on email or on a shared document. But every so often we have to come together and that becomes a challenge.

RAM MOHAN: Thank you, Ram.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, another question. Vania, please go ahead.

VANIA OLIVEIRA: Hi. So thank you for your presentation. I am a pharmacist and health professional. I have a great concern with public health, wherever some people take advantage of internet to create websites to sell the medicine online. So how can a health entity report the existence of websites that sell medicines online?

RAM MOHAN: Thank you, Vania, for the question. In general, we are focused not at content. Our focus generally is on the infrastructure layers of the internet. The only real interaction we have with content is, for example, when spam comes through using email or when you are being phished, you know, when a website is created that looks just like a real website, then we have specific advice for that. But for other kinds of content, for example, there is a great deal of security and stability issues that come with disinformation, misinformation that happens, for example, in social media. We don't go near that. That's not part of our focus.

OLUBUSAYO BALOGUN: Thank you for the presentation. I think what struck me was the membership. You mentioned that you had two members from the Africa region. I think I would like to know more about that. Thank you.

RAM MOHAN: Please contact me. We are eager to find qualified people from there, and it's really our fault for not having done enough outreach. We're doing it now. You know, you can acknowledge what you've not done

right before, but you can also say you're going to change it going forward.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: And the fellowship program was lucky. Last year, we had one member of our program who came through the NextGen program and then the fellowship program and became a SSAC member. Now, Matthias is one of our crowds in this committee, so more to come. And probably one more question over here, because I overlooked this part.

NITISH REDDY YERRADODDI: Hello, Ram. Thank you for the session. My question is about DNS blocking. So in India, majorly from where I come from, entertainment is a very big industry. And probably there's millions of dollars or probably a billion dollars of loss because of the piracy. So when you're talking about DNS blocking, well, DNS blocking is being implemented. But again, people use VPNs to use some other sites to use off a ripoff of a Netflix or something and just stream their content. So is there any effort being made, like, you know, to make that DNS blocking effort global and universal, where if it's blocked, it's blocked across the globe? Like, does ICANN get into that area or ICANN doesn't want to get into that area? If it doesn't want to, what is the reason, per se?

RAM MOHAN: Thank you for that question. I cannot speak for ICANN, but I can say that from the Security and Stability Committee point of view, our view is that many years ago, our view was DNS blocking is generally a bad idea.

Okay? And it's generally a bad idea because you block it, and then there are technologies that can circumvent it. As you said, there are VPNs, there are other technologies that can circumvent it. It becomes a cat and mouse game. And the only people who really get anything out of it are the people who help you circumvent those rules.

So that used to be our thinking. But our thinking has evolved now. We now believe that, or at least we, as SSAC, we haven't come to a final conclusion. But I'll speak about myself. I think that there are some reasons why DNS blocking is a reasonable approach to a specific problem. But because the internet is not only global, it's also highly diverse. The technology deployed in one part is not the same as the technology deployed in another part.

So if you want to implement some kind of global DNS blocking, really the only way to do that is at the top level domain or at the root level. And we all know the famous case where when the war happened in Ukraine, there was a request that came in to ICANN, to IANA, to remove a top level domain from the root. I mean, that's the ultimate in DNS blocking. And you saw what ICANN did there. ICANN said, that's not what we do. That's not our role. We're not going to get in the middle of that.

So I will say this. Global DNS blocking, in my opinion, is a difficult thing. But if you really want to do it in a way that is effective, really the way to do it is to remove a zone completely so that nothing can get to it. You're not dependent upon VPN or proxies or internet service providers. That's

a nuclear option. You have to be really careful about going down that path.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Ram. I appreciate you being here with us. And our applause is to Ram. Now you know who is Security and Stability Advisory Committee chair. And you can always go and ask questions. Ram is very open to respond to your questions. And thank you for that. Thank you so much. With that, I would like we continue learning about the ICANN community and give the floor to the representative of GNSO Council, which is Generic Names Supporting Organization. And Sebastien Ducos is here. It's my pleasure to introduce him, who will talk about what GNSO Council is doing and what GNSO actually is doing and how we can be part of GNSO. Sebastien, the floor is yours. Thank you, Siranush. So my name is Sebastien Ducos.

SEBASTIEN DUCOS: Thank you, Siranush. So my name is Sebastien Ducos. I'm a French guy that lives in Germany and works for GoDaddy, an American company. And last year I was the chair of the GNSO Council, the GNSO chair. It's only the council, but the title englobes the whole GNSO. And so I'll try to present a bit our activities.

So as much as what Ram was discussing and presenting is the very technical side of what we do here, the GNSO is pretty much all about the political side of things. It's still technology. We're still discussing technology, technical systems and implementations, but not for the technology, but for the political impact that it has.

