
ICANN81 | AGM – Joint Meeting: GAC and ALAC
Tuesday, November 12, 2024 – 9:00 to 10:00 TRT

DAN GLUCK:

Hello, and welcome to the GAC Joint Meeting with the ALAC on Tuesday, the 12th of November at 06:00 UTC. My name is Dan Gluck from the ICANN Policy Development GAC Support Team.

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As a kind reminder, tables with microphones are reserved for GAC members and observers, and as we know for this session, invited guests. I will now hand the floor over to Nico Caballero.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Daniel. Welcome everyone. I hope you enjoyed the concert last night, Vivaldi Four Seasons with the Istanbul Filler Morning Orchestra, and that you enjoyed the coffee and the drinks, of course. So some housekeeping details for after the session. Please make sure you stay in the room for the photo session right after this

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session with the ALAC. So with that, let me welcome Amrita, Justine, and Joanna from the ALAC. And of course, we have Nigel, Ian, and Christina, I'm sorry.

My laser brain is not working so well at this time due to lack of caffeine, so I'm working on it. My apologies. So the agenda for today, we will touch upon reflections and future directions. That subdivision of the session will be led by Amrita and Nigel. And right after that, we'll discuss DNS abuse. I understand Jonathan Zuck is not in the room for whatever reason, but Justine will be walking us through that subsection of our discussions along with Ian Sheldon, our distinguished GAC representative from Australia.

And then we'll open the floor for questions, comments, and a good discussion on these two or any other topic you might find interesting to discuss. And then we'll have some closing remarks, not from Jonathan Zuck, given the fact that he's not in the room, but I assume they will be coming from, from Justine or from Amrita or from Joanna, which would be equally acceptable for us, of course. So with that, let me welcome you again. Welcome, ALAC. Let me give the floor at this point to Amrita. Welcome.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Thank you so much, Nico, and thank you for having us there. Amrita for the record. And I'm supposed to be speaking on behalf of ALAC on WSIS+20 reflections and future directions. Though there is much to discuss, we thought that since time is limited, we restricted to two questions, and the first is deliberate how GAC and ALAC can work

together to make at least the WSIS+20 negotiations more open, transparent and inclusive.

Because what we have been seeing in the GDC discussions, as much as it was supposed to be multi-stakeholder, it wasn't as open, inclusive, and transparent as all stakeholders would want it to be. So Nigel, should I ask the first question first and then we discuss it and then go to the next? Would anyone from the GAC want to even take this point up first?

NICO CABALLERO:

Oh, I can read the questions for you, and then we'll open the floor.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

And the next question is that since the WSIS+20 negotiations finally would be member states voting, how can we explore that ALAC members, At-Large members in the respective countries, and the GAC members who are there from those countries work together to at least have more I would say deliberations at the national level, which can go in to feed the discussions which the national teams would have when they go in for final negotiations? These are the two questions and would be happy to hear from people on this.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Amrita. So the floor is open. Let's see if we have hands in the room or online. I don't see any hand online yet, so I don't know if you would like to speak first, Joanna, Christina or any of you, and then

we'll have a queue for sure. So in the meantime, we already have-- there's this lady, Marita Moll. Go ahead, please. I assume Marita Moll is from ALAC, is that correct? Okay. Please go ahead, Marita.

MARITA MOLL:

Yes, thank you. I'm the co-coordinator of the WSIS+20 issues in ALAC, and I'm a member of the WSIS+20 discussion groups, both of them, both the mailing list and the SO/AC discussion groups.

For the last two years, we've all been involved in awareness raising situations here and opportunities here at ICANN, public forum and forum that we organized through ALAC, and that's been a wonderful way of really enabling all of us at At-Large and maybe even at GAC, to really become aware of the fact that things need to be ramped up. And I'm really happy to say that in the last little while, it really feels like it's being ramped up, that governments are starting to move to the front and pulling people together and providing opportunities for other groups to kind of lock in.

