
ICANN82 | CF – At-Large Plenary 2: SubPro's Promise and the New gTLD Round
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MICHELLE DESMYTER

Hello and welcome, everyone, to the At-Large Plenary 2: SubPro's Promise and the New gTLD Round. My name is Michelle DeSmyter, and I'm the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session today is being recorded and 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 within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session today will include English, French, and Spanish. If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom, on-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English. And please speak at a reasonable pace.

If you are going to use the headsets today, just a kind reminder to leave your translation receiver sitting out and not covered so it translates properly and you can hear properly as well. I will now hand the floor over to Avri Doria, CPWG Co-Chair.

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AVRI DORIA

Thank you. My name is Avri Doria. I'll be speaking a version of English, sometimes it corresponds, sometimes it doesn't. Okay. Let me introduce the session. We're basically going to-- And actually, let me just go to the first slide. So, the next slide, please.

So, basically the introduction to the session, and various people have worried about this, but basically as the plans for the New gTLDs are finalizing, people are going back, I certainly went back, and looking at conversations we've had. Now, looking at understandings that developed during those conversations, and as we're reviewing the application guidebook, the AGB and all those things, the questions are every time, in fact, we'll see a list of the issues that At-Large ALAC sent to the Board, to the team, to the others, about issues and concerns they had with the new program, a year early, two years early.

And pretty much we were always told, and in fact, I was guilty of doing the same thing myself in another life, it'll be okay, we're going to take care of it, it'll be fine, you'll be happy, you'll be satisfied. And as I look around, I think that's probably the truth, and probably the case. But really wanted to open up the questions so that everybody could sort of look at it and such.

So, we took a possible topics, were taken from comments, from communications, we did a poll among the members of the Consolidated Policy Working Group and the Operations Finance and Budget, did I get the words right, group, and polled all of them to see which were the issues, the top three issues, and in a bit I'll show you just the whole list so you know, top three issues of the

communications they sent along the year, and then we took the top two, because we wanted to give about half hour to each topic.

So, within of each of the two topics that we picked, first there'll be a three-minute introduction, and you'll see there's very tight timings on everything here. Three minutes for the topic to be introduced. Three minutes for someone who thinks that, yeah, it was taken care of, they did a really good job, we're happy. Three minutes for someone that's going, I'm not so sure, let me look at it, let's talk about it. Then a 10-minute open discussion with, I will ask everybody to try and stick to one minute. We're going to have timers, so it'll be easier to try and stick to the minute.

Then after that 10 minutes, again give the chance to the person that said, no, it's worrisome, it's not working out quite as we hoped. Get another minute to either say, I was wrong, I agree, everybody's right, this is working out great, or to reinforce their no. Same thing with the person that was saying, yes, it's working out great, and nothing I've heard changes my mind. And then the person that introduced the topic will get to close the question with another three minutes. Then there'll be two subjects and then there'll be a recap at the end.

Now going to the next slide, please, just so you could see what the topics were. So, as we did the polling, two topics hit, probably got the most votes and they were fairly close. One was DNS Abuse, has enough been done? A lot has been done, we are constantly having meetings telling us about everything that's being done. Has enough been done? So, that'll be the question. The other one that

came up as a lead was applicant support, have we made it sufficiently accessible? And we'll have both the proponent and next. You can just see the rest of the topics there that correspond to correspondence that came from At-Large or ALAC to the various folks.

Next slide, please, just so you can see. So, the first topic, and we'll get right back to it, is the discussion around DNS Abuse and the New gTLD Round. Introducing the question is Hadia Elminiawi. And then the proponent that says it's going good is Olivier, the no is Cheryl, open discussion. And then we'll come back to Cheryl, we'll come back to Olivier, we'll come back to Hadia.

Just so you can see the second topic before we start, the second topic relating to the applicant support, it'll be introduced by Joanna. The pro will be Cheryl, the no will be Maureen. And it's no, no can be just I've got doubts. It doesn't have to be absolute no. An open discussion again, minute each, and then come back to Maureen, come back to Cheryl, and then let Joanna close it.

And then finally, Jonathan. And Jonathan, will you be doing the Mentimeter or...? Okay. So, Jonathan's going to run a Mentimeter on these, sort of ask the question at the beginning, the pro and the con, just to get the group's feeling on it. And then also look at it at the end and see if anything has changed in the attitudes.

And this is more sort of the everything is being done that was on the list. Everything is being done really well by the people working in the IRTs, both on the community side and on the staff side. All the boxes will certainly be checked. What this is looking to avoid is

that feeling that, well, yeah, everything got done, but, and to try and catch all those butts. So, with that, let's go to this first one, the discussion around DNS Abuse. And these will all be timed. And Hadia. Yes, the floor is yours.

HADIA ELMINIAMI

Thank you, Avri. This is Hadia for the record. So, let's start the introduction of the topic by defining DNS Abuse. So, DNS Abuse, as defined by the ICANN community, refers to botnet, smallware, farming, phishing, and spam, when spam serves as a delivery mechanism for the forms of DNS Abuse listed.