It's an organization that celebrated last year its 20th year. It's an organization that 20 years ago, there was a preceding organization that was called the name-supporting organization, the NSO. That split 20 years ago into the ccNSO, so all the country top-level domains, and the GNSO, which were the generic top-level domains. So the generic started with a .com, .net, .org, .mil, et cetera, and then expanded from, talked about .info, and there was about 15 others in the early 2000s. And then in 2012, we had a big round, and it expanded again. I think there was almost 2,000 applications, about 1,500 TLDs that still run today. So these are the generic top-level domains.

I personally work for a company that's called GoDaddy, which is a registrar, but I work for the registry side of that company, and we participated in that effort and run a certain number of those generic top-level domains, but I also work with ccTLDs and et cetera, so I'm a bit between the two different worlds.

So the GNSO is basically made of a certain number of sub-organizations, what we call the stakeholder groups and the constituencies, or the SGs and Cs, because we love acronyms in this community. And these are organized according to your participating, your participation or your point of entry in the community.

So we have the registry stakeholder group, which I'm a part of, that represent all the registries, both in terms of the different TLD operators and also the back-ends that operate these systems on their behalf. There are two smaller sub-groups under that. There is one that is specialized in dealing with geo-TLDs, those are all the cities that have a TLD. There's a .Istanbul, there's a .ist also, the city has got two TLDs, but

you have cities and regional TLDs, mainly in Europe and North America, but with a new round opening now, I hope to have it the world around.

My personal participation in this whole industry was to bring forward the cities of Sydney and Melbourne. I used to live in Australia, so I helped develop the application for that and get them to where they are now.

The second organization is the registrars stakeholder group. So all the registrars, you would have gone through the whole explanation of the registrant, the registrars, the registries. So those are the people that interact with the registrants, take their information, take their money, and then pass it on to the registrars. We don't have contact with the registrants. It's all done through registrars in gTLD land.

Then there is a second part of the GNSO. We'll see later that these are separated in two different houses that deal with, basically, with the registrants at large. So you have all the different registrars, the registrants at large. So you have all the commercial stakeholder group that represent the commercial registrants or their suppliers. So you have the business constituency. Essentially, it's all the businesses that have a domain name or a TLD out there.

The IP constituencies. These are lawyers, IP protection, intellectual property protection lawyers that represent some of the prior, but also in general interest of IP protection, of brand protection in ensuring that domain names are not abusively registered to pretend to be a brand. All these IP protection problems that we have in this community.

And then you have the service providers, the ISPs, the telcos, all these people that are represented there. And then you have the non-commercial stakeholder group. And this should be a constituency of particular interest for you because a number of their representatives are ex-fellows, people that come from this room and join the community through that. And so the non-commercials, they themselves are separated into two groups of the individual, of the users, of private users and of non-for-profits. So they represent essentially the interest of the individual registrants as opposed to the commercial registrants.

And then there's the GNSO council, which is a representative body. Each of the SGs and Cs get to send people to the GNSO council. And the GNSO Council also receives people from the rest of the community through the NomCom. I don't know if you have gone through that yet, that appoints them, but you will hear about it. But it's trying to get a representation of the different branches of the community.

There is no liaison, for example, from SSAC into the GNSO, but there is a system of liaison with the GAC, there's a system of liaison with ALAC, there's a system of liaison with the ccNSO. In order to sort of bring all these people into a room and be able to have different perspectives and views. They meet monthly, mainly on Zoom, but also three times a year in these venues at ICANN.

I'm going to take the good example of Ram and invite you, I think it's on Wednesday afternoon at 1pm, there's a council session that is an open session, most of our sessions are open, but this one is the formal public open session, and there's even an open mic. I don't know exactly when

it happens, but in one of the two sessions I'll be able to verify and tell you, Siranush, if you're interested, but you'll be very welcome to come.

In there we discuss basically policy development, because the GNSO Council is responsible, is the manager of the policy development, that doesn't mean that the council itself makes the rules, but the council is there to manage the different groups that go and work on the topics of interest, of the topics where we're developing policy. And usually these are years-long endeavors.

We are finishing now, we're about to vote on a work that is done on IDNs, Ram just mentioned them, so this is about top-level IDNs, and particularly the idea of variation of IDNs, I'm not going to go into the technical explanation of it, but depending on the languages, some languages allow different forms of the same word to be recognized as being the same. In terms of DNS, these are two different words, but in terms of humans, it's the same, so we use and work and operate them the same way. And this is four years, three years maybe, of work that is just coming to fruition now, just in time for the new gTLD round to be included in it.

There is other work, for example, on transfer, what happens when you have a domain name with a registrar but decide that you want to send it to another registrar, you want to have a commercial interaction with somebody else, people in the background systems need to agree with each other to pass the information from one to the next and still make it work and still make it yours and et cetera.

