

**Transcription ICANN Buenos Aires Meeting
Question and Answer session
Saturday 16 November 2013**

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(Jonathan): Right. Good morning everyone. Welcome to the first day of the GNSO Weekend Session. Thank you to all of you who've made the effort to get up early and come and join us. I'm sorry we're - (thanks).

I'm - thanks to all of you who've made the effort to get - to be with us this morning. You'll see we've got a full agenda for the day ahead. The first session will involve a Q&A session with myself so I'll be handing over to Wolf-Ulrich to Chair that session.

We are aware that there's no power supply in the room apart from on the (USAD) table so I think there's going to be something done to try and remedy that. So apologies for that for those of you who are here and need power.

I think that's all as far as the housekeeping is concerned for the moment. Are there any other points that anyone needs to make before we get the show on the road this morning?

Okay. Thanks very much. Welcome to the Councilors. Welcome to all the participants from the GNSO as a whole. And reminding you all that these are

GNSO working sessions so they're open. We'll welcome contributions from the table, the floor, the room in general and it's great to have you all here. So welcome to Buenos Aires. Let's - let me hand over to Wolf-Ulrich then for this first session.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Thank you (Jonathan). Welcome to you as well from my side. As we have established the agenda for today, we were thinking about well to improve from the last time, you know. And every time it's starting on warming up sessions it's not an easy job to do because so we were thinking about how to do that so that people could overcome their jetlags.

And then we came to the conclusion it might be the best one to start with the Q&A session. So and - so that is the opportunity right now because we have - we are going to undergo the Chair election of the Council next week. And therefore this session is now open.

So I invited all the Councilors, all of the GNSO attendance now to join this session. Especially I would like to invite the incoming Councilors who are new to the Council then and who may know the candidate but who are not accustomed to his behavior so far and then his kind of chairing the Council here.

So this is a very good opportunity for you especially, the new Councilors - incoming Councilors to put questions here. And then to define your opinion on how you should vote.

And see after the voting procedure you are undergoing next week I would like to only say that the candidate for the Chair he has to get 60% of the vote of both houses.

So that is the threshold. And this is - well it's not a long threshold and therefore I would like also to ask you (Jonathan) now to be really serious

answering your - the questions here coming up so because you have to overcome this threshold.

So going forward I would like - also (Jonathan) has made an announcement and the candidate statement. I would also like to start with a - asking (Jonathan) first just to - if he has to add something to his candidate statement and just to say a few words about his work and how it's going to do that and then to leave that open for the questions.

We have only until 9:30. So it's more or less 50 minutes right now - so from now. So be very brief so that we have time for questions. (Jonathan) please.

(Jonathan): Thanks Wolf-Ulrich. I think sometimes if anything I'm too serious. So I'll try and be maybe a little less serious at times. But I do take your point. It's important opportunity to talk through things properly to hear any questions.

And frankly I'd welcome some discussion over some of the issues because this isn't all about, you know, tell us what you're going to do. It's how are we going to do things within the GNSO and on the Council.

And I'm going to just say a very brief couple of things. I mean coming into this position a year ago I felt there was some quite significant challenges including the effectiveness and reputation of the Council and our work was I feel being questioned and our role and relationship with others in the broader ICANN community and some questions raised about our processes and procedures.

I think we've done a good job over the last year of tackling some of those things and some of the highlights for me seem to be that we're on I feel a better footing with some others in the community probably most notably the GAC. There's still plenty of work to be done.

But there has been this theme of developing the work with others. I think we have an effective working relationship with the Board. And I think we've seen that with the last few meetings we've had with the Board. And I think we've picked up the theme of trying to produce ongoing and continuous improvement in the way in which we work.

And so for me we've ended up with what I feel is a functioning Council with a recognition that there's work to be done in terms of changing and developing the way in which we work but where with some way down that role - down that road I still - I feel we still face some quite significant challenges in terms of we've seen in numerous ways challenges to the work of the GNSO and work where people have talked about circumventing, bypassing, happening outside.