To that end, ICANN org and the community have been trying to mitigate DNS Abuse through various initiatives and programs, including amendments to the Registrar Accreditation Agreement and the Base Generic Top-Level Domains Registry Agreement, regarding DNS Abuse. They have introduced mitigation obligations and enforced compliance.

ICANN Domain Metrica, which aims to improve the way domain data is captured, measured, and analyzed. It is built to evolve over time to incorporate new data sources, measurement methodologies, and metrics. ICANN's Identifier Technology Health Indicator, which provides a way to analyze trends in DNS security threats for the community. A lot of capacity development and training. Last November, ICANN published the Informal Report, which is a project aimed at exploring an attacker's preferences regarding DNS Abuse.

The findings of the report show that bulk registrations play a role in DNS Abuse. So currently, ICANN agreements and policies do not contain requirements or limitations related to registering domain names in bulk. Registrars and TLDs, the findings also included that registrars and TLDs with stringent verification processes tend to experience lower rates of malicious registrations. This topic could be related to accuracy as well as verification. Findings include lower registration costs may attract cyber criminals operating on tight budgets. The findings also include that swift responses to abuse reports and the implementation of effective security measurements contribute to reducing the lifespan and impact of malicious domain.

So, to kick off the discussion, do you believe the current efforts to combat DNS Abuse are sufficient or is more action needed? With that, I stop and hand it to Olivier.

AVRI DORIA

Yeah, while you're starting up it. Please, we don't have to wait for this to stop. Just go ahead.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Sorry. So, this is a survey to see where we are, a baseline, before the debate. So go to the QR code on your phone or your laptop and you can use, if you can read it, join at menti.com user code up there if you're using a laptop. And then vote on your phone, but don't close the app because we're going to be coming back and doing the survey again throughout.

AVRI DORIA

Please, Olivier.

OLIVIER CREPIN-LEBLOND

Thank you very much, Avri. Olivier Crepin-Leblond speaking. And I should really start by saying that it took three minutes, nearly three minutes, with barely 10 seconds left for my dear friend, Hadia-- Good, good, I can talk more. For my good friend, Hadia, to be able to enumerate all the different things that are happening about DNS Abuse.

And in fact, she didn't mention all of them. She didn't mention the DNS Abuse Institute, which is now NetBeacon, that is a single location where you can go and point out issues of DNS Abuse. There's a whole range of other actors that are tracking DNS Abuse out there. Not-for-profits and also companies. Law enforcement, when you compare it now to what it was like in 2012, is a lot more clued up today. And in fact, all actors are a lot more clued up today about DNS Abuse.

Now, of course, it's been what? It's been more than 10 years. It's going to be about 14 years until the Next Round of new generic top-level domain applications. And the question that we have to ask ourselves is how long more do we need an absolutely perfect system where we will have turned every single rock, every single problem, and actually totally fixed it before we move forward with a Next Round? Or are we okay with what we have? Is what we have today okay, good enough for us to be able to proceed forward?

Yes, we can always do better. It's obvious, we can always do better. There's always more to do. But we cannot just say, let's stop everything and let's wait until we get everything absolutely perfect. Because you have to remember, perfection is the enemy of the good. Because it will just delay us further and we'll end up not achieving anything at the end. So, my point is, I think it's time for us to proceed forward with the Next Round. And as far as DNS Abuse is concerned, we might have not completely stamped it out, but we have definitely made some great progress about it. And I think we need to realize that. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Cheryl, please.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Thank you, Avri. Rose-tinted glasses, perhaps, down at the other end of the table. I'm speaking on the no on this. And I've put a few years into this area of new gTLDs. And I want to take a note out of something that was said in Pari's excellent earlier plenary by David Lawrence, where he said bad people do bad things. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that's very, very true. Bad people do do bad things. And enough of them are exploiting the already expanded, dare I say, bloated new space.

And the concept of offering more opportunity for more malicious, and particularly those things around bulk registration, seems farcical, if not fantastical thinking. I mean, for heaven's sake, people, if I was to read you out, and I don't have the time to do so,

but do do a little Google search, on the discussion of the review of new gTLD programs, safeguards against DNS Abuse, before a new round. Please note, the date on that report is 2016. It was before the Consumer Choice and Trust Review. It was before the last new round. And even one fifth of the things that were recommended in there, if they had been implemented, I might be feeling a tiny bit more secure about it.

But right now, I do believe we need to look at ways where it's not a matter of response to a report of damage and harm being done to the end user. We need to find a way, before we bloat this system any further, to be proactive and minimise harms and minimise risks. I don't need three minutes to say why this is wrong. We are not ready yet. Back to you, ma'am.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Now we go into an open discussion, a minute each. All of you can speak on. I have to get the hand thing up. A question was passed to me, a question from Edmon. Who is we in this question? We as each of you. You can answer for you. You can answer for the general we that you happen to hang out with. You can answer for we, if it's your constituency you like to speak for. Do you think it's been taken care of? Do we think so, collectively, as perhaps what we're looking for? So, are there hands? I need to get the-- We have a hand from, Jonathan, please.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yes, and thank you, Olivier and Cheryl, for your helping to frame this issue, and Hadia. Olivier, I think, raises a good point, which is there's no such thing as perfection. And so that can't be the threshold. But I guess I would ask, then, what is the threshold? Because the reverse could be said, that, well, because it can never be perfect, why should we do anything? How do we decide when enough is being done? And as Cheryl suggested, as long as there's something sort of obvious that can be done, then that feels like we haven't met the threshold. It's all about diminishing returns, but as long as the returns have the potential to be substantial, it feels like there's still more that could be done. That's my observation from the two sides you presented.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Do I have any other hands up? There's really no one that wants to comment on this. There's a roving mic, too for anyone that's there. Oh, okay. Satish, please.

