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DURBAN – Welcome Ceremony & President's Opening Session – Fadi Chehade's Remarks

Monday, July 15, 2013 – 08:30 to 10:00

ICANN – Durban, South Africa

MR. FADI CHEHADE: I will just ask if my team could get me back my notes that were on the table.

[ Laughter ]

That would be helpful, although we don't need them, really, but it would be helpful.

Thank you, sir.

Okay. And now we come to our session. I think we ran a little bit over time, so I'm going to quickly ask my -- Duncan or someone to give me a time check.

How many minutes do we have?

>> (Speaker is off microphone.)

MR. FADI CHEHADE: Pardon?

>> (Speaker is off microphone.)

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*Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.*

MR. FADI CHEHADE:

The time I need. No, no. No. We'll try to keep this down to half an hour this time, because I think we're a little bit over time. We're okay on half an hour?

Okay. Now, typically as you know, we translate these meetings into the U.N. languages plus Portuguese. Today, we're adding one more language, and for those of you who kind of lived during the days when everybody was trying to create a lingua franca and didn't quite succeed at that, we believe that the real lingua franca is a visual language.

So today, we're adding something new. We have Rob there to the left. Rob is from South Africa and is going to be taking -- well, good to have you, Rob. Thank you.

[ Applause ]

Rob is an illustrator and he will take my presentation now and actually translate it into a picture that we can share also with people on the Web.

So that's what he does for a living, and it's a new language that I hope will be helpful and break some of the language barriers.

As you know, when we were in Beijing I said that we're still in our first phase of the new season, and the first phase is the phase of preparing the ground so that we can build and continue to grow this organization where it needs to go.

We're still in that first phase and we will be there through my first year at ICANN, which should be around the Buenos Aires meeting.

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I'm happy to tell you today that we are on track. In fact, we are a little bit ahead of schedule on most of the things we committed to do.

What I'm going to do is take you through three sections here. The first one is to just quickly give you a sense of what we've accomplished since Beijing. I will give you an update on that.

So from Beijing to Durban, of course a very short hop -- some of you may remember Beijing was kind of yesterday, only less than three months ago, so a very short trimester for us, but nonetheless, a busy trimester.

As you just saw, we completed the new registry and registrar agreements. This is a huge accomplishment for you, for this community. It moves us forward into a contracting stage, and it changes completely where we are with this program.

I think most of us can say today we can see the last mile before the first new TLD is in the root. We can see it. It's in front of us now. We actually are measuring things, as I said before, now by days, not by weeks or months or years.

We are at the point where we are seeing the light at the end of that long tunnel.

Once again, the work that went into getting these agreements done and the commitment that we made to make them work for everyone was tremendous and was a sign of how this community works together.

I must tell you there were some tough times and there were some big debates, and as you remember, all of you told me in Beijing, "Do not

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move forward with these agreements before we get another chance to comment on them."

And I understood the need to do that, so we did not move forward. We extended the comment period and allowed all of us to participate, give input, and that input, by the way, I must tell you, was actually very helpful. It refined the agreements. It made them better.

And so we now have these agreements and we can move forward into the next stage.

Jean-François Baril who is with us here in the room, along with Steve Crocker and many of you here have worked together to create the next generation directory service model. You all saw their report.

I think I want to first commend them and thank them for the great work they did. This was not easy. It was also not easy to go into the details, but rather to stay at the right level and deliver a balanced, clear report that identified how we can move forward, past the difficulties and concerns with the WHOIS into a new directory service model.

Now, what they did is not a decision. What they did is merely a recommendation for this community to take, to debate, to discuss, and to move forward to the next stage.

So each one of us is responsible for this, and we ask everyone here to participate, and we have many sessions here in Durban to discuss this great report.

So again, thank you, Jean-François for stepping up to do this. Thank you, Steve. Thank you, Michele, all of you who participated. I'm not

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going to name you, but thank you very, very much for the effort that was put around that. This is a huge step forward for us to solve a difficult area of our progress.

Now, here there's a lot going on.