We did have one session, it was October the 24th in Canada where ICANN and country code operator CIRA and the government put together an initial meeting to get people together and just start thinking about it. I don't know what the next step is, but it was great to see that and I hope that that's happening in other places. Basically, wrapping up right now and as quickly as we can. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you very much for that, Marita. The floor is still open. In the meantime, I do have a question for Amrita, Justine, or Joanna. Is there anything, in your opinion, from your point of view, from ALAC's point of view, is there anything that would lead us to think that negotiations are actually not open or transparent or inclusive? Is there anything that would lead us to think that that is the case in your opinion? Is there anything you could share with the GAC at this point in that regard?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

Nick, Amrita, for the record. For the WSIS+20, we really don't know what is happening, but since the stage is going to be set, we would rather like to put our asks in the table before, because there is a lot in the play. It is not only the renewal of the IGF, but even the WSIS mandate. And that's a huge thing which would happen, and that is why we would urge and we want to see a much more open, transparent, and accountable process because where the sentiments from all stakeholders are taken into account and what has come in also should be listed.

For example, many times during the GDC, the submissions were made by big, small countries, big, small individuals, or even technical community or civil society, but no one could see what was made. It was a black box unless you shared it. So the text is absolutely good. I would say it's very developing country friendly, but the process is not, so that's why we are wary about it.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you very much for that, Amrita. I have Switzerland. Please go ahead.

JORGE CANCIO: Hello. Good morning. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland for the record. So perhaps it's early morning, people are still in need of some coffee, myself as well. But I'll try to say something meaningful. So thanks very much for raising this. Well, as a point of information, just if you don't know, the GAC has a strategic plan and following the larger IG discussions is part of that strategic plan. So I'm not one of the responsible caretakers for the different strategic objectives, but be assured that this is part of the GAC wider priority setting that's being done.

I think that's mostly at a level of exchange of information, of being aware of what is happening, because as you know, also perhaps the specific positions on discrete topics may vary in such a large group as the GAC. So I don't think we are engaging in advocacy as such as the GAC. So that's my personal opinion, of course. And yeah, on your questions, what I would say is, Amrita, Joanna, all of you we engage, at least at the level of the Swiss government and also many other governments.

We engage as much as we can in as many fora we can. Of course, we have physical limitations. There's a 24-hour day still and 365 days in a year. And we have also other topics, but we try very hard. And of course, this is part of this engagement. For instance, we had the geopolitical session yesterday. A number of GAC members went to the microphone

and shared their views, made their advocacy points from their national perspectives, and we included. And today we have a ccNSO session on this, so we are also engaging with them.

Anai and I, and I don't know if some other colleagues are participating there in one hour and 17 minutes. And tomorrow we have the, or is it on-- yeah, it's tomorrow, the plenary session where the whole of the community will discuss things. So that's, of course, in the ICANN environment. And I think it's quite useful what Benny and his team are doing in putting at the disposal of membership, the WSIS+20 list that was also used to exchange information and positions about GDC.

Of course, more can be done, that's always possible. And beyond that, of course, within the many other fora like the IGF, we engage, and there are many opportunities there to engage with ALAC members because we all wear different hats. So you maybe don't wear that hat when you are engaging in those other fora like the IGF and its working groups, but we also meet there. And of course, nationally, if that is also a question nationally, we engage with our community.

We have different fora, a multi-stakeholder fora where we inform, where we get feedback, where we discuss, and of course, we have the Swiss IGF where this has been a topic. But we have also what we call the tripartite platform where we meet with our civil society, technical community, private sector, more than 350 people, various times a year, and we discuss these things. So I don't know if this has been an icebreaker for other colleagues, but I'll stop rumbling. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for the icebreaking comments, Switzerland. I do have a very quick question before I give the floor, and there's already a queue there. So, given the fact that you have found that the negotiations are not entirely open, transparent, or inclusive from your point of view, have you found ways to engage with your national governments, your GAC representatives or not in that regard? And that question is again, for the ALAC, before I give the floor to the Netherlands and Australia, and then to Marita Moll again, but I have that quick question before we continue.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY:

So Amrita for the records. It varies because we have members across the globe in different nations, and the interest or the engagement varies. For example, as Jorge mentioned, in Switzerland or UK or even in Australia, there has been a lot of engagement. There are countries where some inputs have been given to the governments, some places are members did not even know whom to give the comments because we do have GAC members, but these statements are made from the Ministry of External Affairs at the UN office.

So many of our members who are representing end user interests may not even know the dynamics, which works. They understand the issues and those affect them, but they may not know the right way. And the learning curve is also steep. They may not have the information, but as Marita mentioned, the WSIS+20 mailing list, et cetera, gives a lot of information. There's a lot of discussions happening everywhere, but our ask is if we can at least since we have a lot of GAC represented

members here from different countries, perhaps that kind of discussions, if it could happen even at the country level, it would be really helpful, even to them, to our members too.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you for that. And we already have a queue here. I have the Netherlands, Australia, Egypt, and Marita Moll. Netherlands, please go ahead.

