JOHANNESBURG – Who sets ICANN's priorities?
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BART BOSWINKEL: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this cross-community session on who sets ICANN's priorities. This is -- it will be chaired by Thomas Schneider from the GAC. And you will see two moderators. One is Jordan Carter from the ccNSO, and the other one is Chuck Gomes from the GNSO. And we will have a few panelists, esteemed panel. I'll start on my right-hand side. That's panel one. That is first Alan Greenberg, chair of ALAC. Then Katrina Sataki, chair of the ccNSO. Xavier Calvez, ICANN CFO. And on the left-hand side, you will see Patrik Faltstrom, chair of SSAC, Cherine Chalaby, vice chair of the ICANN board of directors. And at the far end, it's James Bladel, chair of the GNSO.

If you want to continue a conversation outside, that would be very helpful, especially for the moderators and for the chair. I'll now hand over to the chair of the session, Thomas Schneider.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Bart, for your role in the preparation of this. We tried to do this as a joint exercise as a community dialogue so we tried to also make it as interactive as possible and try to take in as many voices that we can. One of the elements for this is the famous two-minute clock that will be running whenever somebody speaks.

I will just make a few introductory remarks for about why we are having this session and a little bit maybe about the expected outcome or hoped outcome.

So why are we having this session? One of the things we hear most or extremely increasingly frequently in ICANN is that we are overloaded with work. This is the case for many representatives of probably all ICANN's constituencies. It is definitely the case for many, if not all, GAC members.

And, of course, we know that ICANN is a complex institution that has an enormous number of work streams going on. We have work streams that are triggered by PDPs of supporting organizations, that many of them are complex with a number of consequent work groups or subgroups or other groups that trigger work in the ACs and elsewhere.

We have an increasing number of cross-community activities, discussions that are also important. And we have a number of procedural work streams like reviews, things that we are mandated to do by the bylaws or through other processes that again take resources from SOs and ACs and, of course, from their membership.

Since ICANN has the mandate to manage critical resources of the Internet in a global public interest and is working based on an inclusive, multistakeholder approach where everybody is invited and actually required to participate as part of a community that should represent all people and all businesses around the world to contribute decisions that are made in the global public interest, I think we are

facing -- or we are more and more aware of a significant challenge for most of us, which is that a meaningful and inclusive participation in ICANN is requiring resources that most of us do not have. And this is, at least in our view, a significant challenge to the functioning of the organization and to its processes that are supposed to produce outcomes that are in the global public interest and thus also challenges the legitimacy of the model.

Maybe just to give you a little bit of a practical eye on what we're talking about, maybe we can put up just a list -- or two lists that are actually to be found on ICANN's Web site that list.

BART BOSWINKEL: We don't have them.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: We don't have them. That's a pity because you can go on the Web site and the ICANN staff has tried to -- based on the discussions in Helsinki, to list the number of work items, just the headers, not the subteams. And it's actually an impressively long list that we would have wanted to show to you. And there's another similarly impressive list of work streams that has been put together with another logic. So we can't show this to you.

But to make it concrete, for instance, in the case of the GAC, an average GAC member may have something like one to five hours a week at the disposal for the processes of ICANN. He may have ten or five or 15 other international processes to follow. And if he would try

and meaningfully participate in all relevant work streams, maybe he would need 20 hours or even 50 hours a week, which is something that somehow does not match. So this is at least, in our perception, the challenge that we are trying to address here, trying to find ways together with everybody in the community to lessen this problem or to find better ways of allowing inclusive and meaningful participation.

Of course, this is not easy or some of the aspects of the problems are not easy. Others, however, are maybe not as difficult as we may think.

So to cut this down to two elements that we think are important or could be ways to solve this problem, one is the one -- is one that we are focusing on now. If we all agree that we have too many parallel work streams that take too many resources which allow only insiders to these processes to meaningfully participate but not people who are not equipped to spend hours and hours of their time following this so closely, then we may have to set priorities. That means we may need to decide, okay, what are we going to try and achieve in the next year. What are the urgent, most urgent elements. We may also need to assess if we say we want to have a framework for new gTLDs ready by next year, what subprocesses that this applies? What may be resources that may be needed to get there in order to then agree that maybe something needs to be done very quickly, whereas other things can be done at a later stage.

An argument that is often brought up with regard to setting priorities is something like, well, you cannot impede technological progress,

technological development. There's nothing we can do to slow this down. And I don't think that this is true.

Cars, for instance, have become faster since -- dare I mention in the 19th century, cars can now run 300 miles an hour, 400 miles an hour. Society is not necessarily forced to accept every technical, feasible speed of a car to let it run at that speed. You may have speed limits on certain roads with 25 miles, with 35, with 55. The Germans have agreed that they have areas where there's no speed limit. So you may actually -- it's a political decision of a society, of a community to decide to what extent you will allow the use of things that are technically feasible.

The same goes for surgery and genetic, medical -- I don't know the words in English -- stuff. There's lots of things that are technically possible. Not everything is considered healthy or good by society. So it is in the end a political decision of a society about setting priorities or defining time lines for things to be used or things to may be used later. So we'll focus on this during this session.

Another complementary but equally important element in our view is the fact that there is room for improvement with regard to lowering the access threshold to ICANN processes to non-insiders.

One of the elements is -- I have raised this before -- is improving the guidance on documents produced in the ICANN framework that people would start putting a date on it, a name of an author, a reference to a process, which is -- and I disagreed this morning with my dear friend Goran -- I think a fairly low-hanging fruit.

Other elements -- and this is probably even the most important would be to try and synthesize the admittedly complex issues and the complex processes in ICANN to easy, understandable one-pagers, two-pagers, five-pagers before sending things out for public comment.

And the fact that this is possible has been proven by ICANN with the accountability and the IANA reform process where very complex legal constructs and models, people have been able to compress this into one-pagers, two-pagers, diagrams, ten-page executive summaries that have actually allowed a larger group than usual to read and understand, have a view on it, and meaningfully participate.

So it is possible if the necessary attention is given to this to explain every -- be it as complicated an issue into something that in the big lines can be understood by non-insiders. And we think that this is something where room for improvement is possible.

We will not discuss this during this session. But I think it's good to be aware that these are two elements, discussion about prioritizing issues in a way that things get digestible, complemented by helping people to get easier access to the processes and they are mutually reinforcing.

So the aim at least or the expectation from us is that we look into ways to set priorities so that -- to use the SDG phrase "no one is left behind" also in the ICANN processes.

I'll stop here and hand over to our able moderators that will run the discussions with our panelists that we have on stage. I assume that you will introduce them by packages.

So, Jordan, go ahead.

JORDAN CARTER: Thanks, Thomas, for that start to the panel.

My name is Jordan Carter, .NZ. Here the only hat I'm wearing here is a moderator for this discussion along with Chuck Gomes from VeriSign who is standing over there. Our job is to introduce these panels and to quiz them a bit, and then as the audience contributions flow, possibly to quiz you, teasing out things, sort of trying to draw the conversation into a coherent whole.