We are moving much closer to our stakeholders. I promised you we will start new hubs. I'm happy to tell you that our new hub in Istanbul is now a legally established entity. We have signed the agreements, we have leased an office, and we have moved employees there in the last 80 days. This is done.

And I want to thank here publicly Dr. Tayfun Acarer, who is the head of the information technology and communication authority of Turkey. Here he is. Tayfun, please stand so everyone sees you. For the incredible support that he and our friend, Hassan, gave us. Thank you, Hassan.

[ Applause ]

And welcome that they gave us in Turkey. Thank you. We're very pleased to be there.

This is going to be an extremely important hub for us. We are moving a lot of our thinking, a lot of our focus on how we divide our teams there and then in Singapore as we are moving forward there, too.

So on Singapore, very quickly, as you know, also since Beijing we have identified and announced the appointment of Kuek as our new regional vice president for Asia. Kuek, if you could just stand so everybody sees you.

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[ Applause ]

Kuek has -- Kuek is the first person at ICANN that will make me look slow. I think he will bring enormous energy to ICANN and move a great continent and a great region, Asia-Pacific, in good -- in a good direction and help us start building our strategy there.

So I thank you for agreeing to join us from Yahoo!, and we look forward to see you succeed with us as well. Thank you, Kuek. Good to have you. Good to have you.

[ Applause ]

I think the hubs are going to be in place and functioning much quicker than I, frankly, even expected.

The energy that we have within the ICANN community to move into these hubs is happening. But more important than the hubs, I wanted to mention what is happening regionally.

All of you know that on my first day in Prague, I met with the African community, and very quickly, I came to an understanding we -- we need to get something decalcified and we moved forward with an active plan to build a strategy for Africa. That African strategy not only was completed, but I'm happy to tell you it is being implemented. It is real. We have had workshops, DNS security workshops across -- DNSSEC security workshops across Africa, a meeting of all the potential registrars, registrars business people in the DNS in Addis Ababa. We, in the last two days, did something here with ISOC that was very, very well received by the African community, and many activities to actually make our words real.

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We are past the age of words. We have to work. We have to get things done. And I want to commend Pierre, who is now our regional vice president for Africa. He came on board and took an enormous portfolio of activities and is putting it in place, and I want to thank our African community for working with him, because it wasn't just him. He was just coordinating with ISOC, with AfriNIC, with the AfTLD and all of our friends in the region, and now we have an active, live set of activities happening in Africa.

Thank you for that, all of you, and Pierre especially.

[ Applause ]

So we move over to the Middle East, where also we said we're going to start a strategy. If you remember, we had a big meeting in Dubai and invited many people in the community, and we launched a strategy effort.

The strategy effort was completed, bottom-up, multistakeholder, not just across government, business, academia, technical people, but also with our community of ISOC, RIRs, the W3C was with us in the Middle East. They all joined us so that we can, together, build solutions.

And that Middle East strategy is also moving forward and many projects will be announced here in Durban of moving forward in the Middle East.

I shared with some of you in the last couple of months that on a recent visit, for example, to a country -- one particular country in the Middle East, they started seeing the value of building multistakeholder Internet governance within that country, and the government within days changed the law in the Parliament to allow for building a Brazil-like

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board that manages the Internet at a national level, coordinating with ICANN and the international organizations to ensure that we are working together.

There's change happening. This is good. We're seeing facts on the ground saying the multistakeholder model is being embraced nationally and internationally, and we must remain, as I said earlier, that beacon, that example of a transnational multistakeholder model.

Europe is now discussing how to build their own strategy and there are different ways that they're looking at and we will see, you know, how that develops.

Latin America has advanced with their own strategy and they completed it. You saw it in Beijing. Since then they went to Medellin. They had a meeting of the community. They presented the strategy and I think Rodrigo, who now moved to -- back from the U.S. to live in his region -- and thank you for taking that sacrifice with that family -- moved back. After he had moved here, we told him, "You need to go closer to your stakeholders," so he's back to Mexico City with his family. They're a little confused now, but he will -- he will help them get settled back there. And we also have added managers in Brazilia to serve our growing community in Brazil, we just added one in Caribbean, in Santa Lucia, so we can serve the community there. We will be adding another person in our new engagement center in Montevideo, and I really thank all of our community and all of our partners, LACNIC included here -- especially LACNIC and ISOC and South America -- for the great support. Now you will be launching the first five projects soon in Latin America, and we will hear about them here, I hope.