SATISH BABU

Thanks very much, Avri, and for the presenters, also. So, one concern I have is that the way this thing is framed, it is as if this is a static target, whereas in real life, the situation is changing all over the place, new threats are emerging. So, things are never, ever done. This is a journey. It's not a destination. And from that perspective, I think to frame it as have we done enough is a very static perspective, in my opinion. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. But just a question, if I can explain it while I'm looking for more hands, is have we done enough for starting the round? Is really, for anyone that's looking at, have we done enough for all eternity, true? Might be a much more difficult question. But have we done enough now? Because there had been various people that sort of said, can't do another round until we've taken care of. So, now we're about to do another round. We look like we're getting close to ready, but have we done enough? But thank you for that. I have a hand from Elaine, please.

ELAINE PRIUS

Thank you. Elaine Prius for the record, and I'm speaking in my personal capacity, not on behalf of my company. I want to tell you a little story about something that happened in the past. So, I had been talking with some legislators in the European Union, and they asked me, "How do we drive abuse to zero?" And I said, "We all go to heaven, because we live on an earth where there are people who do bad things." So, I think this question about the threshold is super important.

Also, I'd like to point out that ages ago, when I was a ccTLD registry operator, we had roving abuse, where abuse would show up at a TLD, and there would be takedowns, and it would be dealt with, and then it would show up somewhere else. So, I really question the validity of the argument that more TLDs means more abuse. I think maybe it might be harder to keep track of where it is, but I don't think the volume of abuse is dependent on the number of TLDs.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. And next, I have Alan.

ALAN GREENBERG

Thank you. My opinion is pretty simple. I don't think we've done enough. The reason why is, if you look at the list of things that we've done, they've all happened in the last year or so. If we had started in the 2016 report, or at the last round, or when the review was done, which showed that there were some TLDs that had huge amounts of abuse for various obvious reasons, and if we had started then, and continued every year adding something to it, then I think we would have done enough. But we just didn't start soon enough, and we're nowhere near where we should be. Is that going to stop anyone from launching a new round? No. But it's really a shame, and I don't think it's a good mark on ICANN that we've taken this long to start doing something. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Forgive me for having left my microphone on. Claire, please.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thanks. Claire Craig for the record. So, listening to the two sides of the conversation, it appears that things have been happening. However, this is a moving target. And so, whether it is have we done enough to be able to open the round, it's whether we continue to move forward in doing what we need to do,

recognizing that the round is open. That's where I sit right now, because, yes, things have been done, but are we continuing, and are we moving fast enough into the future, because this is an existential threat that we need to be concerned about moving forward. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. You even got an applause. I don't have any other hands at the moment. Sure, ask a question. Oh, there's a physical hand. Sure, you want to ask your question, and then-- Yes, I know, Martin. Sure. Just because you gave a little thing before, you could still speak again, but quickly.

OLIVIER CREPIN-LEBLOND

All right. Thank you. Olivier Crepin-Leblond speaking. So, the question I have is, for those people that want more done, do you actually even have a list of what you would like done? Because if you don't have a list, then we don't really know how much more you want. And if you want more and more and more, are any of these actual realizable expectations, or are you just imagining that the world can be all peaceful and happy?

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. The world can be peaceful and happy. Martin, please.

MARTIN SUTTON

Martin Sutton, TLDs. So, I was going to say something similar there in terms of what is it that needs to be done still on the wish list, but

also, it's going to be at least another three years before some of the new ones are delegated. If there's been action the last year, two years, that's been really positive, there's a lot more to come in the next three years as well.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Alan, your hand is still up. Did you have something else you wanted to say?

ALAN GREENBERG

No, my hand is up again.

AVRI DORIA

Excuse me. Please, Alan.

ALAN GREENBERG

Thank you. Yes, we still have a couple of years, or several years. The question is, will we do anything in those, or will we sit back and say, well, we put the things in the RAA, and we're talking about it, and we have a report. So, will anything actually get done? If I had to predict, I'd say no. In terms of a list, this group has talked for the last year, or close to a year, on the issue of bulk registrations. The last I heard a couple of days ago is, well, we're not really ready for a PDP. We should do some more talking, and whatever, and then hand-waving, and then we'll start a PDP. It will take two years. So, we have three years, perhaps. Are we actually going to do anything in it?

AVRI DORIA

Thank you.

NATALIE TERCOVA

Thank you so much. This is Natilie Tercova for the record. I just want to say that, actually, I believe we can learn all something from the format of the session, when we all voted on what is the most crucial and hot topic we feel that should be addressed, looking ahead, and being like, oh, we have the list. The list can be very long, and extensive, and exhausting. And, of course, as technologies progress, probably new fears and ghosts are appearing, slowly, but certainly.