On this first panel which is looking at how are priorities set today in the ICANN system, we have Xavier Calvez, the chief financial officer of ICANN. Is that right? Whew!

Katrina Sataki, the chair of the ccNSO, and Alan Greenberg, chair of the ALAC. And they've each got two minutes -- and they each get their own special digital counter to keep them to two minutes. I will start interrupting them after two minutes -- to offer your thoughts.

Xavier, do you want to go first since you are at the head of the table? What do you think about how ICANN sets priorities today?

XAVIER CALVEZ: Thank you, Jordan.

And to set the stage, I will explain how ICANN as an organization and as a community currently organizes its work to ensure that it delivers on the mission. This community and the board and the ICANN organization has developed strategic plans and operating plans for the organization in order to ensure that the activities carried out are delivering on the mission. And these strategic plans and operating plans list out all the activities underneath that the ICANN organization and community carry out.

This is in order to ensure that what the organization supports in the work of the community supports effectively the delivery of the strategic objectives that ICANN has set for itself through the multistakeholder process. So five-year strategic plans, five-year operating plan. And then on an annual basis, to refine and to adjust its activities to the visible future of the upcoming year, there is also an annual operating plan and budget that helps define the activities that the organization will carry out in that shorter time frame.

So this is the planning framework that ICANN operates under that then helps ensuring that the activities of the organization are carried out according to its mission. Thank you.

JORDAN CARTER: Thanks. Thanks, Xavier.

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A quick question for you: On a scale of one to five, where one is terrible and five is great, how well do you think that planning system helps ICANN as a whole set priorities today? How well? One to five.

XAVIER CALVEZ: Well, I'm conflicted in that answer.

I'll venture a guess. I would say four. I think the community has been participating very actively in the planning process over the years. The strategic planning -- the strategic plan results from bottom-up, multistakeholder community input.

[Timer sounds.]

So that has been helping a lot.

I think that where we have progress to make is in being able to adjust a little bit on the fly during the year outside of a planning cycle, what we do when the environment has changed. And I think that's where we need to be able to make some progress.

Thank you.

JORDAN CARTER: Great. Thank you for that.

Katrina, go ahead.

KATRINA SATAKI: Thank you very much, Jordan. And good afternoon, everyone.

Well, unlike GAC, we at the ccNSO drive our agenda ourselves. For us, the most important things that we want and need to do are related with ccTLDs and their interests.

Of course, just like for all other communities, the number of active contributors, active volunteers is very limited.

And time we have to accomplish everything we want to accomplish is also very limited.

And then of course we have different requests incoming from the outside, from other constituencies, and we also need to accommodate these requests. And we realized this problem several years ago and that's why the ccNSO council established a triage committee. That is the first filter, people who see all the incoming requests and try to understand if they should be addressed by the ccNSO.

So first, it's -- so we'll see how important is the issue, how it's important to the ccTLDs, how urgent it is, and how can we contribute to the process.

For example, in 2014, the ccNSO received 64 requests to do something; in 2015, 52; 2016, 54; and this year, already 33.

I understand that for GAC these numbers must be way higher, but even for us, it's a challenge.

CHUCK GOMES: Katrina, you made a distinction that I think is really important.

Prioritizing tasks within the ccNSO where it's primarily impacting ccTLD registries is one area of prioritization, and that's important.

A second area that you also mentioned has to do with when there are issues that are affecting the broader community where the ccNSO may be interested in and wants to have some input.

Now, how do you integrate those two and deal with the outside issues that involve a broader part of the community and how do you fit that in with your ccNSO priorities?

KATRINA SATAKI: Yes. Thank you very much for this question. Hopefully I won't have only eight seconds to address this question.

Yes, you're absolutely right, we need to find some balance, and it's not always easy. That's one thing.

Another thing -- yeah. Again, that's an issue of contributors.

Unfortunately in the past, we've seen that some really heavy lifters, valuable members of our community who contribute a lot, they were forced to step out of our activities because they did not have any more time to dedicate to the work of ICANN. And, yeah, I think that the average number of hours that we -- our ccTLD managers, operators, employees could spend on ICANN matters could be similar to GAC representatives. And -- but if you want to be on the track, you need to spend 20, 30 hours per week, which does not work for all of us.

How we -- how we deal with -- yeah, but we try to do, but -- to deal with these issues but with all due respect, we cannot address -- we cannot answer to all the incoming requests. We have to select those where we can really contribute which are important for us.

I'd like to apologize to those hard-working groups that probably ask for our input but we could not provide it.

JORDAN CARTER: So just one more follow-up question. I'm going to ask each of you this. 1 to 5, terrible, excellently well, how well is that prioritization process working for you today?

KATRINA SATAKI: That's a good question, and I would say that without other communities, it would have been 5.

[Laughter]

KATRINA SATAKI: Taking into account that we have to accommodate incoming requests, yeah, probably 3, 4.

JORDAN CARTER: Great. Thanks, Katrina.

And Alan?

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. My initial inclination to how do we set our priorities is: We don't. We're just blown around in the wind by the various things that happen around us.

The reality, of course, is we do set priorities because we address the things that we feel we absolutely can't avoid, which are either driven by things going on around us, you know, whether it's IANA transition or a GNSO PDP that's critical or an election or selection we have to do because there's a deadline set, and some things fall through the cracks.

These days, more things fall through the cracks than we're really happy with, but there's only a limited amount of resources.

Nobody in our group is employed by anyone -- by anything related to the domain industry, so it's all volunteer work. If we didn't have a small core of people who spend 60, 70 hours a week on At-Large, we probably would cease to exist and function. Because of those part of our community that is capable of assimilating what we're doing and interested in it, there's only a limited amount of time they can put into it if they're actually still trying to earn a living or -- or do other things with their lives or have a family. So it's -- it's really problematic.

Thomas mentioned, you know, simple one-pagers, and one-pagers are really great and we use them and we'll be increasingly using them to try to get people interested, but once they are caught in the web, so to speak, they're going to have to do -- get a lot more knowledge than you get from a one-pager and put a lot more time into it than most people can afford. And of course in many cases, that translates to

CHUCK GOMES: So Alan, I want to follow up on that. The ALAC is in a different position than an SO. So Katrina talked about an SO. That's a policy development body, as everyone knows. In the case of the ALAC, you have the challenge of probably having interests in all SOs, and in particular, the ccNSO and the GNSO, and they're setting priorities.

How does that work for the ALAC? Are you -- do you find that there's opportunities for you to contribute to those priorities set by the SOs for their own policy development? And then of course how about in the broader community when they go across SOs?

ALAN GREENBERG: We try. And, yes, in fact, there's -- there are not many things going on in ICANN which aren't of some interest to us, either because they concern the welfare of ICANN itself or users do have -- are impacted by it.

So we have a really wide range of issues, and, you know, yes, sometimes we select. Sometimes we let things go that should be of interest but there's just no resources to do it. Other times, we perhaps do work that's not up to the quality that -- that I believe or we believe we should be doing, but there's no real -- no real option.

So my -- my analogy of being blown around by the winds really describes a lot of what we're doing. I'm not sure that answers it, but -- yeah.

