
JOHANNESBURG – GAC Session on New gTLD Policies
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CHAIR SCHNEIDER: All right. So please sit down. We'll continue with the Session Number 16, which is on a very important item called new gTLD policies.

You have received a brief about this, and 1.0 next to me will quickly guide you through the most important elements on this topic. So thank you, Tom.

TOM DALE: Thank you, Thomas.

I would just note that other people have more impressive numerical identifiers than 1.0. 007 springs to mind as having a bit of class. It's pretty cool, but --

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Okay. We'll go for 001.0, if that's better.

TOM DALE: Yeah. Just 1.0 makes me sound like a soft release or something.

Thank you. Good morning, everybody.

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

The briefing that we prepared for this item, which has become something of a standing item on the GAC's agenda, covers two things, as previously: the process and GAC engagement in the work that is going on across the community for policy development for new gTLDs; and the brief also highlighted a number of quite specific issues which seem to be of relevance to the GAC.

I'll just run through the issues quickly first, which you see on the screen, and then come back to some of the options that we're suggesting for more effective engagement and then see, you know, what use you want to make of this session.

The issues that are being worked on within the framework of the subsequent procedures PDP working group are listed there.

The first one is whether -- if there is a release of further gTLDs, should it be in another round -- you know, Round 1, Round 2, or whatever it is we're up to -- or should there be some other mechanism to have a continuous process of accepting applications instead of a round over a defined period.

The issue there has come up of interest to some GAC members in some of the groups about whether a so-called first come, first served arrangement should be part of the arrangements for doing so, and there's been some active discussion about that.

The reference to ICANN preparatory work there is because there has been a number of dialogues between the PDP members and ICANN -- ICANN organization concerning how much preparatory work ICANN can do to get ready for further releases of gTLDs ahead of a final report from that working group.

So if you like, there are some interests who are very keen to start sooner, rather than later. And the practicalities of that have been discussed briefly with ICANN.

The second issue noted there is the question of whether gTLD applications should be dealt with in different categories, and that's something the GAC has previously considered. There is some standing GAC advice -- or sorry, GAC views on the matter contained in the Nairobi communique from seven years ago. The next issue concerns a question of a so-called predictability framework and community engagement. In the context of the PDP's discussions, predictability always includes some reference to GAC advice, the GAC early warning system, which was put in place for the last round, and ways of greater community engagement including GAC, to have issues and problems, in particular, identified earlier rather than later in the process.

This is done from the point of view of the interests of the applicants and general fairness in the process.

The next issue that the group has been discussing concerns safeguards and the term "global public interest," which always is problematic because people get sidetracked on definitions and there aren't any agreed definitions of that term, the global public interest, but it is something ICANN is required to pursue under the bylaws.

So the discussion there has focused a little bit on public interest commitments and other issues that the GAC has previously provided a lot of input on, but it has not progressed a great deal within the working group today.

The next issue concerns community-based applications. Again, an issue on which you're aware the GAC has expressed a number of concerns about the system used in the last round and how to improve things, if that's needed for -- in any future releases.

The discussion on that hasn't progressed significantly, as far as we can tell, within the PDP but it is certainly on the agenda.

The work on underserved regions, including the ICANN applicant support program from the last round, has been looked at, and that issue has also been looked at, as you heard earlier, by the competition, consumer trust, and consumer choice review, the CCT review.

And finally, the issue of geographic names, of course, has not been discussed at the working group level to any great degree, but a great deal of effort has been put in this week, as you're aware, to a number of open cross-community sessions which started yesterday.

As a matter of process, these issues are being dealt with at the present time in four work tracks that the PDP working group has organized. They meet on line between face-to-face meetings about every two weeks or so, and they have -- and the main working group has plenary meetings, as well, about once a month.

The GAC engagement in that -- in those processes goes up and down. At the plenary -- for the plenary meetings of the working group, there are normally a number of -- a small number of GAC members, and myself as well, monitoring the work there at the work track level on some of these detailed issues. The GAC engagement has been quite sporadic, occasional, but that's how it is.

Now, finally, briefly, in terms of more effective GAC engagement with the policy development processes, because we're always asked to propose some suggestions on this, and progress previously has not been great, but we were asked again so we suggested a couple of things in the briefing.

One option is to review the current GAC topic leads for some of these issues, to ensure that current and emerging issues are covered.

Another is to try to more systematically spread the work of engagement with the PDP across more GAC members to cover calls in all time zones, for example. That would help if we just had another, you know, three or four members on particular issues.

And finally, another one is to try to find some means of GAC members being able to actually attend and engage with the PDP face-to-face meetings that are held in -- at ICANN meetings.

Now, these currently have always clashed with GAC plenary sessions, and the meeting of the subsequent procedures PDP yesterday morning clashed with this meeting as well.

One GAC member mentioned to the group yesterday that he had attended that, or one particular part of it, but the clashes are -- are manageable if the GAC wishes to change the structure of its meeting so that there is -- you know, there is more time to engage with those other activities, such as a particular PDP, for example. It is in the GAC's hands, to some extent.

Those are the issues covered and suggested in the brief.

Thomas, I'll pass back to you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Tom, for this overview. So as you see, it's a fairly complex group or set of issues.

Let me give the floor to you for your comments, questions, and to start the discussion.

Iran is first. Thank you.

IRAN: Thank you. Good morning to everyone.

Thank you, Tom, for the brief that you have prepared. It is very useful for those who have no time to attend or to read what is going on. There are four tracks and each track dealing with one of the issues. Very extensive participations of other SO/ACs or constituencies or stakeholders. Very few from GAC. That is quite evident. Manpower or lack of resources. But there are important issues that really we need to take care of.