ALISA HEAVER:

Thank you. And this is Alisa Heaver for the record. So in the Netherlands, our ICANN delegation is from the Ministry of Economic Affairs. And I'm pointing this out because it's quite important, because the people that are negotiating in New York on behalf of governments are often from foreign affairs. And I know some people here in ICANN are also from foreign affairs, but not everyone. So the people or our GAC colleagues that are not from foreign affairs, they have to ensure that they become well acquainted with capital foreign affairs, but also with the permanent representation in Geneva and the permanent representation in New York.

In the first stages, we did some capacity building to our colleague or with our colleagues in New York, because they weren't dealing with internet governance. The colleagues from the permanent representation in Geneva, they were dealing with internet governance via the ITU, more or less. So bringing those four lines together in

government, that was really important for us. So that's one part of the, the story.

And the other part that I wanted to say is that in the Netherlands, we obviously have also done quite a lot of outreach towards our community. This year for the first time, we hosted, once again, a Netherlands Internet Governance Forum, but for the first time we did it in collaboration with ISOC Netherlands and the Netherlands platform for internet standards.

And we had a turnout that was three times as high as we would usually have with only the Netherlands Internet Governance Forum. And in our small country, we managed to have a attendance of 230 people physically for this event, which we managed to discuss with the whole community, the GDC and the upcoming WSIS process. So we've done a lot of outreach, but towards the group here, I would really like to stress the importance of bringing together the telecom or the Economic Affairs Ministry and the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you for those remarks, Netherlands. Any reactions before I give the floor to the next speaker?

AMRITA CHOUDHURY: No, I think she said what-- we equal the sentiments completely.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much. Thank you, Netherlands. I have Australia next.

IAN SHELDON:

Thank you, Nico. Ian Sheldon, GAC Australia for the record. I thought I might share a couple of domestic initiatives that we've been working on, just building on the comments from Alisa and Jorge. For us, we learned a lot from the GDC process, and we learned about how important engaging with our local community was. We benefited hugely from having strong trusted relationships with our local community, and they provided a huge amount of deep expertise through the GDC process.

So pretty much as soon as GDC wrapped up, we launched our domestic system. And we are going through a bit of an experimental process at the moment. But we are looking to stand up a task force comprised of local community members who can come together and actually write some of the briefing papers that we will be looking to pass through our government system and give those papers directly to some of the negotiators that we know will be at the front lines in some of these negotiations through WSIS.

We will also be having a pretty open-door policy. So public consultation is a routine thing for us. But public consultation, over the course of the entirety of the WSIS process, is quite a long, drawn-out piece. And so we've got a system whereby if our local community have any thoughts at all on the WSIS process, there's a mailbox, there's a system for submitting ideas and contributions, and we'll be taking all of those back to our task force and trying to synthesize them and turn them into tangible talking points we can use at the front line. It's still early days,

and I can see Cheryl in the back nodding. We are very much trying to blend the multi-stakeholder and multilateral processes together as much as we can.

And I think finding some way to tangibly leverage all the expertise we have locally and refine and fines that messaging that we can take through to WSIS is gonna put us in quite good stead. So we'll be looking to showcase more of this work hopefully at the IGF later this year, and I encourage all of the ALAC to reach out to your local GAC as the sensible touch point to these multilateral processes. It's often quite difficult to work out where in your government you can make that touch point, but this room is that best spot to have those conversations and start those relationships.

So building on those comments, I'd very much encourage you to find your GAC rep and pass out business cards and start the conversation now, because next year we'll be very busy and we need to build and strengthen those relationships now to see us through and make sure we've got good outcomes through the WSIS review.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Australia. Let me give the floor to Marita Moll at this point. Please go ahead, Marita.

MARITA MOLL:

Thank you. Marita Moll for the record. I appreciate the remarks from the Australian representative. I have been watching the outreach that you've been doing, I'm from Canada, watching the outreach you've

been doing, and it's a pretty good model, and I encourage everyone to look at it.

I think that we could make use of such models as probably others out there and make them available to other governments and other At-Large, other members of the stakeholder community to look at and see what they can take that they can use in their own context. I think that's important. We don't all have to reinvent the wheel. I see that the technical community through the Canadian country code operators and other country code operators set up a coalition and they're already putting out a questionnaire and people are putting out papers.