So, maybe also looking at, and speaking from an academic perspective, again, what are the main research gaps, or maybe the hot topics that really, really need to be addressed in future rounds, and future reports, and addressing, like, okay, these three are really, really important, because, and because of that. And then, making sure we do address them, and then moving forward, could be, maybe, a very simple way of thinking about this issue, but I think it can help us see things with a silver lining, that this is not just a big, terrible cloud full of, yeah, just bad things. Thank you so much.

AVRI DORIA

Sorry, thank you. Okay, Pari, please, and then the mic goes to that there. Thanks.

PARI ESFANDIARI

So, I think the fact that we don't have a list, a good indication that we are not ready, because we need to investigate, have a list, prioritize. And since we haven't done any of that, that's quite clear that we are not ready to go forward. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. We've got a mic back there, yeah. And then, I have Kathleen with a hand up afterwards.

GISELLA GRUBER

And just while I've got the mic, Gisella for the record, please state your name every time you speak. Our interpreters, otherwise, are not able to say who's speaking. Thank you very much.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. I should have remembered to say that every time.

SETONDJH HOUNZANDJI

Okay. My name is Setondji Hounzandji. I'm sorry, I would like to speak in French. I'm going to speak in French. I hope you can hear me. Very well. So, what I wanted to say, I'll be brief. Many things were already said, and I agree with that and those elements, but I think that when we talk about DNS Abuse, two years ago, we didn't talk about the ChatGPT, and we didn't talk about DeepSeek. Now, we have those AI elements. And tomorrow, we're going after new technologies that are going to arrive. And I would say, DNS Abuse

will never end, and we have to look at those new technologies as well. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Sorry again. Kathleen, and you'll be the last one in this section before we go to the closing on this topic.

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Hi. Kathleen Scoggin for the record. I guess I have more of a question than a comment. There are certain gTLDs released in 2012 that have been identified to have 70%—I don't know if this is a random number I'm throwing out. I wish I had it in front of me, but I don't—of instances of DNS Abuse. And we have mechanisms to take down those individual secondary domains, but I guess I want to better understand ICANN's ability to-- any sort of recourse, and whether there's a threshold for a gTLD if they have 80% DNS Abuse, and we've identified that. What do we do? Do we just keep that active and continue to be able to use it, even though we've identified that? I guess I just don't maybe have the information, but would love to know more.

AVRI DORIA

Yes, Jonathan?

JONATHAN ZUCK

I just thought I'd answer, because we actually held a session during the pandemic about thresholds and the possibility of implementing a threshold for abuse. The pushback at the time

from the registrars in particular was that it could be susceptible to a registrar being targeted or something like that for abuse, particularly to get them, have an enforcement action against them.

So, I think at this moment, it stands as an unresolved issue, but it has come on and off of the table, including with some support. At one point, Graeme at Tucows, when he was still at Tucows, was supportive of the idea. I think there just isn't a solid idea how to protect them from targeting them. I'd push them above that threshold temporarily or something like that. That was the issue that came up at the time.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. This is Avri again. Okay, so now we'll go to the sort of conclusion part of this and start with Cheryl, who gave us an argument why it wasn't quite enough. Have you changed your mind?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Well, Avri, I'm feeling slightly less concerned than when I started because I hear that we do have some time. Thank you, Martin. And I do recognise that if we get some of our thresholds and our capabilities sorted and recognised, that providing the work is actually done, then there may be greater safeguards in place for the end user, who is, after all, a victim of all of this DNS Abuse. But just let's make sure we don't take our fingers off the pressure points here.

Because I am very well aware, obviously, that this is a train that we're not going to stop. It's a huge diesel. It's moving along a track. And the New gTLD round will occur. And it will occur on time. I'm trying to help that actually happen. But what we do need to do is make sure this extremely risky part of the equation is not left for too late, as it clearly was last time round.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. And Olivier, please, have you still confident? Are you still confident?

OLIVIER CREPIN-LEBLOND

Thank you, Avri. It's Olivier Crepin-Leblond speaking. And I'm still, I'm quite confident with what I've heard today that this is indeed a moving train. This is indeed something that is not going to stop. And we are always, there's new technologies, as Setondji has mentioned to us. And so, we'll always have new challenges in front of us. And we can't just stop innovation. We can't stop the future because we're scared of the future. We have to deal with it.

So, as Martin has very much said, there's still a few years until the Next Round actually will generate some new top-level domains launched on the Internet. We still have plenty of work to do and plenty of time to do work on that. And that will also not mean the end. Work will continue after that time as well. It's an ongoing system where as long as we don't drop the ball and say we don't need to do any more about DNS Abuse, I would be happy to say I'm

happy at the moment that we proceed forward as long as we continue the work.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. And you'll notice that the Menti is already up there for people to indicate their answers. And I'd like to go to Hadia to sort of wrap us up on this first topic.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Okay. Thank you, Avri. And this is Hadia for the record. So, I will list some of the cons and the pros that were mentioned during the debate. So, the people that were saying yes, we have done enough. That doesn't mean that's the end, of course. Some of the arguments mentioned. Now the ecosystem includes many other actors. NetBeacon is one, law enforcement and others. There is no such thing as perfection. This is a moving target. This is not a static target. It's a journey and not a destination.