There is work also being done, I'll get afterwards maybe that, because I have a whole chart back. So basically the manager of the PDP, what does it mean? It charges, it scopes PDPs, policy development processes, it says exactly what we need to do, not the solution itself, but how we need to do it, what are the questions, what are the problems that we're going to solve, and then delegates that to a group of volunteers in the community, usually members of the GNSO itself, but also bringing in other people, bringing other interests, technology interests, a board, the GAC, trying to rally around a certain topic, all the people that need to be there to give their opinion, work on it.

Then these groups come back with reports, reports that are community tested, that go through public comments, that are then amended after the public comments, that are presented back to council, the work is done, council votes on it, usually, there may be a bit of back and forth if things are not completely done the way they should be. And then once the council has adopted, has voted a particular set of recommendations in the policy development, it is sent to the board that goes into, well first votes it and then sends it for implementation, but I have a graph for that.

So first, in relation to that first slide, you have the registries and the registrars under one house, they're called the contracted party because they have a contract with ICANN in order to have a TLD registry, you need to have a registry agreement with ICANN. In order to be a registrar, you need to be ICANN accredited, you have an accreditation, so these people have a contract with them. And then there's a second house that's called the non-contracted party house, and these are people that,

again, mainly registrants, either legal entities or personal individuals that are represented here.

I'm mentioning liaisons with ALAC, with the ccNSO, there's another liaison that is not in this graph, with the GAC. This is the council as was this time last year, the council that is still sitting for another few days. People like you and me, people that have, in order to be a councilor, usually you have a few years' experience in this community, you've been participating in your group. These are elected people, so there's a form of recognition there. But people that come from all sorts of backgrounds, technical, non-technical, lawyers, non-lawyers, and et cetera, and all meet there regularly to advance the policy development.

So that's the famous route of policy development that the GNSO uses, and where everything that is done politically here goes through. So in the beginning, at the top left, you have the pre-work, we're trying to define if there is a problem, what is a problem. Somebody raised their hand and says, I see an issue here. We need to resolve an issue here.

One of the issues that is living in this particular zone right now is one that is related to IDNs in Latin scripts. So these are not IDNs in Arabic or in Chinese or in many other languages. These are IDNs that are accents on a Latin E. My name, Sebastien, is written S-E, accent. That makes it, the very fact that there is an accent, that that E is not the standard English E, makes it already an IDN. And it's an IDN that is a bit special, because it's so close to Latin that it has implications. It's a normal IDN, but it has implications in the way we've handled it in the past.

And in particular, in the fact that, because there's many, many, many different languages that use that Latin script around the world, from Europe to Maori and New Zealand to languages everywhere that have, and at some point, Turkish, who have at some point adopted this Latin script. There are many variations and many things that happen to these letters that are not exactly the English root. So we're going to work on that this week, if I understand well, they're going to vote on that work becoming a policy development process.

I talked about the transfers. The transfers is somewhere in that down diagonal slope. So it's in the process of work. There's a preliminary report that's been issued. There's a second report that has been working on. They're advancing the work. They're in the middle of it. They're two years into a three-year process, I think. I don't know exactly, but this is the sort of timeframe that we're talking about. And then I talked about this work on IDN that is going to be voted, I believe, this week by the Council. That is on the bottom side of the Z. So this is the part where things are coming to fruition. They're being adopted. They're being voted in by Council that is going to send it to the Board, and the Board will send it for implementation. You would, in the last few years, for example, this part of the process has changed, has been readapted, because we presented a number of projects that were very big, that were very costly. The Board decided to add an iteration in this process in order to be able to evaluate the cost of the projects that we're offering them called the operational design phase, so the middle of it. That didn't exist five years ago. It was added. Five years ago, it's that middle part of the process that was changed. We talked about PDP 2.0, the new form of BPs, new forms of interactions in order to optimize that

central part of the Z. Actually, the graph came from that particular exercise. You want time for questions?

Then I'm almost finished. So, that's what we do. The last part of it, the implementation is formally not within our hands. It's the board and ICANN that manages that, but because we've been working through the whole process, it's one that we interact with a lot and participating a lot in, and that's what we do.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Sebastien. So, we have time for a couple of questions.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have two questions. One is on the council. You said the council will be resolved in a few days. I want to know how long is the term. Second, when I first joined ICANN, I learned about the TLDs, and I was a bit confused whether the continent names, so like .Africa, .EU, were gTLDs or ccTLDs. But then I think they are gTLDs. Okay, so you answered my question, but my question was, what happens to Australia? Is it a gTLD or is it a ccTLD?