JORDAN CARTER: So a quick -- my follow-up: How does being blown around by the wind follow -- feel in terms of a priority-setting process? Is it a 1 or a 5? What's your rating?

ALAN GREENBERG: You didn't give any negative numbers.

JORDAN CARTER: Oh, you can go negative if you want.

[Laughter]

ALAN GREENBERG: I think we -- by focusing on the things that we can and letting the other ones drop, we probably do a moderately good job. I think we do a moderately good job. It's not a particularly satisfying feeling, however, knowing that we really are at the mercy of whether it's an SO deciding there's a PDP necessary, ICANN deciding there's a review team necessary. It's -- it's really difficult and it becomes even more interesting when you get someone, you know, who is one of your hard workers and finally says, you know, "I've got to get back to my real life," you know, or "I just got married and my wife expects me to be

earning a living" or "I expect -- I expect her to be earning a living." It's -- it becomes a real challenge, and it's part of the reason that we don't do as well as we want to in some cases.

But, you know, we probably do a 2 or a 3. Occasionally we do a 5. But it varies depending on the subject.

JORDAN CARTER: Okay. 2, 3, or 5 depending on the subject.

ALAN GREENBERG: Yeah.

JORDAN CARTER: Thank you, Alan. Thomas.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Talking about 2, 3, or 5, I think it's time to open up the discussion to the public, and you have people with numbers like 2, 3 or 5, but also others like 4, that you may use. Those who have been on these fora before know how this works, so hold your hand up and -- ah, this is -- you hold your -- so let's take 3. This is the only one I see. And then there's some -- were some hands here before in the middle. I don't know who is covering the middle part. Maybe, Jordan, you can do it.

FILIZ YILMAZ: Hello. I'm the 3. Number 3 here. Filiz Yilmaz, Address Support Organization, Address Council chair. I would like to share our experience and our sentiments a bit about this as well. Not necessarily maybe on the -- I don't have numbers, but I must say we -- we suffer from the volunteer fatigue theme as well. And I believe the issue here is often, to some extent I -- is related to ICANN's nature.

As the Address Support Organization, we are kind of the minority community within ICANN, and we often get requests or issues to work on through the -- through the topics that are raised by the other larger part of the ICANN.

And they may often relate to us or may not relate to us. You can easily go through and say, "Yes, this relates to us and we will participate" or "No, this doesn't directly impact us and we have nothing to say significantly important for you," but before being able to say that, you also need to study it a bit and understand what the impact of being present in the conversation or saying, "This doesn't relate to us," because things evolve, morph, right?

And there is that tendency of "Oh, maybe we will monitor it a little bit so that we can understand it is going to impact us later on." By the time you realize that, you're already in it.

So that is one thing.

The other thing -- and this is, I think, very related to ICANN's nature. I believe there is very little we can do about that.

But there is one thing we can do. We do know how many reviews are lining up and we do know by laws when they are going to be lining up.

I think we are making mistakes, putting them all together, which --

[Timer sounds]

-- which happens to increase our workload exponentially at times and that is the real issue that we are suffering. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Number 1?

BENEDICTO FONSECA: Yes. Thank you. I think from the perspective of priorities, there is a sense there are too many parallel tracks, and I think the -- some of the ideas that were voiced by Thomas Schneider could help in trying to set some priorities. I would also say extension of deadlines for consultation. I think those would help certainly governments.

But I would slightly refer and slightly change a little bit the assessment that was made by Thomas because I think he -- he correctly addresses part of the problem from the perspective of governments. That is, how to meaningfully participate in the PDPs directly. I think everything that can be done in that regard is very welcome, but I'd like to highlight this is not what is mandated for the GAC according to the bylaws.

The way the GAC should participate according to the structure we have is through providing advice. Of course we should not wait until the end of any PDP to provide advice. We can provide advice in the preparation. I think this -- we have that. And then the concern we have is that the way -- the timing for the advice and the way it is processed, it gives not satisfaction to governments to the extent that their input is -- is not being processed in the -- in a way that seems to be taken on a par with the other inputs coming from the community.

So I think that is the main challenge and this is a structural thing that will not be solved by us. I think that refers maybe to the way the board will address it. We think the board should not take a comfort position and just say "This was developed by the community so the GAC now is coming at a late stage, we cannot take it."

There are some ways to address.

But of course to also think about --

[Timer sounds]

-- ways we can better participate in the development of -- is something very welcome and we look forward for further ways to participate in that.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Number 4.

Before we give the floor, I've been asked to ask people to stand up and not forget to introduce themselves. I don't know -- we have some nice

cameras here -- whether we could use them to actually film people from the ones that are sitting in the front, so that the ones sitting in the back can also see their faces. I'm just thinking out loud.

So yes, thank you for standing up, Sebastien.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: I will also tell you that you can speak in your own language. I'm going to speak in French if I may.

I think you have two things. You have not enough volunteers on many topics and we don't know how to organize ourselves.

All of us are -- we have different priorities. How can we do work as a collective level and do the right intelligent choices for the community and to not force everyone to look at everything, to follow everything.

To be at at-large.

If you want to participate, you need to have some means. Maybe someone else needs to make money for us, to be retired, or to be totally crazy. I know some of them who are totally crazy.

But if we can find another opportunity, we need to have the end user be able to participate and not have only 5 or 10 people always participating. This is an important element to take into account so that we have an intelligent participation and smart participation of those users.

We need to find a way to agree on our priorities.

For users, for instance, do we need some new generic extensions in 2019? No. Is it urgent? It might be urgent for people who want to sell more. But how are we going to agree what are the urgencies, what are the priorities?

Is it important to do the ALAC revision right in the middle of the IANA transition? We had to do it because it's in our statutes --

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-- so we have to make sure we can implement a process to make choices and smart collective choices.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: We have number -- I'm told Number 1 first.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Off microphone.)

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Chuck first. Chuck first. Chuck.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: I'm told Chuck, so Chuck.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Number 2.

CHUCK GOMES: I'm on. Okay. I want to follow up. Not necessarily just with Sebastien, but he raises a really critical issue.

In 2010, in the GNSO we made quite a large effort to try and prioritize our tasks and we ran into what Sebastien is talking about.

Different groups within the GNSO have very different priorities, sometimes opposite priorities, and so we found it very difficulty to agree on any priorities because of the competing interests.

So Sebastien raises a very interesting point. How do you resolve, then, competing interests?   And we certainly have that in the GNSO.   I suspect it's not unique to the GNSO, but that would be great if -- if people, and including the panelists, have some quick thoughts on that.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. So I think Number 1 is next.

STEVE DelBIANCO: Steve DelBianco with the business constituency, and I'm trying to understand which problem we're trying to solve. Are we trying to solve individuals' experience of volunteer fatigue from the bottom of the bottom-up process or are we observing at the end of public comment periods that only a handful have filed or that PDPs come together and only have a handful volunteer? So that would be the collective finding, that it lacks the participation, and those are two very different problems. We probably have elements of both.