And we, of course, in at least one of the arguments raised that all what we have done has actually been during the past couple of years. But this also can be regarded as a plus and not a minus because we will not have any new delegations to the route before three years. And if we have done that much in the past couple of years, then we can definitely do more in the upcoming three years.

Some of the people who said no, well, the arguments included, of course, that it's not a matter about responding to complaints. It's a matter of being proactive, that we have not done much since 2016. But most of what we have done is just during the past couple

of years. It's an existential threat. So, are we actually ready to move ahead with such risks? Not having a list of the items or the actions that we want to do is in itself an indication that we are not ready and that there is no threshold for abuse for the TLDs, for the abuse observed in TLDs.

There was a mention to bulk registrations and will we be able to do something within the upcoming years. But generally speaking, the sense was technology is advancing the future. We cannot stop the future. We cannot stop and let's move ahead and while taking into account that we are able always to improve and introduce more actions as we have done in the past couple of years.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you, Avri speaking. Thank you, Hadia. Thank you to all of you that commented. Thank you to all of you that did the Menti. I am slightly concerned that there was a disproportionate set of numbers, which means a lot of people have concerns that they didn't speak of, that they didn't raise their hands on. So, as time goes on, hopefully those of you will be able to sort of get your assurances or make your comments. So, that people have heard them because there were 18 people that didn't, if I got the numbers right, there were 18 people that didn't.

But let's move on to that and thank you for that and I hope it was useful in terms of thinking about this and go on to the next question, which is applicant support and the New gTLD Round.

Have we done enough to make it inclusive? Is it ready? So, I go to Joanna to sort of introduce us to the question.

JOANNA KULESZA

Thank you, Avri. This is Joanna Kulesza for transcription purposes. I get the easy job of trying to present the facts. It's challenging because there's a lot of facts to consider. I was authorized to say that the reason why we're looking at the Applicant Support Program in this session is because in the last round it was, and this is the authorized word, a failure. So, building upon that failure, the question is whether the current Applicant Support Program as it stands lives up to its expectations.

For those in the room who might be a little bit confused by the name itself, please let me reiterate the Applicant Support Program is designed to make sure that underserved communities get a fair chance to submit their application. Because the At-Large is all about metrics and numbers, please let me also remind everyone in the room we're looking at a substantial amount of \$227,000 for submitting an application and the Applicant Support Program is a way to alleviate that burden.

If we have historians in the room, it was \$185,000 in the previous round. So, that is a significant increase. Based on what was said during the last two days, three days, we are looking at potential 25 applications within the Applicant Support Program. So, as we debate, we might wish to decide if that is the number we are aiming for.

Now, the substantial policy part that my task here is to review is relatively easy, as already said, because the At-Large community represented by the ALAC together with the GAG submitted a joint position on the Applicant Support Program roughly a year ago. So, we were well in time to make sure that the program meets joint expectations from both communities.

The document is for you to review. I will refrain from referencing it in much detail, but I will use the remaining minute just to highlight that that document included four crucial points and we will try to address them as we progress. The initial task for the program was to alleviate the financial burden on the applicants through the program itself. We were looking to prioritize outreach to applicants from globally underserved regions. We have sworn in that document a commitment to apply a holistic approach to facilitate adequate and needed support. That's the metric we're looking for here.

And last but not least, we want these people to stick around. We don't want them just to apply, use the Applicant Support Program and then possibly face challenges. The fourth item was to make sure that the Applicant Support Program supports the applicants throughout the lifetime of that domain. And that's almost perfectly, there we go, three minutes. And I give the floor back to, I think, Jonathan for the Mentimeter. Is that how it goes?

AVRI DORIA

Probably a good idea, but just put up, I don't know that there's a need to introduce the topic again. And thank you. It's Avri

speaking again. And why don't we move on to the proponents who believes that the Applicant Support Program is fulfilling its promise. And I've got Cheryl on that one. Thank you.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Thank you, Avri. Cheryl Langdon-Orr for the record. It's good to be on the yes side this time, but that's okay. Well, look, I was also part of the original, along with Avri and various others around the table here today, involved in the original Applicant Support Program, which was an abysmal failure and really could be classified as simply too little too late. Although we did get a lovely badge. So, Avri, I don't know whether you've still got your badge, but there's the original applicant support community badge. So, that was helpful, wasn't it?

Anyway, that being said, this time around, the commitment that community have made and working with the very talented and very committed ICANN staff on creating an Applicant Support Guidebook on opening 12 months before the possibility for applications is going to even start. So, we have people who will be pre-prepared, who will be able to have already since November last year get access to the resourcing and explore the possibilities of their underserved community, be that one of the particular parts. It could be a community of interest. It could be a diaspora. Whatever it is, that they have this opportunity to be part of the new names Next Round.