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So great progress across the regions.

Next, I want to talk about promoting our multistakeholder model.

Again, as I said earlier, some of you are still trying to appreciate what is happening with our opening with international organizations.

During the last three months, we participated, as Dr. Toure said, at the WTPF in Geneva. This was an extremely important moment for us, because after the WCIT we were measuring how will participate and how we will change our posture. And as you know, I had the pleasure of opening the WTPF, along with Dr. Toure, and during that opening, Dr. Toure had an interesting gesture of wearing a blue helmet, as you recall, and telling everybody that, you know, we're -- we're at peace here, we're not trying to take over ICANN or the Internet.

Symbolic.

We need to translate that together into a factual relationship that makes sense. But the good news is, we are working together and we are talking, and that new spirit of promoting who we are is an important spirit.

We do not need to continue apologizing for who we are. We need to be very proud of what we've done. It is a great model.

[ Applause ]

Thank you.

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So let's talk a little bit about organizing ourselves. This is a little bit about how we really work well together inside ICANN, inside the staff group, and with the community.

So I will tell you that during the last few months, we did the first executive base camp. Now, for those of you who don't know the word "base camp," so you can appreciate the background, for those who climb mountains, you know that as you are climbing a big mountain, at some point there is a base camp where people can take a rest, enlarge their lungs, and get ready for the next climb.

I think all of you know that we've been climbing quite fast, and it was time for base camp.

Of course my staff wanted to know if base camp is a day or a month or six months.

Base camp will last us through the end of this year. This is a time for us to not add more on our plate, but rather, start executing what's on our plate.

And so we met with the whole executive team. We spent a remarkable couple of days together. We used that time to actually strengthen our unity, to increase our knowledge of how to manage.

There were trainings in budget management, in facilitation, and other things. So we did things that enable us to do our job better for the growing ICANN team, for the growing ICANN staff, and frankly, again, for the growing base of supporting the community.

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And the staff has grown. As you know, when I started we were at about 130 people. ICANN staff is today close to 200 people and will probably grow again this year.

In order to manage an organization with a budget, as many of you know, that is now in the next fiscal year a little over \$140 million, we have quite a bit to put in place at every level.

So we are investing in our people. We are empowering our staff to serve you better. And we're doing this actively.

One of the major changes we did this year at executive base camp is that we have now empowered each executive to fully own the responsibility of their budget. Okay?

These are small, but important, steps in empowering our team to be able to do their work very, very well. But we're giving them the tools, we're giving them the support, we're giving them the knowledge to do this very well.

The second thing we've done internally is that we've taken our operations and we've now moved forward to split them into three. We have three areas of operations, operations related to working with our contracted parties, the registries and the registrars; administrative operations, HR, finance, facilities, risk management, procurement, et cetera. These are very important administrative operations. And, thirdly, we have the technical and security operations to manage our DNS operations, our L-root -- which, by the way, is by far the most present and distributed root on the planet, the one managed by ICANN. And that requires a lot of operational capabilities behind it. All of our

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I.T., our growing I.T. capabilities, et cetera, all of that fits into our technical and growing security portfolio for all the reasons you might imagine.

Now all of these areas reported under Akram. And as we felt with the new gTLD program, the registry and registrar operations were going to grow quite significantly, we felt Akram should be focused there. We promoted him to president and we created the new division.

Now, the admin side is now run by our new chief operating officer, Susanna Bennett. Is Susanna here? Susanna? Here she is. Susanna Bennett.

[ Applause ]

Another addition to my leadership team. Susanna comes with a great, great background a great resume'. You can read it online. Managed global operations across the U.S., Israel, Japan. Great integrity, great sense of participation with us already. She started a few days ago, so please welcome her when you see her in the halls. Welcome on board, Susanna.