And I guess most recently that's come up in this significant sort of context of - and we're going to talk with this Fadi and the Board and others over the next few days about the developments on the international front, the existence of the strategy panels and how that impacts us in the GNSO and the fundamental concept of the bottom up multi stakeholder model.

So I think we've got some challenges in the year ahead in the sort of big picture. And whilst recognizing those I think the other thing we've got to keep a focus on is continuing to stick to the knitting if you like and work on and be productive about producing the kind of policies that the Council is tasked with and initiating, developing and managing and the GNSO is responsible for delivering.

So I won't say more than that for the moment. I think as you rightly said Wolf-Ulrich, this is an opportunity to have some Q&A and as I said at the outset to have some opportunity for discussion.

Thanks to all of you who have made the effort to be here this morning and I'll open it up to discussion, question, comment on the Chair and how we work at the Council.

Wolf-Ulrich Knochen: Well thanks (Jonathan) for your words. So the floor is open. It's open to you if you have any questions, any comments, any follow up with the candidate please. All right. (Peta). (Unintelligible) (Peta) (first please).

(Peta): (Peta) (unintelligible) IPC. First of all thank you for your first year. I'm well aware that it's difficult to - even if you have a long experience before but to sit in that position. And also I can see that what you have presented for your plans for the next coming year some overall objectives.

But it would be interesting to see if you could quickly put down the five most important issues that you see that we are going to work with and hope to deal with them.

((Crosstalk))

(Jonathan): Thanks (Peta).

(Peta): Yeah.

Man: (Unintelligible).

Wolf-Ulrich Knochen: Yes. No, no. Two minutes for each.

(Jonathan): Look I think - in some ways I suppose I've contextualized my answer (Peta) in that this isn't - the Chair of the Council is about ensuring that the Council and the groups that make up the Council's voices are coordinated and properly heard and that the policy management process works.

So in some ways I feel slightly uncomfortable, you know, putting out a grand vision because I don't think I'm the CEO or the Executive Chair in that sense that comes up. But on the other hand, it is a leadership position and it is - there is a requirement to provide some guidance in that respect.

And as I said, one of the key things for me to distill it down into five points I've probably got more like two or three. But it's really ensuring that the role of the Council and the role of the GNSO is properly understood.

I think that's one challenge we face in the broader community. I'm not sure we're understood. I think we're frequently misunderstood occasionally deliberately but frankly I think it's more than that. It's often just not properly understood how we work, what we do, what we're responsible for.

And I think that the tremendous value that that has in validating the bottom up multi stakeholder model, which seems so important in this global context. And so I - for me those are two key points.

I think another - third, which I touched on in my opening remarks, is just ensure that we continue to produce a steady flow of work effectively and efficiently and show a willingness to develop in the way in which we work. So I think I've probably got three or four out there. And that's - I'll leave it at that.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Are you satisfied with that (Peta)? I think so yes. Thanks. (John), please say your name for the transcribes please. John and then (Thomas).

John Berard: This is, excuse me, John Berard. (Jonathan), how much time do you spend in your role as Chair now? And do you have the - and do you - will you have the continued support of your employer in order to continue to invest that kind of time? And in light of the extra ICANN issues that seem to be driving a lot of the ICANN agenda, do you see that your time demands will increase, stay the same or decrease in the next year?

(Jonathan): That's a very good question John. I think it can be answered in lots of different ways. But talk to people who've had experience chairing a Council before or who are familiar with the position they'll say it can be up to a full time role. It can take as much time as you'll give it.

I've - coming in a year ago I said to myself and set the expectation that I would spend up to half my time doing it. I think it overruns that quite comfortably at times. And I think, you know, the week or two before the physical meeting that can be more or less all hours of the day trying to get in shape.