If indeed the extraordinary efforts that have been made by the outreach and engagement team are going to be bringing the fruit

fully through the process, and I think that's where the 28 comes in. I think we've already had that many nibbles. The extraordinary work setting the metrics and the guidelines and what is or is not a measure of success done by a particular policy process, a shortened policy process. I won't bore you with all of that. There's yet more acronyms involved. What they were hoping for was a mere 10 supported applicants to get through. We believe out of the Applicant Support Program work that we should be able to run with as many as 40 or 45, and we've already had 28 nibbles. So, this is good.

The commitment to the work is there. There is no reason why this should fail. Is it going as wide as it possibly could? Perhaps not, but that's all about resource management. Let's see that this Applicant Support Program is a success so the next and the next and the next following it is equally successful. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Avri speaking. Thank you, Cheryl. And now move on to Maureen who has a different view.

MAUREEN HILYARD

A different one. Thank you. Maureen for the record. As I mentioned earlier in the week, I was on the GGP and we felt very strongly that ICANN must make sure that this time round they gave special attention to any prospective new applicants requiring support, especially those in underserved regions.

And while we applaud the fact that they are focusing on these regions at this time, ICANN's outreach into such unfamiliar territory is painfully obvious. The GGP felt that it was important that the targeted group was given more information and more time to absorb it about New gTLDs, why it was important for the new round, and that they learned about the availability of the Applicant Support Program within a realistic time frame. And we'd suggested about 24 months before the actual application window opened.

But to make up for the shortened time frame, of course, of 12 months, ICANN has produced a toolkit to get this important information out to the masses. However, I feel that this also falls short of being an effective tool. Firstly, it's full of ICANN speak. Its language is not directed to the level of understanding by many even aspiring domain name owners from underserved regions who may not speak or write in English. More particularly, it doesn't explain the actual reality of the ongoing financial and technical obligations of a domain registry, although it is mentioned, but very briefly.

But notwithstanding the \$227,000 for their initial application fee, despite the promise of a discount should they qualify for applicant support, there's also the reality of the financial depth that's required to keep their registry operational for at least three years. And there was a backup sum of about \$5 million that was sort of like seen as a requirement for this.

Now, I question a group of ccTLD managers in the Pacific, a developing region, to ascertain their potential interest in the Applicant Support Program. And I must admit that I have to attribute their complete lack of response to perhaps two reasons. Firstly, our ccTLD managers in the Pacific region are usually the only registry on a small island nation. And most are experiencing difficulties themselves, especially in relation to general management of their operations, as well as in managing the increasing online harms that their users are being exposed to. So, their ccTLD is their priority.

Secondly, New gTLDs are not going to make much impact in regions such as the Pacific when social media and the immediacy of access to information makes websites and domain names almost redundant to many internet users in the region. So, unless ICANN can overcome these issues and get the messages out about any value that New gTLDs will bring to their region within only 12 months to identify and appropriately inform and educate any potential applicants who may actually have the wherewithal to apply for a domain name anyway, with or without applicant support, it's far too little and far too late.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avri speaking again. So, now we go into the open discussion. Sorry, I've got to get to now where I can see hands. Got to keep changing screens. Okay, I don't see any hands. Either come speak to a microphone or remember to introduce yourself.

MARTIN SUTTON

It's Martin Sutton from TLDs. So, I was kind of wondering how to answer this pre-debate, but one of the things that I think is valid is that there has been a considerably more amount done in preparation for Applicant Support Program this time around, so it is significantly better. But unfortunately, I think before or after the outputs for applicant support and the window opening, there's other additions that have come through on the Applicant Guidebook that do concern me in the way that they could affect potential applicants, in particular ASP applicants, and that's the refund levels, so that if they do end up in contention sets and do not feel comfortable about going forward, there is a much lower amount of refund, so they lose a lot more out of that pocket.

Last time around, it was 85% refund. Now ICANN have said that after some debate, they pushed it up from 45% to 65%. That's still a deterrent, so it's unfortunate. So, that's why I have sort of hesitancy in saying that it's much more towards the yes that's done well, and I hesitate a bit because of the deterrents that are coming through.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avri speaking. Sergio.

SERGIO SALINAS-PORTO

I'm going to speak Spanish. Please have your headphones. Thank you, Avri, for giving me the floor. The other day, I was mentioning something that Maureen very cleverly and smartly mentioned.

This is Sergio Salinas-Porto for the record. I'm concerned, very concerned about several topics, but one of them is the following. Let me tell you what happens in South America.

Our SMEs are not defined by the financial or economic volume, but rather by the number of people that are part of that company. In the case of Argentina, up to 50 people that have a company, these are acknowledged as an SME. More than 50 people is a big company. When they put up a limit of \$50 million, that is where I should reread this because Eunice told me that it was up to \$5 million. Maybe it was my mistake, and I could have misunderstood the English drafting, but that excess in the number, the amount of money that is requested as a basis is a concern for me because we will not be able to foster any company, at least in Argentina or in the southern area, to be an applicant.

It's like a trick, correct? Because we are not measuring things as they are measured up in developing countries, and we are not taking into account this measurement. We are taking the measurements of developed countries and not developing countries. We should take this into account for small islands or the countries in the region, in the Caribbean, that have the same problem that we do. We should have something that takes into account this issue so that they can apply. Thank you very much.