RAM MOHAN: So, your first question about the terms. Each councilor is on council for a two-year term that can be renewed once, and then afterwards, you're term-limited. Which means that you need to skip around. You can present yourself again. It doesn't happen very often, but you can present yourself again afterwards. But there's this idea of term limitation in order to create rotations. And so, for example, here, of all

the people that I had on the picture, there will be five or six that will drop off, and five or six new that will come. The body in general, there is history, and so the same people stay there. But there's constantly a change at this time of the year.

Your second question, it depends. It depends. So, for example, .Africa is a gTLD because the people that wanted to have a .Africa, the African or a group of South Africans that were supported by the African Union, went through that program to do it because they wanted the full name Africa. They didn't want to have a two-character string related to .Af. They wanted to have the full name Africa, and that had to make it a gTLD. The same for .Asia exists there, but there's no .Latin America. There's no .Europe. What there is in Europe is a .EU, and the .EU went a different route. It went to the ccNSO and said, hey, we should have a .EU, two-letter code. It looks like all the other country codes, and they live in that world. They're in the ccTLD world. Australia, there's no .Australia, the whole string. There's a .AU, which is a country code, just like TR here in Turkey, and so they're in ccTLD land.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: We have a question from Glora Amofah. Given that GNSO has evolved from handling just a handful of original TLDs to now managing approximately 1,500 TLDs, how does the organization ensure balanced representation and effective policy development across its diverse stakeholder groups, particularly between commercials and non-commercials interests in the rapidly expanding domain name system?

SEBASTIEN DUCOS: Good question. So, to a certain extent, what we do doesn't vary so much by the number of TLDs. So we apply rules to everybody, and it's the same rules to all the different TLDs, and the set of rules, the number of rules, hasn't dramatically changed with the expansion of the number of TLDs. There are different problems that were brought by the expansion of TLDs, and particularly I mentioned concerns for IP lawyers, because they have seen the multiplication of the different subterritories of Internet that they need to protect in. That's a different, that's an absolute concern to them, but in terms of policy development, it doesn't make all that much difference.

Now, how do we make sure that everybody gets heard? The council, this community, and you will find a number of loudmouths in this community. Everybody's problem is very well defended. There is a lot of debate, a lot of discussion, and a lot of people have strong voices and are not too shy about using it. And so it's about that, it's about listening, it's about hearing, it's about exchanging, it's about consensus building, and these things take a long time, and these things take a lot of effort, and these things take a lot of nurturing and attention.

And that also explains that everything that we do, particularly on council, but everything that we do, Ron was talking about not being able to take 18 months to go and write a paper on a technology because it moves so fast. I wish I was living in a world that was going that fast. Everything that we do takes years and years and years. The Z from the top of it to the very bottom could be 7, 10 years easily on the most simple problem because we need to get to hear everybody, and which is also a problem of credibility for ICANN vis-à-vis the rest of the world

because the legislator outside in Europe, for example, where I come from, says, taking too long, I'm going to start putting the rules myself. And so it's a balance there. We need to hear everybody, we need to make sure everybody participates, but we need to get also the trains to move and get there on time.

SEBASTIEN DUCOS: We'll take one more question.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, just a quick question, if I understood correctly, so a registrar to be able or to be eligible to handle gTLD operations, registration operations, it should be ICANN accredited. So just what are the requirements needed for a registrar to be an ICANN accredited registrar?

SEBASTIEN DUCOS: Sorry, I'm not a registrar myself. I don't know the whole process. But essentially, there are requirements in terms of financial stability, your capacity to handle your clients and a company that raises up and within three months is gone, is of no interest to ICANN because bad credibility. So that's one part. There is also a technical part. You need to be able to work with the operators. All those transactions work through a system, EPP interaction and so on. And then there is a contract. There's a number of rules that you need to obey by. And, for example, last year, these contracts have been amended for registries and registrars to handle abuse, to handle technical abuse. And so you commit to a

certain behavior, you commit to whatever. And then financially, and then finally, sorry, because these things are always the same, you pay fees. And so once you are able to, you have the financial stability, you have the technical capacity, you obey the rules and you pay your fees, you become a registrar and you can play with everybody. And then it opens all at once, the capacity of the register within .com, or any of the 1600 TLDs that are out there. Sorry, I need to correct myself. The ones that are open, because you also have brand TLDs that are closed TLDs, but the ones that are open with a registrar accreditation, you can work it. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Sebastien. And thank you, everyone, for your questions. Unfortunately, we cannot take more, but you will have the opportunity to see these people during the upcoming week. So stop them, ask your questions, and I really appreciate your time, Sebastien. Thank you very much. Sebastien was one of the Fellowship Program Selection Committee members, so he knows pretty well the program. He knows the capacity coming, so I appreciate the support. Our thanks to our panelists to give us more learning opportunities about SSAC and GNSO. Thank you very much. With that, our meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

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