But as an engineer, it's always going to come down to the three factors we need. It's time, talent, and interest. And we can only do so much to increase the amount of talent. We can only do a few things to increase the amount of time by stretching out what we do through some set of priorities.

But interest is something that you can't manufacture.

The topics we wish to attract participation on are interesting and relevant to different sets of individuals. And unless those individuals gravitate to the structure of ICANN and organizations that follow a lot of comments, their voices will not be heard sufficiently and they will not participate at the development of solutions.

My business constituency is probably the leading generator of comments. We do about 40 a year, and our members participate in nearly every working group for which there's relevance or interest to us. But we, too, have volunteer fatigue because too few of the BC members have the time to do it. So that leaves only one factor left, it's the talent factor. Meaning we have to recruit more individuals. And, therefore, that factor is the objective of the outreach that we do. Sure enough, we do outreach with an eye towards diversity. But we are really looking for more arms and legs, more hands and heads and shoulders, hoping that that will generate the missing factor and relieve volunteer fatigue as well as generate more output.

JORDAN CARTER: Can I just make a reflection, Steve, on that point, which is what I'm hearing from most of the contributions so far is that there's a consequence of something, which is it being hard to engage with what ICANN is doing, volunteer fatigue, not enough people to cover all the work.

I would suggest to you that it's reasonable to think that the cause of that is that we're trying to do too many things at the same time. So if you can't get that extra talent, those extra legs, one of the things that you can consider is to try and run fewer races. You can either stretch things out over longer time frames, or you can, dare I say it, set priorities and not try and do everything that everyone wants to do at once.

And, of course, how we might do that is the subject of the second panel. But it sounds to me like the problem with prioritization is underlining some of the -- or underlying some of the frustration that people are sharing with the room.

Thomas.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: I think I should give the floor to six and then a quick reply by Alan.

JAVIER RUA-JOVET: Just quickly, Javier Rua-Jovet, ALAC. Great discussion. When I saw the title of this session, I thought it was going to be -- it was going to concentrate on a broader issue of what sets the priorities of ICANN as

a whole and not this great detailed discussion. So we have a detailed community-based discussion, which is great.

But I guess a question out there also is: What sets the priorities of ICANN itself. Is it just the bylaws? Is it the bylaws and something external also? Is it what the board says? Is it a mixture of things? Just a question out there for the chair.

CHUCK GOMES: That's a very great question. And I think Xavier answered it a little bit. At a very high level, the strategic plan which is a five-year strategic plan and then you have an operating plan that follows that and is updated annually. It's easy to say that is the way they're set.

But in reality, the strategic plan is at a very high level. And when it comes down to the GNSO, I know -- and I think it's probably true for the ccNSO -- we have to get -- translate that into our everyday work.

So I think the most practical thing from the SOs, and then the supporting ACs as well, is if we don't get at a lower level than the strategic plan, it doesn't help us very much.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

Alan.

ALAN GREENBERG: That question feeds well into what I was going to say because there is no single ICANN. If the GNSO had chosen not to do a PDP on new gTLDs at this point, many of us would be doing a lot less work and we would be focusing on some of the other things which we think -- we may think are important. But it's the same as Chuck said.

Just like within the GNSO there are different factions and different priorities, there are different factions and priorities within ICANN overall. And not all of us have the same priorities.

If you would have asked ALAC should we embark on new gTLDs in this decade, I think we would have easily said no, weighing all of the pros and cons. Other people clearly did not feel that way.

So it's not clear that ICANN as a single entity makes the decisions. The decisions are often distributed. And once they're made, the rest of the world has to follow along or ignore them at their risk.

JORDAN CARTER: There was a remote comment which we might just get read out, if that's okay.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Let's take this one and then I think we have to move to panel two because -- or should we give two or three more? Okay. So remote participation, please.

OZAN SAHIN: Thank you.   This is Ozan speaking, doing the remote participation management here.   We have a question from Dina Solveig Jalkanen from NCSG.   Dina says: Lack of consistent outreach to interested groups with suitable background and young people who would be interested might be part of the problem.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Okay. Should we take these two?   They have mics okay.   Please present yourself. Egypt and then Iran.

MANAL ISMAIL: My name is Manal Ismail. I'm the GAC representative of Egypt.

And on what Thomas has said, I think maybe multiplied by ten or maybe by hundred when it comes to developing countries so -- in terms of resources and in terms of everything so -- and not to mention language barriers sometimes as well.

And also as Katrina mentioned, if one is setting an SO or an AC priorities, we could easily achieve five.   But when it comes to the overall thing and influenced by external priorities as well, then you can easily fall below three.   Again, sometimes we have some urgent and important things that we have to attend to.   And I recall here the IANA transition.   Everyone left everything.   We focused and it got through.

But then we have some urgent but less important things and important but not that urgent. And then, of course, if it's not important and not urgent, I'm sure it's not going to be attended to.

So, I mean, the way it's done now, it's bottom-up, as I understand. But, again, it's a union of everything. And then we have to go through prioritization of this collective thing because, I mean, even to prioritize, if we do our own prioritization, then the process won't wait for us and things that are not on our priorities would go through. And even sometimes to know that this is not a priority, you have to go through some reading as well to exclude it from your priorities.

And, finally --

[Timer sounds.]

-- I think there must be some ceiling to things that are running in parallel. We have to have some global agreed ceiling. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

Kavouss and then Number 4.

KAVOUSS ARASTEH: Thank you, Thomas. I think the most complex area is GNSO. Two houses. We don't have any house at all. Several constituencies and several stakeholder groups, each of which provide their priorities. No -- maybe there is some sort of filtering that. And they have sufficient

resources to push for the priorities. But who will be the victim? Us. We can't follow that.

So we have to find some way. Their priorities should take into account resources of others but not only pushing their own priorities. That is a difficulty that we cannot cope with.

I put many hours, more than five or six hours per day. But I cannot continue forever with that. There are others countries that may not do that at all. So please try to have something that those who have more complex area to consider the problems of the others and establish the priorities. And there should be some sort of filtering the priorities to put that in order to allow the others to participate. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Number four.

DONNA AUSTIN: Can you hear me? Sorry. Donna Austin of NeuStar but also wearing my vice chair of the GNSO Council hat.

One of the things that the council will start doing next year is having a strategic planning session.

So in January we are looking at a three-day session just so we can take stock of what we have in front of us for the 12-month period. We have never done that before. And I think what would be really helpful, to Steve's point about time, we spend 16 days a year together. Everybody in this room, we spend 16 days a year together. Is there

some opportunity that we can break down the topics or the subjects that we're talking about throughout the year to focus on a specific area of interest?   We're trialing that a little bit here with the geographic names discussion. And I think it's been really valuable.

But I think, you know, some of the challenges we -- particularly from a GNSO perspective and perhaps a GAC perspective, we're looking at four or five different topics as we come into every meeting. But if we understood what was a priority in terms of timing for the PDPs, unfortunately most of these kicked off at the same time. So that's a bit of a challenge in managing the steps of the process.

But if we could identify a topic for one meeting that we could engage the whole community in that discussion, it would be more helpful than trying to cover all the four subjects at the one time.