AVRI DORIA

Next, please, yeah.

SETONDJI HOUNZANDJI

Okay, thank you. I'm going to speak in French. My name is Setondji. I have only 60 seconds, so I'll be quick. And I have an opinion and a question. I am from Africa. You can see it. I am from Africa. We were told it was \$227,000, but when you choose that, you have 25% off rebate of 25%. That's about \$30,000, and in my money, my currency, it's 20 million CFA francs. That's, for me, impossible, those 20 millions in my currency.

But my question would be, it might be a surprising question, do you think that when I produce, should I sell it at the same price everywhere on the planet? I have to take into account the price, in the price of how you can sell it in each and every country of the world. This is just a question I'm sending to you. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you very much. And now I guess it's Sebastien. I think that's the guy with the hat.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much. Sebastien Bachollet, speaking in French. We have kind of a game around those New gTLD. It's for rich people. It's for the rich. If you have no money, you cannot play that game. And we saw it the last time around, during the first round. The rich ones became richer and richer because they play the game. They know how to play the game. And they do those private auctions. So, they play with their money and with our money as well. Because finally, the money they have is what we give them to buy domain names. So maybe we should stop that

and give extensions to organizations that do really need it. So, we are an organization that supports rich people. And maybe I am against capitalism at ICANN. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you very much, Sebastien. Now I look at hands, and I've got four hands up, which will probably be the end of the queue. But we'll see. Jonathan, please.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks, Avri, and thanks to everyone for participating in this conversation. There's a lot of issues with this. I served on the CCT review, and we had to look at the success of the Applicant Support Program. And it's easy to say that it failed because it didn't result in very many applications and only resulted 10 years later with the help of .Asia in one successful application. But the problem is we'll never truly know whether or not what we saw was a lack of demand or not enough help or what Sebastien and Sergio are getting to, which is, is there a bias in the system away from the types of applicants that we're really looking to see.

Part of what we've done is wire the system in such a way that you have to have this high overhead in order to run a string. But given that there's already an infrastructure in place with registry service providers, it feels as though there might be a way to say that there's different types of some percentage of registered service provider work should be for lower income operators so that you don't need these same minimums in order to participate.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avri speaking. And next I go to Edmon Chung, please.

EDMON CHUNG

Thank you, Avri. Edmon here. And thank you, Jonathan, for talking about .Asia. But here I will speak as ISOC Hong Kong since we were At-Large. I just want to quickly respond to Sergio. I think the requirement is actually an organization that has less than \$5 million as income, so smaller organizations, not that they have to reach that in order to get it. So just clarify that.

But on the issue whether the current program is good enough, I think the key problem is still on what was raised in terms of the refund, or if they apply and they are in contention, there's just no way that they can beat out the commercial ones. There is a way to have a secondary string, but why don't you just let them pick another string from that's not contended? I think it's as simple as that. I don't know why it's not included. And finally, if they have zero money times a multiplier, it's still zero. So, a multiplier doesn't work for that. It's just a fake issue, a fake handout as a multiplier, I think.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avri speaking again. And next I have Raihanath. And forgive me if I didn't pronounce correctly.

RAIHANATH GBADAMASSI

I'm going to be speaking French. I think this debate is very important, but I think we're forgetting something. We need to recognize, to appreciate the efforts that have been done to help applicants, but the target of the program was not respected. Maureen said it earlier. The program is planned to, conceived to help underserved communities. But take a look at the reality. How can you help people with a program they cannot even join? And the risk is that some people will join the program, and then they will leave it. They will abandon it. What will have the program been useful for?

If you want to help people, we need to lower the level. You cannot stay at the top and say that you want to help people which are at the lowest level and who are not able to join the program. So, we need to revise this program. Otherwise, this new round will be a failure again, because few people will be able to join it, and those who will have joined it will leave it because of financial reasons.

AVRI DORIA

Last one in this particular discussion. Lance, please.

LANCE HINDS

Thank you, Chair. Point one, the underserved is varied all the way through, so the reality is that in certain cases, this will not work. And let's face that. What you have in the underserved, if you've got some who are emerging, and I say that because here's an interesting example of what happens. In the Caribbean, there are a few companies that would not mind looking at a brand TLD as

part of their marketing and their branding, similar to what .Amazon would look like.

The interesting thing, though, is that they make over \$5 million, and there is no provision for them to be able to have a chance except to pay the full \$200,000 amount. So, in future rounds, a little more flexibility might be useful to accommodate those kinds of companies. Just a thought in terms of how that works. Fundamentally, this has always been a money spinner for the big boys. No matter how much you slice it, no matter how much you do it, chances are it's going to continue being that way. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avri speaking. And now we'll go to the post-group discussion, and I go back to Maureen and see if your view has at all changed.

MAUREEN HILYARD

Sort of, no. One of the things that I found really interesting, and I'm glad Jonathan mentioned it, was the little information that's actually been given out about the successful application last time, and that was due to a partnership between an applicant and an already established registry. And that partnership is still in existence and .Asia is providing support for .kids until such time as they can actually take it over themselves. Why has that not been promoted? That's alarming. Thanks.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you, Avri speaking, and Cheryl, please, have you changed your view at all?