[ Applause ]

If anyone is ready to apply to run our technical and security operations, that job is on the Web and it is open and I'm looking for a leader for that area.

But let me talk about the registry and registrar area. This is essentially what's now being called the Generic Domain Division. And I know some of you already gave me input, which I passed to Akram, that maybe

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"division" is not the right word. We may rename it to something else like "unit." That's fine. But let me just explain the spirit of this first.

Needless to say, since I arrived at ICANN, the new gTLD program has pretty much taken a lot of my oxygen. Frankly, it has taken a lot of the oxygen of the organization. Now, that's an important thing, and that's why when I arrived we said, let's focus on this. Let's make it happen. And it is happening now.

But we also need to attend to the rest of ICANN's mission and goals and functions. And so by creating this new division, we're giving room for the rest of ICANN to get oxygen. By allowing Akram to have his own staff, his own financial statements, his own team, we now are able to create a bit of separation between our multistakeholder function that needs to be bottom-up and may not need to be very efficient. I know you are shocked to hear me say this. But I've learned over the last year that efficiency is not the most important thing to maintain a multistakeholder organization.

What is more important is as we said before, this lateral inclusiveness, to work like a relational database and to bring everybody together to work on that side of the house.

But on this side of the house, Akram's side of the house, you want us to be acting, you know, with some level of management, with a different pace, with a different emphasis.

Here our focus is the user. Our focus is the end user and the registrants that count on us and trust ICANN to actually do the work. And, therefore, we will work with our partners. They're our partners, the

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registries and registrars, to serve the same user. We are united in that goal. We're not separated.

Now, that at times means we will have some difficult discussions with them. But that's fine. I have to ask Akram to up our level of service because it has not been great to registries and registrars. We have to do something there, and we are. And we are investing to do that. And in return, I will ask them to perform in the spirit of serving that user. They are our focus. I think we're clear on that. And that's the spirit and the modus operandi of the new division.

I want to note something about this division. Compliance -- contractual compliance will remain reporting to me. It will not move into the new division. While it may coordinate with the new division and get synced up so they can do their work, it will remain reporting to me. I promised you that, and I will keep that promise.

I also have now given Maguy, our vice president responsible for this division, the green light to go directly without my permission, without anyone's permission, to the Audit Committee any time she needs and let them know if there is something she wants to report. This is important.

Having said that -- and now I'm talking to our partners, the registries and registrars -- we also need to balance our compliance vigor, our compliance focus with good relationship management. We cannot have these two things be out of sync. And, therefore, by adding Cyrus to the team of Akram, focused on building and growing our relationships with registries and registrars, we ensure that these relationships are not

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confrontational at every step but are strong and present when needed and used in a proper way. And that's my commitment to you.

So, congratulations to Akram. Congratulations to all of us. We will now see this new division prosper and grow and support the new gTLD program.

I want to tell you how this will solve one thing. I don't know if my colleague from dot Sweden is here, Danny Aerts, but I see some other colleagues from the ccTLD community. But Danny a year ago -- And I didn't know him. Not a year ago, pardon me, a few months ago, four, five months ago wrote a blog in Swedish. I don't read Swedish. But the head of the French ccTLD retweeted that blog and said: This is important, you should read it. I saw that tweet. I chased it, got the blog, read it.

And the blog said: ICANN is janus faced. So I called Danny and I said, Danny, walk me through this. I need to understand why you wrote this. Janus faced for those of you who don't know what that is, it means we are kind of two faced. We have two faces.

I said, Why do you think we have two faces? He said, You always have two faces because on one hand, you must to work bottom-up, multistakeholder, and slow down to let everyone be part of the solution. On the other part, we need you to be the one making sure that the public interest is maintained and the licensees who have licenses to operate these TLDs are actually managed properly. Serviced properly but managed also properly. And he says, these two things will always make you two faced.

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So I immediately asked him to help us fix this. And we spent time with him and with his colleagues and they guided us. This is the kind of cooperation we need. They helped us and, hence, we have a new division and hopefully we won't be called janus faced again.