So I think -- I'm not sure how the GNSO Council's strategy session will work out. But, hopefully, we can look at it from a perspective of we have these PDPs that we need to get through in a certain period of time.   We have 16 days throughout the year that there's an opportunity for face-to-face time. How can we use that 16 days --

 [Timer sounds.]

 -- in the most effective manner? Thanks.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

Maybe for once a quick response from my side. I think something that becomes evident is that the SOs trigger the work for the ACs. Either you follow or your advice doesn't exist. I think this is something -- the ACs cannot say, This is not a priority so we'll ignore you because then things go on just without your advice. I think there's a logic and a sequence of this. That's point one.

Point two is the thing -- the point that Steve brought up, you may as a company just find good additional individuals. You may hire them. As a government with limited resources, you cannot just hire additional people. You cannot have -- hire or bring to them -- even if you have them somewhere, you cannot bring a copyright expert and a security expert and an expert on geographic names and five other experts to an ICANN meeting because nobody would give you the money to travel -- to travel or they don't have the time to do this. So resources are limited.

I mean, half of the membership or more than half of the membership, despite some travel support, is not even able to come to GAC meetings. This is the real situation, like what Manal has explained.

So probably we have a special, like, together with the ALAC, we have a special limitation where there is not that much from our side that we can do.

I'll stop here. I think we have to move to panel 2.

JORDAN CARTER: Yeah, just a brief summary, if I was to provocatively -- and this is provocatively to get you talking and thinking -- paraphrase what I have heard, it would be that in a global sense, priorities are not being set across the ICANN system and the result is that it's getting hard or it is hard for people to meaningfully engage. And part of the reason for that is a very organic, segmented stakeholder SO-based priority setting process for the work that's going on.

So the next panel, which I think Chuck is going to take lead on introducing is about how we should do it. This was about how we are doing it. Lots of frustration expressed.

CHUCK GOMES: Thank you very much. Great discussion. Just one follow-up on that, going back to what Manal said and what I think Alan hit on and Steve hit on, one of the things that some of you are already doing that is very good, you're setting priorities within your organization and then you apply those by which opportunities you participate in. And I think that's right. You have to do that with the limited resources. So I want to compliment you the way you're doing it. I think -- I don't know if there's another way to do that when you have limited resources and all of the different policy development going on.

So moving to the next panel, the general question for the next panel is: How should we set priorities? We spent some time talking about how it's done now. Are there some ways that should change or could change that we should consider and start pursuing over the months ahead?

And we'll start with the first panelist on the left, Patrik Faltstrom. And each of you have up to two minutes for your intro, okay? And that doesn't include all the discussion that will follow.

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Thank you very much. Patrik Faltstrom, chair of SSAC.

I would like just to summarize, just like the others, of where we are and what I'm trying to address. We heard Katrina and others mention how many topics per year they can work with. We, in SSAC, our number is about eight. So the question we have been working on is that, okay, how do we select what eight things we are working on as an advisory committee given that we are driven by the SOs and their PDPs, which as we heard have a certain time line and that they need to -- they feel that they need to follow and then the limited time of volunteers that, Mr. Arasteh and others have pointed out.

So what we think needs to happen is, for example -- and I'm now speaking from the point of an advisory committee and specifically I use SSAC that work with our issues as an example.

The first thing is that I think we can do better and make sure that the ACs don't have to follow the whole PDP, only the things that are actually relevant for the actual AC itself. And that is the selection that I think the ones running the PDP can do themselves. So saving time, ship smaller, quicker, more focused questions to us ACs and it will be easier for us to respond and we might be able to increase our numbers from eight to a higher number.

The other thing that we think is important is that, for example, regarding SSR issues, we do believe that the rest of the PDPs running, for example, in GNSO, they should be able to do an SSR evaluation and work themselves. We don't feel that we in SSAC do have to be the ones that SSR work for all PDPs in ICANN. We could be the auditor to envisage and to ensure that the right thing has been done. But we don't feel that we have to actually do all the work ourselves.

The last thing is that --

[Timer sounds.]

-- one thing that we in SSAC end up with, problem we end up with many, many times is that we are asked to at least appoint a topic matter expert to various other groups. We have no problem with that. But that must be recognized as an expert appointed by us and not that the appointed person speaks on behalf of SSAC. The day we can see a separation between these two, it will be much easier for SSAC to help. Thank you.

CHUCK GOMES: So, Patrik, Patrik, one quick follow-up. What happens, you've chosen your eight topics and a really hot topic comes up and maybe the board requests that you respond to this new topic and it really does -- it really could benefit from SSAC expertise, how do you handle that?

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Okay. Now we're going back to the first panel, and I think that's a little bit sort of -- that was not really the idea of what where I was here.

But let me then explain and go back to the first panel of how we're working today.

We are filtering everything that we are dealing with. And in certain cases, we have to drop what we're doing and prioritize and stop doing something. But the way we are handling the sort of eight -- or the way I handle it as chair of the SSAC is that I sort of reserve approximately two requests out of the eight for the board. I reserve maybe three to the GNSO and one to ccNSO. Historically, I also reserved one to GAC, but it has been very quiet from GAC lately. So every year I sort of do an allocation in the beginning of the year.

CHUCK GOMES: Thank you, Patrik.

JORDAN CARTER: Just another angle of follow-up, Patrik, if there was a need to set global priorities across ICANN, which existing group of people or organizations should do that?

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Well, I think -- I think I agree with Alan that the ACs are very much driven by the PDPs. So I think the people running the PDPs, that's where the overall interest is to do certain things and prioritize one PDP in favor of another one, both as we heard within, for example, GNSO or

maybe between GNSO and ccNSO, et cetera. And all of that needs to then to be matched to, among other things, the ICANN strategic plan or all of the budget processes that every year are talked at.

We, for example, see from an SSAC perspective, we see us being followers after the sort of overall priorities from -- that ICANN is doing. So we don't see us participating in that.

CHUCK GOMES: Thank you, Patrik. Let's go our next panelist. Cherine Chalaby is vice chair of the ICANN board. Cherine, how should we set priorities?

CHERINE CHALABY: Thank you, Chuck.

So I'm going to speak here in my personal capacity.   I'm not representing the views of the board.

So I see the problem is in two parts, and I see that our priorities are in two parts, one which I call the collective priorities and one which I call the separate priorities, and each have different solutions.

Regarding the collective priorities, the three ICANN entities -- the community, the board and org -- as Xavier said, we are bound together by the strategic plan and operating plan, and annually, the operating plan sets the priorities for us and we all go through that cycle of public comments, we agree, we change, we make amendments, and we decide on those collective priorities.

So I don't think here there is any disagreement on the clarity on who sets the ICANN collective priorities. That is the strategic plan and the annual operating plan. We can do much better on that in streamlining and communicating and changing things, but who sets it is the strategic plan.

But in addition to these collective priorities, the three entities develop separate priorities every year as part of their work plan.

And the problem, in my view, is that unlike the collective priorities, there is no central or joint coordination of these separate priorities that are in contention for the same pool of staff, volunteers, the same pot of money, and the same available time.