So I think that all of our communities need to start doing all of these things. And certainly, the people in At-Large need to reach out to their governments. This is the best forum to find out who's actually doing what. We also have the same situation with different government departments working either at ICANN or at the WSIS, but they are now working together on that. So we need the tools, and in the At-Large community, we can certainly start working a little harder at pushing those tools out through our own regional At-Large organizations, and I think we really need to do that. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Marita. I have Egypt next, our esteemed and deeply respected former chair Manal Ismail. Go ahead, please, Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL:

Thank you, Nico. And just in support of everything that has been said so far, I think that the coming period is very intense and very busy, and it's high time that we start preparing our engagement and coordination. We definitely need coordination at all levels vertically within our stakeholder groups, horizontally across stakeholder groups at the national level and beyond with like-minded and beyond to promote also the ideas.

For ALAC colleagues, you can definitely benefit from being at the same venue with your government representatives here at the GAC. But also to highlight, and I fully agree with the Netherlands in the exercise that we had to go through also with the discussions moving to New York with our diplomat colleagues who already have loaded diplomat agendas.

So it took significant coordination as well with the pace of the process with the different time zones we were working at. And also, the consultations not taking into consideration the weekends at our region, so most of them were on Fridays. So we had to find some way to quickly coordinate and provide timely input, and I believe what was already being discussed even within the technical community was very useful. The briefs that came out, the comparisons that were developed, they were very useful and informative and we used them as a government.

So I think whenever there is valuable contribution, it'll definitely be taken into consideration one way or another. So there is no one-size-fits-all. Try to be creative and engaging with your focal points and to identify who's the focal point within your country. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you very much, Egypt. I have Joanna Kulesza next. Please go ahead, Joanna.

JOANNA KULESZA: Thank you, Nico. I have put myself in the queue. Thank you very much. Just a few comments on the selection of the topics. As Christina and I have been preparing the session, I do admit that the WSIS+20 is an excuse for us to start a conversation, a conversation starter per se, if you will. We realize that WSIS+20 is just one of the processes that the members of the gag have on their agendas, and those agendas are very full. So this is for us to take temperature of both rooms and make sure that there are conversations for us to engage on.

I particularly appreciate the interventions from Switzerland, from Netherlands, from Australia. We have held sessions, joint session before on good practice examples and both Ian and Cheryl have been tremendously supportive in showing us how this on the ground collaboration can happen. But ICANN gives a unique, pun intended, common denominator for both communities that does not easily translate as the Dutch representative highlighted to national policies. There's a steep learning curve as we like to say, and when you have representatives in New York discussing the cybercrime convention or in vessels discussing NIS2.

It's not an easy conversation to have when one is to explain what ICANN does and how that translates onto national policies. So from our perspective with our stakeholders having very broad portfolios and trying to engage with governments whose portfolios are usually

chopped into smaller packages, there are ministries who only handle part of the cyber policy on internet governance related policies. We feel like it makes sense for us to have a platform of exchange on all of these issues. My favorite example is the Cyber Crime Convention.

Oh, slow down. Okay. I get excited about these topics, I apologize. So we felt it might make sense for us to take temperature of both rooms to make sure that there is joint interest in identifying specific messages to carry in those legislative and regulatory tracks. As an example, I would point to NIS2 and one specific article that has been mentioned during our meetings before Article 28. If we are to have a joint ICANN community position that represents citizens and end users alike, it might make sense for us to engage in discussions on these specific topics.

WSIS+20 is a low hanging fruit because ICANN already started a mailing list, there is already a conversation happening. And I will take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Veni and his team for the session yesterday. But there's much more potential for us to engage both with the ICANN governmental engagement team and us bilaterally to keep tabs on what is happening with regards to regulatory developments.

So from the kitchen of the session, so to speak, this is to highlight that WSIS+20 here is perceived merely as a conversation starter. We appreciate all of the feedback that has been provided. I have taken duly my place in the queue, and I note that there are other speakers and hands raised, but putting on my staff support hat here, I just highlight

to Nico that Nigel is also ready to take the floor in due course. Thank you so much.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you, Joanna. Thank you so much for that. Indeed, amazing how two simple questions can trigger such an interesting conversation. Thank you so much for that. I have Colombia next.

THIAGO DAL-TOE:

Thank you so much, Nico. Indeed, it's been a great discussion. I think posing this question, we've been able to see how different countries are facing this duality on how to act on the GDC. I wanted to share with you also what we've been seeing in Colombia.