Focus on the registrant. And the new registry and registrar agreement these gentlemen signed, the registrar agreement includes a registrant rights and responsibilities document. For the first time written in plain English -- and I want to thank James and GoDaddy for helping us with that part of it. They helped us write it in plain English so that a registrant could read it and understand what are my rights and responsibilities.

And, note, a registrant has rights but also has responsibilities because our ultimate responsibility is to the end user who trusts us to make sure that DNS is serviced properly. So thank you, all of you, for helping make that focus our central focus moving forward.

My last bit is about the strategic planning. Now, this is the part where, frankly, we can look to the future together. And you know we started the conversation on strategy in Beijing and that conversation continues. We had a number of meetings. And these meetings have been very important and we will have more today.

But I want to remind you what I said in Beijing. This is not about changing why we exist and what we do. This is about how we do what we're supposed to do.

So all we're doing is reaffirming our why and what and then retooling how we get things done. This is important.

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What have we done? In Beijing, we got your input. We continued to get your input online. We've also had a excellent board workshop in Amsterdam where the board worked together to actually give us some input into this strategy planning process.

Right after I get off the stage -- and I'm sure Denise and her team want me off very quickly -- they will start a great effort here to bring all of you into the strategy discussion today. Please participate in that.

And if you are not wearing the yellow button that was on my jacket, which they will give you should you participate later today, I will be checking with you. Please stay here and participate. We need your input for this strategy to make sense.

Now, this strategy will move on and will include your input as we go. And there's more to come all the way till the end of this year.

As I was getting input from you online, it became very clear that there are a few areas where we will have some -- not we will have, we need to have some difficult discussions amongst us. And these are important areas. And so I discussed with my team and with the board how best to address these difficult areas.

And by "difficult" I don't mean intractable or impossible. I simply mean ones that require depth and a little more time together.

Now, to do that, we have decided to create with you in the next few months together five ICANN strategy panels. And these ICANN strategy panels will be places where we, the community, together come and discuss key issues on strategy. These panels will inform the strategic

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planning process. They will not decide anything. They're just informative. They're giving us input.

And these panels are you. In fact, I have asked the board and the staff that none of us can be on these panels. These are community panels. These are you. That's why we call them "ICANN strategy panels."

Now, here are the five panels, and I will walk you through them. The first one will be a panel that defines our public responsibility framework. I must tell you, if I ask each of you what is ICANN's public responsibility framework, I may get 1,500 answers, maybe 1,000. But we are still, as a community, not clearly united around what is exactly our public responsibility framework.

And this will become important as we decide maybe, maybe not in the months and years ahead, to expand not our mission but our work and our activities in areas of public responsibility. We must define that framework.

This particular panel will focus on that. And I invite you, any of you, who know people who can help us on these panels to let us know, and I will make that invitation later also when we are with Denise.

The second panel to the top right is a panel to bring the technology discussion back into the community.

I was frankly tired of hearing hush, hush all the time. Oh, we're not sure if the DNS will be around. Or search will do this. Or the application of the Internet will do this. I said, why aren't we facing this and talking about it? Why aren't we sitting down and discussing this? Who are we leaving the roadmap of identifiers to?

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Having said that, I do not think this will be solved by ICANN getting a chief technology officer on board because this is not ICANN staff work. This is you. You as a community, with our partners at the IETF and the other great organizations, need to come together and actually talk about technology. This is what this panel will do and will give us a roadmap, will give us a context for understanding where from a technology -- not technical, technology standpoint we need to be and we will be.

The third panel will look at our multistakeholder model -- or I should take that back, our multistakeholder system, our multistakeholder organization, us, all of us here. And many of you come to me and they say: This SO is not working. The PDP is too slow. And I immediately ask: What are you comparing it to? Well, we don't know. It takes two years. Well, yeah, it also takes 18 years to grow a child. I mean, what are you comparing two years to?

And most people don't have answers to this. They simply say it takes too long. But, frankly, we don't know what -- we are overcritical of ourselves sometimes when we really need to step back and say: How do we look at this in a more structured way? How do we understand what are the right structures? What is the right process for us to move forward? This panel will focus on that.