To solve this problem, we must do three things.

One, we must become more effective in the way we -- of our processes and our timing for doing things. We must reach out to new stakeholders and increase our pool of volunteers. And we must find a way of coordinating these separate priorities.

The answer, in my view, does not lie with the board. The answer, in my view, is that for the stakeholders --

[Timer sounds]

-- to get together with our CEO and possibly the chair of the board and create a group that actually discusses these priorities and attempts this coordination.

CHUCK GOMES: Thank you very much, Cherine.

And I go back to Donna's comments with what the GNSO is doing, and if we follow through on what you're suggesting, it sounds like we need a joint strategy session with the different groups, but we can follow up with that kind of thing as we -- as we go forward.

CHERINE CHALABY: Can I just comment on that?

I don't think that one stakeholder group can solve this problem on their own. It's almost impossible. So it has to be a coordination. Okay.

JORDAN CARTER: Just another response, Cherine. I think it should be the board. And the reason I think it should be the board is that the board is the group that brings together all of the ICANN stakeholder groups with some NomCom expertise and the executive represented by the CEO.

So I don't know if you have a response to that, but I'm interested in your thoughts.

CHERINE CHALABY: I personally don't think it should be the board. In fact, the board is not empowered to set the priorities for the various stakeholder groups. We do not set the priorities for the ccNSO, for example.

The priorities -- the -- we don't set the list of policies that the ALAC must look at. We do not tell the RSSAC, SSAC what to do.

So I think the board hasn't got that empowerment.

Secondly, that coordination has to be almost a continuous basis through the year, and I do understand that, for example, our CEO meets with the SO and AC leaders on a very regular basis. That could be a real topic that is brought up to this, and the SO and AC leaders sitting together with the CEO, who has, you know, access to these resources together with, for example, the chair of the board, and talk about those priorities, what is it that's causing the problem, and try and solve it there in a coordination manner, not really imposing a decision on each of the SOs and ACs.

CHUCK GOMES: So before we go to audience discussion, let's let our third panelist -- and mic holders, Steve Crocker can be the first one in the discussion queue when it's opened up, if that's okay with our chair of this panel, but James, let's go to you.

James Bladel from -- the chair of the GNSO Council, and how should we set priorities?

JAMES BLADEL: Thanks, Chuck. Well, I think, you know, from the earlier discussions, I'm coming away with the impression that the GNSO is the only

organization that is not starved for resources or overworked, and I can assure the audience that that is not the case.

We are also, I think, continuously struggling to meet the demands that our community have put in front of us in terms of PDPs. We have four significant PDPs underway at this -- at this time.

We have -- also, we are participants in just about every cross-community working group and every active review team, most of those being set externally to us, you know, via the bylaws or -- or other external-driven priorities.

What we're doing going forward -- and Donna mentioned one of them, so maybe you have the wrong panelist up here because I think she did a great job of outlining the new strategy planning session that we're going to be undertaking in January of next year.

We also have a suggestion, based on our experience this last time around with the budget, that the -- as a participant in the decisional -- decisional participant in the Empowered Community, we want to have a better and more comprehensive engagement in the budget and strategic planning process. Right now we're very deadline-oriented. Instead, we're going to make a year-round process so we're going to hopefully be discussing that tomorrow and kicking off that effort.

But generally, I think that one thing that I would like to see more of is a capacity planning exercise.

I mentioned we have four PDPs underway right now. I think we on the council recognize that that's probably our upper limit in terms of what

we can take on at any given time simultaneously, and I'd like to understand how we would prioritize, for example, if an emergency PDP were to arise when we were at capacity.

I think that is probably one of the discussions --

[Timer sounds]

-- that would be fodder for this future strategic planning.

CHUCK GOMES: So a quick follow-up, James.

What about Cherine's idea of this coordination?

The idea that Donna shared and that you just referred to sounds like a really important and critical thing to do. How do you take that -- how could we take that a step further and follow up with a coordination with the other communities?

JAMES BLADEL: Well, I guess my question to Cherine and to everyone is: Can we mesh that process with the -- with the community engagement with the strategic planning process? Because I think that is something that is right now starved for more input on the -- early on in the process, not just commenting on the draft budget and draft strategic and operating plan once it's published but actually get involved earlier on in the development of that plan and can that -- can that idea be -- be steered into that effort.

CHUCK GOMES: And a quick follow-up on that.

Keep in mind that right now, the five-year strategic plan really happens every five years. That's probably not going to be quick enough for what you're doing, so maybe would it be -- maybe to look at the operational plan level like that?

JAMES BLADEL: Yeah. The strategic plan every five years, the operating plan every year, and the budget every year. But again, that can't be a -- and unfortunately, I think we're all guilty, including the GNSO, of, you know, kind of an, "Oh, no, the draft budget is released again, we better take a look at that and submit our comments in the next week," as opposed to being involved in the development of that budget in the first place so that you're not surprised by what the resulting output is.

JORDAN CARTER: Alan first and then -- then me? Yeah. Or Steve. Steve's contribution. I was just going to quickly respond in my moderator role, so maybe if I do that and then Steve and then Alan.

So James, do you think the board would be uniquely unsuited to help with that task?

JAMES BLADEL: Did you say "unsuited"?

JORDAN CARTER: Well, "suited" or "unsuited," whichever is more provocative and thought-provoking.

JAMES BLADEL: Go ahead, Cherine. I think Cherine wants to take a swing at that.

CHERINE CHALABY: So I did mention that there are two sets of goals, the collective and the separate.

Regarding the collective, the board is acting in terms of a coordination in terms of making sure that the operating plan, the annual -- the strategic plan, and so on, is done correctively by the community, so we do that and we have the empowerment to do so.

Regarding the separate ones, which are really the -- those that are owned by the individual SOs and ACs and they set them as part of their annual work plan, the board cannot impose any top-down priorities on the individual SOs and ACs, but I really think that for those separate, there should be another -- another group, and those are the SOs and AC heads, together with the CEO, together with perhaps the chair of the board, get together on a regular basis throughout the year and address the problem on an ongoing basis. Because you can't address it one off at the beginning of the year and then leave it. It has to be ongoing. Because priorities change throughout the year.

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JORDAN CARTER: Steve?

JAMES BLADEL: So I think -- sorry. Just to build on that response, I would like folks to imagine, you know, a scenario where the board, for example, told the GNSO that "You have four PDPs and we think you should stop one of them, and by the way, we think it should be this one."

Does that feel like an appropriate involvement of the board in that community?

And I think -- I think some folks might be relieved. You know, they can go home a little early. But I think that -- but -- and I'm using that as an extreme example but -- perhaps, but I think it illustrates, you know, the idea that these communities -- and within the GNSO we have -- we are a collection of communities -- are self-organizing, and so it's up to these higher organizations to respect -- you know, whether it's the board and the communities or the GNSO Council to the stakeholder groups and constituencies, we have to respect the fact that this is what our constituents want us to do and we have to find a way to make it work, as opposed to, you know, just slamming the door.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I think we should go -- to give the floor to people, in particular to those who haven't spoken yet, so that everybody gets a chance.