We have a really good relationship with what's called La Mesa colombiana de Gobernanza de Internet, and we've managed to get a lot of inputs from that side. We participated fully in the discussions, and then we also had to share that information with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as we've been seeing some of the discussions here. And then from there to actually go into the mission, who's actually negotiating, it's another telephone conversation.

But I think trying to bridge this differentiation from a Ministry of ICT, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, getting the civil society with us, all the regulatory agencies, I think it's been a success case for us at least. And I think this space, this dialogue that we're having here, learning from different countries, it's what we should be doing. And I highly welcome other colleagues from sharing their own experience as well. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Colombia. I have Egypt, the CTU, and then I'll give the floor to Mr. Nigel Hickson from the UK. Egypt, please go ahead.

CHRISTINE ARIDA: Thank you, Nico. And thank you for bringing those topics to the table and to this session. So I highly agree with Joanna what you just mentioned. I think the WSIS+20 is a low hanging fruit. The GDC has been maybe foreign to our other, let me say community here, because even if we're talking about the IGF community or the ICANN community, the GDC was quite foreign to us.

We learned a lot about the processes, even us as government members. But for the WSIS, I mean the IGF came from the WSIS, the ICANN community is highly involved. And so here I'd like to pose a challenge. The GDC has talked about the very big picture about digital governance. The WSIS has internet governance in it, and what ICANN deals with is even more narrow.

I think the opportunity here is to convert that challenge into something that we can make use of. And here I would like to say that the multi-stakeholder model and the discussions and the negotiations like the ones we're having today within ICANN is something that should be highlighted. So I think it is imperative to focus on how are we going to narrow down the topics, show that internet resources are at the heart

of that, but also that they provide a novel way of let's say governance that could be carried on to other areas.

So I think that should be at the focus of our WSIS+20 discourse. We don't have much time in my view, but we have milestones coming up. We have the other IGF, we have the next ICANN meetings, we also have the WSIS forum, and just recently announced the IGF in the middle of the year next year.

I think we should make an opportunity of that. Like Jorge said, the GAC has internet governance as a strategic objective. One the underlying points in it is awareness, but also engagement and discussion across constituencies. And we have high interest from members. So invite elect to engage with us in that and to move forward on that. Thank you so much.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Egypt. I have the CTU and then the UK, and right after that, Spain. CTU, go ahead, please.

NIGEL CASSIMIRE:

Thank you, chair. Nigel Cassimire from the CTU. Just to give a little perspective from smaller countries where resources might be even more limited to do things. The comments, may be four, are relevant. I agree, I support, I think the outreach is key.

It's a question of the UN, which is a multilateral organization making room for multi-stakeholder input. So in such a situation, it's incumbent

upon the members of that multilateral organization as the governments to do the outreach. So people in this room, I think would be well informed in terms of going back home and talking to whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or engaging with their multi-stakeholder national groups and so on, to try to get the inputs that they need as we hear some of the countries already doing.

The one point that I want to add to everything that's been said before is that we could also try to leverage the intergovernmental organizations where they exist. So in the Caribbean, the CTU is playing a role whereby we are supporting our member governments who are all very limited as far as their resources are concerned, to be aware of these issues we provide, whether it's policy briefs or whatever, create opportunities for people to come together and discuss the issues whether in person or online so that you try to get the inputs from all the stakeholders as much as possible from all the countries. So in many of the regions of the world, we have intergovernment and organizations that we could also bring into and leverage to enhance the outreach. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you, CTU. I have the UK and then Spain. Nigel, please go ahead.

NIGEL HICKSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you want to just take Spain first because I was gonna do a bit of summing up?

NICO CABALLERO: Absolutely. Spain, the floor is yours.

ANA MALDONADO: Thank you, Nico. Thank you, Nigel. I just wanted to comment on the model we have in Spain in case it can be useful for you, for ALAC. In Spain, we have a good network, a good relationship with all our stakeholders leading with our national IGF coordinators, the event.

We do several meetings along the year to prepare that event. And the private sector and civil society is also involved. They know a lot about the process, the WSIS process, the GDC, and the different United Nations Initiative. And from our side in the ministry, I come from the Ministry of Digital Affairs, and we are also pretty close to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also to our national representation in Geneva, and especially New York.