But I'm not concerned about the time commitments. I suppose I should be clear it is in my statement of interest. I'm not employed. I operate as a freelance consultant and I do some work outside of the Council work. But if I - I'll take as much time as it requires really.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Okay. (Thomas) please.

(Thomas): (Jonathan), I guess the Chair is not as hot as it was last year when you did this. My question is more with respect to the Council itself. I guess that you certainly did have some expectations as, you know, with the work that the Council is doing, how it's collaborating with other stakeholders and so on and so forth.

So looking back, do you think that the Council has supported you, you know, driving your agenda in the fashion that it - that you had expected or is there something that we can do better or should do better in order to be more supportive of what you're doing and in order to achieve our goal of - or the goals that you basically put into your candidate statement again?

(Jonathan): Yeah. Thanks (Thomas). I'll try and answer that properly and frankly. I mean first of all for those of you who aren't aware, (Thomas) and I had a closely

fought battle for Chair last year and that's partly what he's making reference to.

And, you know, actually subsequent to that (Thomas) you asked about support and you have been one of the people who's been clearly very engaged particularly at the working group level as everyone ought be aware chairing probably one of the most challenging working groups we've had to deal with.

But in terms of working at the Council level and what that means, I mean I think I've personally got a challenge is to make sure like anyone in this kind of position that I do the work of engaging as effectively as possible with the Councilors and the leadership of the stakeholder groups and constituencies that make up the Council in some of the more challenging issues we face. And that's probably going to become more important over the next year.

I think it is challenging when we meet face to face only three times. And we all kind of get fired up and work productively together and get a good spirit of being together and then we naturally disperse and it becomes over email.

So I think the challenge for me and for us is to work effectively in between the face-to-face meetings and to ensure that the Councilors are as engaged as possible. And I think maybe what I could do more effectively going forward and what we could do is delegate the work and partition it up into groups in order to enhance that engagement and participation.

So that's something that's on my mind is to make sure that the Council is fully engaged. But I don't want to present that as something which is a weakness or failing of the Councilors. I think it's a challenge that I put to myself and to all of us to ensure that we've got as much participation and involvement and productivity of some of the topics we're working on. So those are my - does that answer your question?

(Thomas): Yeah it does. But I guess that maybe, you know, answering questions as a candidate is not an ideal point in time to criticize the Council. But you offered an open answer and I guess we jointly have to make this a success. But it's not - the burden is not only on you and I think we have to be very critical looking at how we behaved.

And I think there are times and I wouldn't put it more harshly we've been almost hibernating in between meetings on certain topics and we should be more active.

(Jonathan): Thanks (Thomas). And I'm sensitive to that and I hope I wasn't seen to be, you know, I want to be frank and I think that's a good - it's a good point. I mean - yeah. Thanks.

Wolf-Ulrich Knochen: Any further question? David.

David Cake: Yeah. David Cake. I'd say we are in a - in one respect we are considering a different candidate than a year ago in that you've got one year of experience in the role. Can you tell us how that experience has affected you or feelings about being Chair like have your priorities, you know, changed a little or anything like that? Or have you got some insight from the role that you did not have before?

(Jonathan): It's a very good question David. And I think - I feel slightly nervous that I'm in danger of repeating myself because I feel like some of the things I've touched on reflect that experience already. And some of - both in terms of answering (Thomas)' question about how we might go forward but also what's gone on in the past.

I think you realize that the sensitivity - I mean there's so many subtle layers to the way in which the groups come to the table. I mean one of the things - one example I suppose I would give is that when we do this induction development day, which is certainly something that I, you know, sort -

immediately struck me with (asking around) the Toronto meeting was that we didn't really have a way of bringing Councilors onboard.

But perhaps a year ago I would have treated the Council slightly more as you would a Board or a group where you induct those incoming Councilors into that group.

And one of the key things that I've probably had partly pointed out to me and partly recognized myself is that it's just quite how important it is to make sure the Council stays joined up with the GNSO as a whole and the groups that come to it, which is why we've got that first session where we don't just go off in a room and say all right, this is about the Council and how the Council functions because the Council is a body within and Board of the GNSO.