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So I see Number 5 -- first Steve, he hasn't spoken yet either, so let's give the floor to Steve and then I have Number 5 in the back.

STEVE CROCKER: Thank you very much. At the risk of belaboring the point, I wanted to address the point that Jordan seems to be very interested in about having the board do the coordination.

Chris' response, James' response, is spot on. It's late in the day. I want to add a little energy to this.

I appreciated very much the picture of us being a very capable, very smart group of people with a lot of expertise from different things. No doubt we could sit there and do it.

It would be wrong. It would instantly put us in the position of being a competitor, basically, another player in the same field, and then we would lose our perspective of being a sort of caretaker or curator of the process and making sure everything goes.

We're so smart, in fact, that we know this so we aren't going to do that.

[Laughter]

STEVE CROCKER: I do like the discussion about the consumption of resources and the competition for time and attention. I think that is very crucial, and not that the board should be the one that says, "We're doing too many

things," but I think that does actually get to the core of some of the issues. There's also issues about how complicated we make things for ourselves, to get to relatively straightforward conclusions. I'll just leave that hanging there. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Number 5.

BYRON HOLLAND: Hi. Byron Holland, president and CEO of CIRA, the ccTLD operator for Canada, vice chair of the ccNSO, former chair of the ccNSO, former chair of the strategic and operational planning group, finance working group.

There are all kinds of great planning opportunities and exercises within this organization and I would like to say that ICANN has actually matured them quite a bit over my tenure that I've been part of all those various groups, whether it's the long-term strategic plan, the annual plan --

[Timer sounds]

-- the budget --

Wow, that seemed like a really short two minutes.

[Laughter]

BYRON HOLLAND: Reset!

 I think I was on the tail end of somebody else's time.

 And I think the point there is there's lots of great opportunities. The challenges we've heard are the fact that there is -- there are resource constraints, and that's measured against the challenges that in a multistakeholder environment we're always concerned.   Within multistakeholder, we start with bottom-up, so there's an inherent apprehension of having any kind of coordination across all groups.

But given the maturity and number of planning processes, given the number of PDPs and activities we engage in, given volunteer fatigue and resource constraints, I don't think that there's anything wrong with having some reasonable level of coordination. I know it can smack of top-down, and clearly we want to avoid that, but reasonable coordination given the maturity, complexity, and scope of this organization at this time is not an unreasonable thing to consider.

And whether that is some level of coordination between the SO/AC chairs with executive-level management and a couple of board members, something should be considered that allows us to do that, and that would also, I think, behoove us to consider some sort of rate limiter.

There is a constraint on how much we can do. We can't just continue to say yes. Occasionally we have to say, "No, not right now."

And there's nothing wrong with that either. And I think we need to come to terms with some sort of rate limit and some sort of

coordination, and maybe, James, to your point, which was being provocative, no, we're not going to say, "GNSO, you can't do that," but maybe we should all accept that, "Hey, GNSO, maybe it's three right now and that fourth one comes at some later point." And I don't -- I think as a mature organization, we need to consider those two elements.

CHUCK GOMES: A 15-second follow-up, Byron.

I agree with everything you said --

[Timer sounds]

-- except for one thing, and that is, I don't think that coordination is not bottom-up. I think coordination can be done in a bottom-up manner.

BYRON HOLLAND: Fair enough. Point taken.

JAMES BLADEL: Can I just throw out a quick response? Byron, I think you're absolutely right, when we designed the PDP, one of the things that concerned me is it's so much asymmetrically easier to start one than it is to finish one and work one, and I think economics tells you that if you let a process like that go for a few years, you're going to have a lot of them laying around that you're trying to work through.

So I absolutely agree. We should be in a position to say either no or not now. And I actually think that responsibility falls to the GNSO Council as the manager of the process. Thanks.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: A quick reply from Alan.

ALAN GREENBERG: I like the idea that's been talked about a little bit of coordination, and it can't just be over a dinner when we're focusing on other things at an ICANN meeting.

We've heard several times the GNSO has to set their own priorities, but groups like the GAC and especially the ALAC end up having to adapt to that, and yet we are not part of the priority-setting and the discussions within the GNSO. We are told the GNSO is going to have a strategy session. We're not part of that strategy session.

So it's fine for the GNSO to look at -- or other driving organizations to look at what they can do, but we have to factor in what the rest of the organization can handle at the same time. I think that's critical.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Number 6.

DONNA AUSTIN: Thanks, Thomas. Donna Austin.

Alan, just in response to your statement that you won't be involved in the strategy session, we haven't decided what that's going to look like yet, so I think this conversation is really helpful when the council starts to think about, you know, what we want to cover in that -- in that strategy session.

So I think this conversation is really helpful for us in our thinking about what we do in those three days in January when we try to prioritize what we're going to do for the next 12 months. Thanks.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Number 5.

JONATHAN ROBINSON: Hi. Jonathan Robinson with Afilias, former GNSO Council chair, amongst other roles.

I -- a couple of thoughts, really.

I think one is at a very high level. It feels like we should recognize and acknowledge that we are heading into a sort of new normal in the post-transition -- post-IANA stewardship transition phase. In other words, we all know how much of the resources that sucked out of the community and there's perhaps a new cadence that can emerge beyond that.

I like the idea of some form of cross-community coordination group in terms of the priorities, and I think that's something that has existed in various formats, as Byron alluded to, and is potentially not

inconsistent with the bottom-up process, so that -- that feels like something that's worth pursuing.

I think James made a good point about the fact that that kind of work is not necessarily well linked to other work that gets down into the annual budget cycle and I think we need to pay more attention into linking those two and being less reactive and more cyclical and potentially proactive with the budgeting process.

I've -- I think there is -- there does seem to be something in trying to find a way in which if -- if the -- if through that process there's a set of priorities that are generated, and then those are reviewed for their importance by the ACs, whether it's SSAC for security and stability, GAC for public policy considerations, it does seem that maybe we could use something like the -- the GNSO quick look mechanism that the GAC is looking at with a templated check.

I mean, it was interesting that Patrik felt that the GNSO could actually have an initial look for security and stability considerations itself.

So I think there's a number of good ideas emerging and I hope those are some supportive comments for those particular ideas that are emerging. Thank you.

[Timer sounds]

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Number 2, Goran.

GORAN MARBY:	Thank you, Goran Marby for the record. I think that idea about finding a group working together is an excellent idea. And as a work -- as a to-do, I can take on board to figure out a way of doing that and coming back to the SO and AC leaders to see if that works for them, if they would like to do that. That's a very, very good idea, not only because it's a board member that came up with it, of course.

The second thing I would like to say in this time, which I also shared in my regular course with SO and AC leaders, is that we are also starting a new process. And that is what we call -- it goes under the poetic name of long-term financial planning process. I can see on your faces how excited you get.

But it's actually about -- we have a five-year strategic plan. We are have a couple of years into it. That strategic plan process lacks any financial decision-making process. You lack the ability to talk about some of the priorities we do in the financial terms, in the longer period than one year.