So I think we have a model that we combine the multi-stakeholder model, we implement that model in Spain, and I feel we have a successful model, even though, in my opinion, in my personal opinion, there would be very positive to have more room for exchange apart from the meetings that we have for our national IGF. So regular meetings with different stakeholders coming from different communities, I think would be very welcome in my opinion. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much, Spain. And now at this point, let me handle the floor over to Nigel Hickson from the UK. All yours, Nigel.

NIGEL HICKSON:

Yes, thank you very much indeed. And this again, proved an excellent discussion, and it just shows the importance of this subject. I was gonna touch on a bit of substance, so I was gonna try in the next three or four minutes to touch on, do we know where we are going on the WSIS process?

Will we know when we get there, what do we want out of it, and how we can work together in our countries? I think the last point in terms of how we can work together has been well covered in the discussion we've just had. It's really excellent to see so many countries having coordination mechanisms within their countries, having initiatives, having collaboration. In the UK, we have an internet governance working group which meets with stakeholders, which tosses on WSIS, and we've set up a separate WSIS+20 stakeholder group.

And I think it's important to do this, not just to discuss the process and to ensure that stakeholders understand what opportunities they have to input into the UN process and other processes, but also to take the views of stakeholders on what they would like to come out of the WSIS process. And sometimes we focus too much on process and not enough on substance. So do we know where we want to go on the WSIS? When we were in Geneva in 2003, when we were in Tunis in 2005, did we really know what we wanted from this overall process of the World's Summit on the Information Society? There were so many different views.

For many of us, the focus should have been on capacity building, it should have been on development, it should have been on reducing the

digital divide, it should have been on funding ICT development in developing countries. The governance of the internet for many of us was secondary to the process. But we learned, we learned that the opinion of many countries was that the governance of the internet was critical for them. And much of the focus, of course, of the WSIS and the resulting Tunis agenda was on the governance of the internet.

But let us not forget what the process was all about in the beginning. It was on the equality, it was on reducing the digital divide, it was in making sure that developmental processes left no one behind. That was the impetus when the ITU discussed this in 1998. The impetus was to have a summit that would really bring people together. The internet was not mentioned. It was the Information Society was the ability for people to come together and all have a share of the information society that it shouldn't be at all for the rich guys, that it should be shared amongst all countries.

So as we approach the WSIS+20 review, let's not just focus on internet governance in the narrow sense of the governance of the internet. Yes, that is critically important, it's important to ICANN. The multi-stakeholder model has proved that it can deliver in so many ways, but still the WSIS process is there with the WSIS action lines that came outta Geneva in 2003 that show us that the WSIS process is more than just governance.

It's about development, it's about reducing the digital divide, it's about increasing skills, it's about having equality, it's about having human rights on the internet, it has many facets. And so as we go into these

discussions, as we prepare for these discussions in the UN CSTD in April, in the ITU high level forum, the WSIS Forum in July, in the UNESCO events in February, I'm going out of order here, let us remember what the WSIS was all about and in our national countries.

Let's not just have discussions with our stakeholders, but let's have discussions within our governments. What do we really want the WSIS+20 review to focus on? Do we want it to go forward, and if you'd like, review the WSIS action lines.

A lot has happened since Geneva in 2003, AI, et cetera, et cetera. Should we not revisit what we want as a society, what we want in terms of reducing the digital divide, what we want in terms of development. So let us have a debate about what we want out of this process, and then we can better work together to have those results. So I think this discussion is so important as we go forward, it's so important to many of us. Yes, we need to do better at the UN as we discussed in the geopolitical forum yesterday, but we also need to work in our own countries to make sure that what we want the WSIS process is reflected in New York. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Words of wisdom indeed, Nigel. Thank you so much for that. So at this point, and for the sake of time, let me hand the floor to Ian Sheldon from Australia and to Justine, I understand, who's replacing Jonathan Zuck. Ian, over to you. We're gonna be discussing how to address the challenges regarding DNS abuse. Over to you.

JUSTINE CHEW:

Okay, I'm being prompted by Ian to start. Okay. Hi, good afternoon. Oh, sorry. Good morning, I should say. Lost track, sorry. On behalf of the At-Large and ALAC, always pleasure to be here talking to the GAC. I think these sessions have become more and more constructive and useful in developing and also improving the relationship between GAC and ALAC in terms of not only things that we do, but things that we may be interested in and trying to establish more collaboration in a more effective way.