So that would be one example of a - perhaps a sensitivity or a - and a practical learning that comes out of being in the role for a year.

David Cake: Great (unintelligible).

Wolf-Ulrich Knochen: We have Zahid next.

Zahid Jamil: Thank you. So I was going to direct my questions to not (Jonathan) but it goes to show that after a year the fact that we don't have anybody else (standing) commends you to the role that you've played over the last year. And I just want to say it'll be disappointing personally since I won't be there next year because my term limited to work with you. It's been a pleasure to do that.

I think I have two basic questions. One would be how would you work more closely or have, you know, have a great liaison maybe with some of the constituencies and having them more involved (at least in) that, you know, timelines and things like that have been challenges at times, one.

And secondly, we are here in Buenos Aires today and I want to be clear on this. This is not because of the Argentinean government. It's for other reasons that we have almost two - I have - I'm here not because of ICANN, you know, assistance with the Visa. It was an independent process.

But (Lanre)'s not here either. And when we want to talk about more participation in the Council from diversity perspective and developing country inclusion, what can we do as a leadership in the Council that you will be sort of going forward to make that a little more sort of available next year hopefully? And that's all. Thank you.

(Jonathan): Thanks Zahid first of all for your supporting and good words at the outset but also for the questions. I think - I'd like to be a little slightly controversial and lay down a bit of a challenge in terms of that liaison with the constituencies and groups.

I'd like to hear from them as well as reach out to them. So I'm kind of - I've frequently I believe made it clear that I'm open and receptive to being influenced not improperly but understanding the requirements.

So I think - I don't want it to sound like a copout but I do want to emphasize the kind of door open policy as well as because honestly it's pretty overwhelming sometimes the sort of administrative workload of just sort of scheduling, organizing, ensure that things function properly.

And to then take another layer, which is clearly what's required of going round the different groups and making sure that they are included or have their appropriate representation.

So I guess the challenge is to the Councilors and to the group leadership outside of that to make themselves known and heard. And as I say, I'm not copping out of it but I do want to sort of challenge and ask for that input as well.

As far as the internationalization, I mean it's a challenging one because, you know, something like (Lanre)'s Visa challenges, I'm just not sure that's how the Council would help and deal with that.

I think it's a challenge for all of us within the ICANN community how we handle internationalization, how we handle the fact that, you know, recognizing that either travel logistics, bureaucratic hurdles to overcome for travel and participation from developing world is just - it's just - until you experience it and realize the frustrations of - even it's that connectivity or remote participation or other factors or financial, logistical, bureaucratic challenges of physical participation.

I suppose it's something that - it's just very helpful that you make sure is on the agenda. It's - I'm not - it's not flowing off the tip of my tongue how we on the Council apart from being aware that being sensitive and we can do something about it.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Alan, do you have - do you have a question?

Alan Greenberg: Thanks. I have a follow on comment. One of the interesting things about being a Chair is you have access to people that others don't have. And trying to move a problem like what's been referenced up the chain of command, which once you get into the lowest person at ICANN that will listen to you, it's not clear it moves up.

Chairs have access essentially to the top down. And, you know, this may be one of those times when you can access it when the rest of us can't.

(Jonathan): Yeah. Very brief response Wolf. That's a good comment and a point well-made and well taken Alan. It's a really interesting one. I've grappled with that access point because again, that access is something which needs to be not abused and but you're right. This is probably one of those occasions where

it's perfectly appropriate use of such access. So I really appreciate the point and it brings it home well. Thank you.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: I'm not sure. Marilyn, did you have your hand up? It's just...

Man: (Unintelligible).

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Oh, Jeff. Okay.

Jeff Neuman: Sure. Thanks. Not that I would have minded if Marilyn went first. But I think what I would say is as a Councilor we can make it a point to the staff that it's not acceptable to have a public meeting in a place where we can't make sure that our Councilors are able to attend at least from the Visa perspective.