So the board has asked me -- and we started to do that work and we had a couple of sessions within the board to start to find the way to tune those mechanics. And the board has instructed me to come back with some sort of plan to do that.

And one of the most important, that is also how do we interact with the community, especially the Empowered Community, which doesn't mention the sort of long-term planning more than one year.

And I hope that that could be a way because in my simple world, priorities are also set by money because if we don't put money on to some of the things that we do, it's just sort of a plan with no content.

The last thing -- really last thing I would like to say -- I'm sorry. No, I can't say it. It was very important but see you later.

[Laughter]

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Goran.

Actually, we are about to run out of time. So let's give precedence to Nigel who has not yet spoken before. Then a quick response by Patrik. And then I think we need to wrap up as much as we would like to continue the discussion.

It is muted. As soon as you start to speak, the sound will come.

Nigel.

NIGEL CASSIMIRE: Nigel Cassimire from the Caribbean Telecommunications Union. Interesting I got to speak after the CEO because I was going to say that I recall as an ordinary member of the community seeing a former CEO proudly presenting a strategic plan which had amazed him in terms of the process that it went through, the bottom-up process that took two years and so on. So I understood from that, that the priorities of

ICANN were set by the communities making appropriate inputs into the strategic plan.

My expectation after that would have been that you would have had execution of this plan, which the communities basically created. And it would have been managed by annual operational plans, as it were.

So I would expect congruence between what the communities are doing and the strategic plan. But, of course, things change. So part of the operations ought to be -- and I would expect that this is some of the things that Mr. Marby may have on his plate to work on, that maybe we could better improve the systems that would maintain the consistency between the strategic plan requirements and the operational plan activities. So there ought to be some sort of periodic review of, okay, how are we going, what needs to change and that sort of thing. Maybe there is something missing in terms of that control system with respect to that. And we've heard some suggestions from different people in the room about that. So that's all I have to say. Thanks.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

Patrik

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Thank you very much. Being, I think, the longest serving SO and AC chair at the moment, I do remember once upon a time when actually

we SO and AC chairs, like, five, six, seven of us, we actually did meet for two hours before each ICANN meeting. And we informed each other what the priorities were so that at least each one of us could inform -- could make more informed decisions of what to spend time on. To some degree, that stopped just because each one of us did not have good enough filtering or prioritization processes within our groups, which we now hear that each one of us is actually building.

So maybe it is the case -- it's of me to say because I am also going to leave as an SO/AC chair soon, maybe it is the case that, that is, for example, one thing that we also could try again, combined with what we heard, for example, Goran and others bringing up. Just those short meetings were actually very, very effective for the small things we did.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Since we have four minutes left before the GAC will continue to finalize its communique in this room -- we are very much looking forward to this, of course -- I think it's time to wrap up. So I would just like to try and take some take-aways. I think, first of all, nobody denies that workload is a problem. I think that's something to note.

And the problem is different for different constituencies. It's different for the SOs that are the drivers of -- mainly apart from the work that is imposed by us on bylaws -- by bylaws and others. While we may try and be a little bit more flexible of dates with reviews and so on and so forth because if they come at a completely bad time, like as has been explained by Sebastien, that may also help that there's a little bit

more understanding of flexibility with things that come from the bylaws or other regulation that requires to do things.

But apart from that, the SOs are the drivers and the ACs are at the receiving end of the workload.

And that is a problem in different ways. And I think we agree that if somebody has to work 70 hours a week for ICANN, there is something wrong here because that's not what we would call work-life balance or anything like a life probably at all unless you consider ICANN your life, which is something that some people may do.

Well, so we need to do something. We need to set priorities. The question is how. How do we set priorities? And the problem is -- I think it should also be taken into account that we need to do -- somehow need to do this together. But we have to try and have a holistic picture on this.

And I welcome what Donna has said, that they have -- we should limit the issues that we're dealing with. But once you enroll into a PDP like new gTLDs, at the end of the chain, the government cannot say, well, okay, we can only deal with three subgroups out of the nine. We'll ignore either consumer safeguards, or we're ignore security, domain name abuse issues or we'll ignore protection of geographic names or we will ignore I don't know what. Because what is public policy? It is not necessarily us who define it but it is our population, our businesses. And if they think we ignore something that we shouldn't, we normally get to hear this fairly quickly and we have to do

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something. So that needs to -- really that chain needs to be taken into account.

How should we set priorities? Maybe the board has not -- is not up to the board to set priorities, but it's in the responsibility of the board to make sure that there's a process that sets priority. That is a different thing. Because in the end, the powers according to the bylaws Article, I think, 2 or so are with the board.

So they are responsible that this thing works, that it is inclusive, that it is acting in a global public interest. So the board may have a role, but maybe it's not up to the board to decide. So I think we've picked up some elements on how we could get to set priorities. One element is the SO/AC -- first of all, it's an internal priority planning in every SO/AC. But, as I said, it's difficult for us if we don't know what is coming upon us as ACs to set the priorities.

So there needs to be a cross-community process either through the chairs, as apparently has been at earlier times, as we heard from Patrik, or we can find other ways. But I think we definitely -- and I will stop with this because there's a few seconds left. We definitely need to do something. We can say this was a very good discussion, very nice and continue as we did before. I don't think that we should accept this.

And I'm with Byron and some others. I think there's a moment where we have to say no because, otherwise, things may go off track in a way that would not be good for the organization but also not for the ones that we are trying to work for.

And to conclude, as I outlined in the beginning, this is one side of the coin, setting priorities. The other side of the coin is actually making it easier for people to lose less time and trying to find out what is going on, where to understand the issues. And there's a number of things that can be done to lower the access barrier to those who do not have 70 hours a week to work for ICANN but to allow others to participate.

And I would strongly suggest that at the Abu Dhabi meeting, we table another cross-community session on how to lower the access threshold for people to participate in ICANN's processes. And I'm sure that we'll have some ideas and discussions on how to treat the other side of this coin.

I think we have to stop here. Cherine wants to say something that will impede us from finalizing the communique.

Okay. Off you go.

[Laughter]

CHERINE CHALABY: Well, our CEO made an offer to us. You said the board should take responsibility and leadership in setting up the process. And our CEO heard this and said he's prepared to come up with an idea for the consideration of this -- of the community. Do we agree, we let our CEO have a go at it and come back to us? Otherwise, we will leave empty handed without a concrete action? So we do have an offer from the CEO. What do you think about that?

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Yes, thank you. I think that looks -- sounds good.

On the other hand, I think we should pay attention to something that we don't set up a process for setting up a process for setting up a process for setting up a process that will help us be more efficient in the end, which is a risk that I have actually occurred sometimes in ICANN.

So let's try and be pragmatic. Let's try and find the simplest possible solution for complicated issues because sometimes there are at least some elements that are simple. So I'll stop with this. Thank you all very much. That was a very good discussion. Of course, we could go on; but we actually have something else to do while you have your nice drinks.

 So thank you and this is the end of this session.

[Applause]

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]