Now I'm here to talk about a little bit about DNS abuse. In terms of where ALAC and the At-Large is at, is that we have in the past, and I'm thinking about 2023, tried to put forward the position to say that DNS abuse, if you don't look at the distinction between maliciously registered domains and non ones, we are just taking it from a general point of view that DNS abuse is likely perpetrated by parties that have easy access to registered domains.

So in terms of things like bulk registrations, cost of a domain, if it's a lower cost and presumably, it's more attractive to potential perpetrators of DNS abuse to register more domains to carry on their malicious activities. So we've put that position in the past and we've come pretty much to a kind of like a roadblock, I would say especially with GNSO, is the position that GNSO takes is let's have a look at whether we have evidence of that and which is fine. We should be making policies based on data, actual data. So we both agreed that,

both ALAC and the GNSO, agreed that we should look at the results of the study that ICANN was going to commission.

And the study is fondly known as INFERMAL or it stands for Inferential Analysis of Malicious Registered Domain, that's what it stands for generally. And part of that in study included things like does bulk registration, does cost, does opening API to anyone to register domains, are those factors prevalent or do they have important part in playing in terms of DNS abuse, whether DNS abuse increases or decreases.

I'm just paraphrasing here right now. And I think if you haven't had a chance to read that INFERMAL report, I would suggest that you do, it's very instructive. And the conclusion drawn there is the simply the answer is yes. If you indulge me, I'm just gonna read a couple of sentences from the conclusion of this report. Says that this study sheds light on the factors that drive malicious domain registrations, particularly phishing campaigns.

So in essence, they have concentrated on maliciously registered domains as their focus, and phishing campaigns really. Because in essence, they said that spam is too difficult to really measure, so they focus on phishing campaigns. So it goes on to say is that we have identified key trends showing that attackers exploit cost effective registration processes and automation features to facilitate- Thank you, Dan.

We have identified key trends showing that attackers exploit cost-effective registration processes and automation features to facilitate the activities. Specifically, price reduction, free services, and API access

significantly increase the likelihood of domain abuse. Our findings emphasize that attackers prioritize registrars, offering lower costs and features that enable bulk registrations, which allow them to scale their operations efficiently. In contrast, stringent registration restrictions serve as effective deterrence, reducing the probability of malicious domains being registered.

Okay, I'm gonna stop there. So some of these things have been picked up by the ALAC position that I tried to allude to earlier that please look at things like bulk registrations, please look at things like know your clients, have stringent processes for know your clients.

Essentially, it's about introducing friction in the registration process undertaken by registrars. So based on this, and I'll just mention the fact that we talk a lot about the recent, well, not so recent now DNS abuse amendments to the contracts to the RAA and the RAs. And what I took away from our session with the Board yesterday is they consider that as low hanging fruit that they could achieve in a short time, which we accept, at least I accept. But the Board did also suggest that it is not be all and the end all. There is still room for the community to decide to push ahead with further obligations if we choose to if you think that is the appropriate move to take.

So I'm suggesting now on behalf of ALAC that because of this INFERNAL report and the conclusions that is contained with it, that we should take up that invitation by the Board to see how we could push this combat against DNS abuse further, and try to see whether we can introduce

more standard benchmark commitments by the contractor parties, in particular the registrars.

So this is an open invitation to the GAC to collaborate with ALAC on this. And we have made inroads with the- yes, thank you, about to stop- with the GNSO because the GNSO has a standing GNSO small team on DNS abuse, and we will definitely be trying to raise this issue again, or this topic again through that avenue. And I would invite GAC's response to this. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you very much, Justine. Australia, please go ahead.

IAN SHELDON:

Thanks, Nigel. Thanks, Justine. So I think the INFERMAL report is a fantastic resource. It only just hit my inbox maybe about an hour ago, so I haven't really had a chance to go through it in detail.

But just, there are a couple of stats in the report which really stood out to me to add a little bit more light and color to Justine's summary. There's a piece in here which talks about each dollar reduction in registration fee corresponds to a 49% increase in malicious domains. The availability of free services such as web hosting drives an 88% surge in phishing activities. And finally, registrars providing API access for domain registration or account creation, experience a staggering 401% rise in malicious domains.

Those are quite stark findings. The GAC obviously has not had time to fully digest and unpack the report, but for me, the initial takeaways, there're certainly are things that the community can pursue to help reduce the harms of DNS abuse and start considering a more proactive approach rather than reactive to some of these challenges. I can also see there are a number of GAC DNS abuse leads in the room here. So I'd welcome them to take the floor and provide any of their off the cuff responses as well. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much. As a matter of fact, we have two hands up already. I have the European Commission and then Alan Greenberg. Please be brief and straight to the point for the sake of time. And the US as well. We only have five minutes for three-- Go ahead. Go ahead. Sorry, go ahead.