I mean I understand if people can't travel because of personal issues or because of work issues or whatever else. That you can do anything about. But certainly someone who wants to come and has the ability to come should never be prevented from coming.

And you can go out to the world and talk about how much you want to encourage participation and multi (stakeholderism) and getting more people involved. But if you can't from a meetings perspective arrange with the local host to have people get here, then you've kind of failed in your job.

So one of the points we can make is a point to staff and maybe even to Fadi as a quick point in our conversation with him is look, if we're going to have a meeting in a place and if you're going to go around the world encouraging people to participate, then make it - help make it easy for them to come and participate.

Wolf-Ulrich Knoben: Thanks Jeff. Looking at the time so we shouldn't comment on the issues themselves. It's rather than put questions to (Jonathan). We can discuss that later on I think in other sessions. Marilyn please.

Marilyn Cade: Thank you. My name is Marilyn Cade. I'm one of the officers of the Business Constituency. I want to just say very quickly how much I appreciate (Jonathan) the progress that I think has been made by the Council in building toward a understanding of the distributed leadership that exists across the GNSO.

The Council is part of the leadership that the ExComs are also a part of the leadership. And so I want to ask a question, which I have not fielded with anyone else but it has two parts.

The first part is whether the Council might start thinking very proactively about having - returning to a process that we actually engaged in once before. And that was face-to-face working sessions for relatively challenging PDP developments where in fact we did bring people together and work face-to-face in order to deal with a particularly contentious issue.

And I - some of the people here were around at that time. And I think we found it very beneficial. So that's one thing. It obviously would affect the budget and your time. But you might think about it because I think there's some challenging issues ahead on the policy front.

The second is I might also ask that the Council think about a once a year engagement with the ExComs of the full ExComs of the constituencies. And think of it as a strategic planning opportunity where in fact we can think about the division of labor, input from the constituencies and SGs into ICANN (strat) plan, into the budget, et cetera.

But also making sure there's a clear understanding of the development of policy and whether you all have thought about sort of different working methods like that or if not if you might think about it.

(Jonathan): Thanks Marilyn. Points well-made and clearly made and yeah, thanks for making those and bringing those up. We - I don't think we've actively discussed those although I'll give the (Friday) session as a halfway house in terms of that of what we're talking about here.

And I suppose on a kind of meta level there's a - I have a feeling that we have a challenge as a GNSO and as a GNSO Council as a whole to ensure that we are, as I said at the outset, well understood, effective in our working and demonstrate the - within the ICANN community and outside the ICANN community how valuable our model is.

And so - and why it exists as it is and what it does and how it does what it does. So to - in that context I think your points are, you know, we've kind of got to come together and work effectively to demonstrate who we are and what we can do.

So, you know, I'll take those in that context. And I think that's food for thought for not only me but for everyone, so thank you.

Wolf-Ulrich Knochen: Okay. (Jonathan), any more questions. Or yet if not, I have a very last one, which fits that what John was asking you but related to the private sector is how did you convince your family that this commitment is an advantage to them?

(Jonathan): That's a difficult question to answer because I think mostly my family accepts that what I need to do or they're supportive and you've kind of thrown me here. I wasn't expecting to - with that. I mean it's - actually it's an interesting point for all of us. It is a real challenge to be - I mean this one - particularly this one looks like a long one.

I flew out on Thursday night and arrived back on Saturday and actually convincing my family or sometimes friends or colleagues in the industry that it's a requirement to spend this much time away from home with industry

colleagues is a challenge. It's maybe something we all need to think about is how much - could we do things differently and more efficiently. But thanks Wolf.

Wolf-Ulrich Knohen: Okay. I was asking for advice. Thank you. Okay. So then this session comes to a close. I do hope you get an impression of the candidate by now. You can go for the election next week. So thank you very much. We close this session and I'll stop the recording and I hand it over to you again. Thank you.

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