The fourth panel will focus on our place, ICANN's place and role, in the Internet organizations' ecosystem. We have very good coordination with our Internet organization -- fellow organizations, ISOC, the IETF, the W3C, the regional RIRs, the W3C, the TLD operations in each of the continents, APTLD, AfTLD, et cetera.

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But how do we evolve our relationship with them? What is our place with them in the years to come? This is an important question, and we need to understand it. And it is important, by the way, because ICANN, frankly, sometimes due to its size and its momentum now may be causing harm to ourselves and to the ecosystem by not being well synchronized. And it is very important we ask how do we make this work going forward?

We are not going to be answering the next circle well, which is the circle about our place in the world of Internet governance and our relationships with governments and international governmental organizations, we won't answer that question well if that middle circle is not answered well. So, first, let's figure out in our family how we're going to work with our family of organizations. This way we are well-placed into the global Internet governance sphere, which is the last and very, very important circle.

I am tired of being defensive when I go to international organizations meetings. I'm tired of taking a bunker mentality. We have nothing to be ashamed of. I've been around now for just one year, and I've been around the world meeting so many people. And every time I walk out of these places, I just realize what we've got here is unique. And no one has anything close to this, no matter what they say. And we should defend it not from the point of a bunker mentality, we should defend it by putting it on top of the hill and saying no one has achieved the multistakeholder level and transparency and engagement and inclusiveness -- and, yes, we can do better but we are doing better and we are moving in the right direction here.

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[ Applause ]

And these five panels, in order to help me build them, and create them, I will be bringing some chair people to do that and I will tell you who they are. But, first, let me explain that these panels are not divorced from the community. They are in the community and they will be filled with people from the community as well. We will have other people from outside the community as well to inform us, to give us an outside-in view. But they are community panels. They're yours. They're ours to fill and grow.

I also want to note that I intend for these communities -- for these panels to stay small. So we will have these at most with seven people with a chair, not always a female but hopefully some females. And then we will have on the outside of that an executive sponsor. So for each of these, we will have one of the ICANN executives to support and make sure that committee gets the support it needs to achieve its goal.

The committees will also last for no more than a year. So we already put a clear time limit for them. They will be 100% transparent. And anyone can ask to talk to them and give them their input. They have to be open so that they hear us as they tackle and help us be informed on these major issues.

I also want to tell you one last thing that was an issue with the expert working group initially until we clarified it. These committees have no decision power. And what comes out of these panels doesn't come to me; it goes to all of you. It goes to all of us. So we take it and we decide what to do with it. It might lead to a PDP process. It might lead to a discussion and a public comment area. It might lead to other things.

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But nothing will come out of these panels and go straight to implementation. Everything will come through us and will inform us as we build both our strategy for the next few months and then the operating plan after that. So to be clear, the next few months, we will build a strategic plan and I told my team no more than five pages. So we're not building a book. This is five pages, strategic plan.

On the heels of that, we'll build a three-year operating plan which will be the first time at ICANN where we see a five-year strategic plan feeding into a three-year operating plan that then feeds into the yearly budgeting and planning process that defines what we do in every year. This is what we're doing right now.

And by mid next year, we will have the strategy done and we will have the operating plan done. That's the plan.

Now, I invited people to come help me form these panels. For public responsibility, frankly unanimously in my discussions with many of you, the same name kept coming up. And so I welcome Nii Quaynor who will be the chair of the public responsibility panel to help us.

[ Applause ]

Thank you. Thank you. I don't need to introduce Nii in his home turf. He's in many ways respected and considered by many of us in the world, not just in Africa, as a pioneer in the Internet space. And, also, I thank ISOC and the great wisdom they had in naming him recently to the hall of fame. So welcome, welcome.

[ Applause ]

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And then when we move into identifier technology, I asked, "Well, who invented the DNS?"

They said, "Well, this guy, Paul Mockapetris, invented the DNS." So I called Paul and Paul agreed to become the new chair of our identifier technology panel.