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Cheryl Langdon-Orr for the record. No, I have not changed my view. I still believe that the work that has been done, what's been put in, what is likely to be able to be implemented is a good best effort for where we are now. We can build upon this, provided it is successful. And I don't deny any of the concerns, and I certainly think if we had a perfect world and unlimited funds, we could possibly do better, but we have to start somewhere, and this is a damnably good start. Thank you.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you, Avri speaking, and back to you, Joanna, for a recap, a summary.

JOANNA KULESZA

Thank you. A minute's recap, I think, should reflect the general concern. I was counting the votes, assured of Cheryl, who was given the most difficult task of defending the program as it stands. I believe there were no other voices of support. This session was framed as a promise, a review of a promise. Has the program delivered what was promised?

I will refrain from summarizing the individual arguments. Maureen has done that at the very beginning, and I believe we've heard more. We have not lived up to that promise yet, but because Cheryl

has taken on the difficult task to try and give us a little bit of sunshine on that very dark scenario, maybe there is a chance for us to do better. So, I'll close it with that. Thank you very much.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you, Avri speaking. And thank you all for voicing your comment on that. Jonathan, I go to you, and then afterwards I'll have a couple words of summing up.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Lots of summarizing. Thanks, Avri, for organizing this. I think it was a very good idea to look at this idea of promises because if you look across the community, the ICANN community, the expectations from the round probably vary considerably, in terms of what different groups want out of the round and what different groups believe the justification for the round might be. And so given that variation, that's sort of the context in which these promises get made.

Part of why both of these issues were interesting, I think, is because they're both kind of non-linear, non-threshold based. In other words, ultimately, we're going to measure the success of the Applicant Support Program on whether or not there are new strings added to the route from other than the usual suspects. And so that may mean that we're going to need to do a complete, as Lance suggested, as we move along, it might be evolutionary. We may need to revamp this entirely to make sure that that happens. Because right now if we have too much of a bias in the system

against gaming the system, then it blocks too many people out. And this is certainly an attempt to improve on that bias, but it may still persist and exist inside of the program.

So, it's sort of non-linear in that way in that we won't really know what the cause is unless we're able to look at applications that come in and understand why they're unsuccessful. So, that remains to be seen. And the same thing with the DNS Abuse topic. It's non-linear in that it doesn't have a finite success characteristic. I will say that one of the aspects associated with a new round is an openness for change that might not necessarily exist at other times.

And this was part of the point that Alan was getting to, that there's a sort of an impetus for change that happens around the new rounds. And so that's why there's a flurry of activity at this point because there's changes to the standard registry agreements that are being negotiated right now. There was a lot of additions to the standard agreements, registry and registrar agreements, before the 2012 round. And so, there's this idea, well, the folks that normally get their way have something they want right now, and that's an opportunity to come up and really push things that have been languishing across the threshold.

And so that's why we ask whether or not enough has been done for this round as opposed to, in some absolute sense, asking whether enough is done. Have we created an environment conducive to this continuous evolution and improvement that everyone

promises? Might be the other question we have to ask ourselves. Hope that's helpful.

AVRI DORIA

Thank you. Avi Doria speaking. I really, first of all, want to thank you all for taking part in this, what was very much an experiment. And it was an experiment based partially on the idea that Jonathan already mentioned, is that everybody is working really hard. Everybody is doing really good work. We've got programs. We've got lists of things that are all getting done. They're being done excellently.

And yet, one of the things that I worry about, even in this environment, we have such a disparity between those who are really satisfied with what's going on and sort of that silent number that-- And one of the things that has worried me through the program is having watched years of people working hard with open hearts, genuinely trying to fulfill the mission. And yet, to then find ourselves in a day when it has all come to pass, it's all working, and people are not happy and we don't understand why. Because we look at it and say, everybody did what they were supposed to do.

Oops, it was my own timer. Except me, yeah. Yeah, never mind. But anyhow, and that's really one of the things that's been concerning me is I see people working hard and putting long hours, whether it's on the policymaking side, or the implementation side. And whenever somebody asks me about implementation review teams, I rave on them because I think it's one of the best inventions

that we've had in a long time. So, I'm really amazed at the work that everyone does, but I'm really concerned that somehow we're not connecting with the 11 to 2, or the 12 to 9, whatever the numbers are. I forget the first numbers. And that's the thing that worries me.

And so came up with this idea, and I'm very grateful to ALAC and At Large for letting me try to put it together. I hope the experiment works. I hope we do this more because we do have an obligation both to meet all the requirements that we can write down, but at the end of the day, we really do want people to be happy. We want people to feel that what needed to be done was done. Never going to be 100%, but the proportion should be on the side of happy and satisfied.

So, I thank you all for putting up with it, for participating, for speaking your minds, and those of you that are in the proportion that are not happy, but that didn't speak your mind, think about it next time. Speak your mind, especially in an open environment like this. It's important. Don't wait until the end of the day and say, oh, I'm bummed out. It didn't work out the way I hoped. Speak your mind. Thank you all.

CHERYL LANGDON-ORR

Thank you, Avri. Thank you very much.

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