MARTINA BARBERO:

I'll take 30 seconds. Thank you very much to ALAC for the great discussion on DNS abuse, and thank you for referring to this study. It's indeed something that is quite fresh, so we didn't have the time to integrate it in the DNS abuse session of today, which is immediately after this session. So your intervention was also very timely because we can still have it fresh in our mind for our DNS abuse discussion, but I think we will discuss with the DNS abuse topic leads, it would be interesting to invite them to report on a finding in next meeting so that we can have a more in-depth discussion on how we can take things forward. Thank you very much.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you, Martina, for being brief and straight to the point. I have Alan Greenberg next.

ALAN GREENBERG: Yeah, I'll be very quick. Also, clearly we have a lot of work to do to process this report and to understand it, but I will remind everyone that the bylaws do allow both the ALAC and the GNSO to initiate a PDP. We don't have to wait for the GNSO to start the process its own, and it's something we may want to consider in this case. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you, Alan. I have the USA next. Owen, please go ahead.

OWEN FLETCHER: Thank you. This is Owen Fletcher from the United States. Thank you for the presentation. On DNS abuse, a topic of interest in particular for the GAC currently, and recently, of course has been following the contract amendments from earlier this year.

Our next session is largely about understanding the impacts of those as we can understand them so far, and how we can continue monitoring and measuring their effectiveness. So while continuing to focus on that, we of course welcome further data and research, including from the INFERMAL report, which I agree we will need to review and consider in order to help us make good decisions about what next steps could be.

I also just wanted to recall that in earlier GAC discussions about this at previous meetings, we noted possibility of any policy work being a micro or mini PDP. So should PDPs on the topic of DNS abuse proceed, we would think they need to be narrowly tailored in order to produce timely and workable outcomes. But we look forward to further engagement on that. Thank you.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you very much for that, USA. USA, go ahead.

LAUREEN KAPIN:

Thank you. And this is Laureen Kapin speaking in my capacity as a member of the Public Safety working Group. As we're looking at this current news, I also just want to remind people to take a look back, and the GAC has previously given advice and noted a lot of very important recommendations and studies from prior community work, including the competition and consumer trust review team recommendations, which also had a study on DNS abuse.

The SSR2 review teams also spoke a lot about what recommendations would make sense. So when we're asked for where's the evidence, I just want to point to the fact that the community has done a lot of work on these issues and made recommendations, which sound very familiar to what is now being cited in the current report, which of course we welcome.

NICO CABALLERO: Thank you so much for that, Laureen. We need to wrap up the session. We have two minutes for Joanna Kulesza. Please go ahead, Joanna.

JOANNA KULESZA: Thank you very much, Nico, and indeed, thank you, everyone. Thank you, GAC, for the invitation, and thank you for a fruitful discussion. Building on the first part of our session since the DNS discussion is yet to unfold, we have been working with GAC leadership [00:58:04 - inaudible] team, so ICANN staff engaged directly with governments and building upon yesterday's session on regulatory developments to introduce a series of briefings working together with the governmental engagement team to give us both communities updates on what they're doing rather than condensing all of this into one session during and otherwise busy ICANN meeting.

We would like for these meetings to happen regularly, possibly once a month, be condensed, open to everyone, but focused on the needs of both communities. GAC vice chair, Zeina Bou Harb, has kindly agreed to take the lead on this activity on behalf of the GAC, and we are tremendously grateful to Zeina and also to Nico for the support of the initiative. And hopefully these meetings will give both communities a platform to exchange ideas about how to best work together to address the regulatory developments as they happen. That's all I have. Thank you so much.

NICO CABALLERO:

Thank you so much for that, and thank you for sticking to the available time. Just some final housekeeping details for our esteemed GAC colleagues in the room. Please stay here. We're gonna have the photo session like in five minutes. And then we'll have a session on DNS abuse, speaking of the devil. And then the meeting with the ICANN Board after lunch and the meeting with the ASO right after the coffee break, and then some communique drafting sessions.

So at this point, let's wrap up the session. Thank you so much, Amrita, Justine, Joanna, and Christina. A big round of applause for them. Thank you so much. Thank you, Nigel. Thank you, Ian. The session is adjourned. Enjoy your coffee.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]