[ Applause ]

And then for multistakeholder innovation, this was a tricky one, because if we're talking about structures and how we make policy, it becomes a little bit tougher to get someone who is -- frankly, has been in this room for a long time.

So we -- many of us will have to be on that panel, but we thought that if we got an external new innovation-oriented person to lead this, it would be good.

So you may not know this, lady but her name is Beth Simone Noveck. She's a professor at New York University. Beth is a remarkable innovator. She wrote a book called "Wiki Government."

She also -- in that book, she describes how she completely changed the way the U.S. Patent Office worked using crowdsourcing.

She also was the deputy chief technology officer of the White House. She was an advisor to Prime Minister Cameron in England. And she is now the head of the only laboratory in the world called The Governance Lab that is designed to think how we evolve our governance models in the world to deal with consensus models.

Sounds familiar?

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She was presented with six potential projects in the world, and she picked ICANN.

So this is the only chair that I didn't pick. I sought and I had to sell us hard, but I won over the Department of Defense, I won over the National Health Service in England, and many distinguished organizations who were seeking her help in rethinking how they can build consensus modeled governance.

Beth has agreed to personally lead this panel and we're very delighted to have her on board.

[ Applause ]

Now, this is another tough one. Who best can help us understand how to make ICANN's role well measured in the Internet organization ecosystem?

And I use the word "measured" carefully because ICANN should not do more than it's supposed to do. We're not building an ICANN empire. This is not our intent.

We just need to know what is the right measure. What is it we should do to strengthen the Internet organization ecosystem.

And so again, I asked who started most of this ecosystem?

And all of you know Vint, so Vint has agreed to chair this panel for us, and we're very delighted to have him.

[ Applause ]

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And of course all of you are waiting to see who is Number 6, but I'm happy to tell you -- or not so happy to tell you -- that we don't have the final okay on Number 6. I welcome any of your ideas. I have been seeking counsel on that, and we have not yet found -- we have not gotten a confirmation yet from the right person.

This is an important one, and of course the easy thing to say is, you know, let's get another panel full of government-knowledgeable people, so that they can help us understand how to deal with governments.

Quite the opposite. This panel should be filled with us, with the stakeholders. It must be a multistakeholder panel that helps us understand how to work with governments and international governmental organizations better, and how to evolve the role of ICANN in that role.

So I want to reemphasize: These panels are here to support the strategic planning process and if other panels -- if you give me counsel to build other panels, if you know of other difficult issues we are unable to solve, we will do this together. This is our work, not my work, not your work. And as you know, in the past, when such things were built, they were called president's strategy committees. This is not what we're doing anymore. This is an ICANN panel. This is yours and ours to inform and improve how we move forward from here.

Okay. I'm done. We're here. We're together in Durban. We have a lot going on in this beautiful city.

So I just remind you that we have over 1800 registered people here. More than 100 from South Africa alone. Every region is represented. I

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got the list from Nick Tomasso, who runs our meetings, of the countries represented here.

It's remarkable. I don't know if Nick can shout me the number but how many countries are represented here at our -- in our registries?

>> (Speaker is off microphone.)

FADI CHEHADE: 92 countries. 92 countries. That's very impressive.

Lots of meetings, lots of sessions.

We also have a number of Africa-focused sessions.

Please attend these.

We also have a very special session. This is the only session I asked for in this meeting, because I really respect the work that was done by the Web -- the Web Foundation with the Web index, and I believe their CEO is here. She is coming to actually present the great work that Tim Berners-Lee had started with the Web index. Please go see that. It's a great index that shows us how the social, economic, and political forces have used the Internet, and which countries have used the Internet well to advance.

And Sweden, by the way, came number one in that list. Great effort, and please go see it amongst hundreds of other sessions.

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I think there's a menu for everyone to be happy and I hope you will find your menu and find your way. And of course if you have time, please join us at the gala and fun, and some other events in the evenings.

We're on track. Have a wonderful week.

[ Applause ]

Ladies and gentlemen, our next program will be starting very, very shortly. It's the five-year strategy and we would love you all to stay and see and listen. Thank you.