One of the issues is rounds, whether we have several rounds and an interval between the rounds, or having a steady process, or a hybrid, taking both of them, rounds and then a steady process.

And within that steady process, one of the issues that we are going to discuss or start discussion very briefly is first come, first served.

At least on the government part, there are some experience on that in other organizations than ICANN. First come, first served has complex issues and a lot of procedures, and in addition, all of them, there is a capacity of processing and procedural processing, and if there is not sufficient capacity processing, and with the number of the applications that they foresee for each applicant up to roughly we are talking about 1,000, after some time if there is no processing structure sufficiently available, there would be a massive backlog and then even the last come, last serving may be last come and never served because there's no time for that, so there would be some frustrations.

I have raised the issue in the group and said that we, the government, have some experience on that. A little group has been established and I have participated in that group and they said that if the experience is shared with GAC and we go to that meeting with views of GAC -- more or less, if possible, coordinated -- would have more effect than one view from one single or two view from two people. It is better if you could have a view on the process of the first come, first served, advantage and disadvantages and so on and so forth.

And there are many issues they are discussing. They are discussing the pent-up issue. That means someone that has some plan but they have no possibility to do it, they want to do it

at a later stage, the first come, first served, this pent-up would create a lot of problem for that application.

So there is big works how GAC could effectively participate. It is up to the members. But, once again, we encourage the participations. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Iran.

Other comments, questions?

United Kingdom.

UNITED KINGDOM:

Yes, thank you, chair. Good morning, everybody. This is a huge amount of work and there's a lot of issues. And four tracks, as we've noted, are going on. So it is a challenge for individual GAC representatives to engage. I wonder if -- and it's one of our objectives here to achieve more effective engagement and comprehensive coverage and reporting back to GAC colleagues and so on.

Appreciate very much Tom's efforts. He has been very diligent in attending calls. And those GAC colleagues who are participating, it's very much appreciated.

I'm tracking another PDP, and there's other cross-community work going on, of course, with Work Stream 2 on accountability. So it's all very challenging in terms of loadings and opportunities. And we have individually as representatives in our national job portfolios, we've got other conflicts as well to balance. So it's very challenging, and there's a lot of complex data issuing. The email exchanges, the tracks and so on, it can be quite a deluge and difficult to track and pick out, you know, what the core issues that are going on.

So my only thought to help us out, if -- and while we do have within the GAC membership a history of identifying policy leads, I'm -- (e), under 2(e), community-based applications, I have been a policy lead on that. And I always wonder, gosh, is something happening in the subsequent procedures PDP on community-based applications. And I'm just trying to find out, you know, where things are, what stage things are at, is quite difficult. And whether there's an upcoming call when the relevant track working group is going to come back to the issue of community-based applications, I find it difficult to find out. Maybe that information is available, but there's an issues matrix which is helpful if you go to the documentation for the PDP. Maybe there is, but I'm not aware of it.

Is there some kind of timetable and a forward look, this is where these specific issues are cropping up so that the topic leads in

the GAC can be alerted and then say, ah, this is up for me. I've got to connect with the next virtual conference call.

So some mapping of the issues and the timetable for the PDP would help, I think, identify who in the GAC is going to be the most effective participant and contributor and then be able to report back on that specific topic or related topic area that the PDP is at that time engaged on.

Maybe Tom can advise if there is such, a mapping across from the issues matrix to the work plan of the PDP. And then we can circulate that around -- excuse me -- around the committee and then with particular alerts to topic leads. You know, this is coming up, will you be able to ensure that you carve out time to join that sequence of conference calls and report back to the GAC so that we enhance our engagement in that way? Is that one possibility, I wonder? Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Mark. That actually reminds me that at our session with the ALAC, I think Sebastien Bachollet rightly pointed out that maybe not everybody was aware what CBA would mean. And I actually wanted to answer him but then forgot it. And nobody else answered him. So CBA means community-based applications. Of course, he knows it, Sebastien, but he just

wanted to point at the fact that we keep using acronyms that we don't explain. So just wanted to make that clear.

With regard to the community, the work on community-based applications, since we have Jeff Neuman here who is one of the co-chairs of this process on so-called subsequent procedures together with Avri Doria that we met yesterday at the session on geo names, for those who were there, maybe -- and he offered us his readiness to answer questions, if there are any.

So maybe let's ask the question to Jeff where you are with the discussion on community-based applications. Just take any seat where there's a microphone so maybe you can give us some insight. And maybe you could also try and answer or give us a little bit more information about Mark's question about mapping and how you communicate to the community and how we should best catch up.

I'd like to note that we have had some proposals and some discussions about how the GAC should engage or GAC members should engage in this process and a number of people showed interest in following this a little more closely. Reality has then shown that, again, this is not so easy and people struggle to have the resources to actually do what they would like to.

But maybe, Jeff, yes, if you could try and answer some of these questions. Thank you.

JEFF NEUMAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is Jeff Neuman. And thank you for allowing me to come in again and address these issues. And although I know I said it in an email to the chairman, this has become one of my highlights for my ICANN meetings. And I meant that seriously.

On the question of mapping of issues to a time line, we do actually have a calendar that we maintain at least a month in advance of putting which topics are being discussed and at what time. We will -- and I have taken a note to myself to make sure that Tom Dale and everyone else is made aware of that. We should do a better job of publicizing that.

We've been doing that for the past -- probably since the beginning of this year. And it's really helped for a number of groups. And to the extent that we can make it more available to the GAC and to anyone interested in participating, we will do that. And I think that's a great suggestion and something we already do. We just need to better publicize that.

Specifically on community-based applications, there have been a number of discussions in what we call Work Track 3 on this very topic where I think the GAC could help us in addition to the paper that we have from the European study that was done on this.

I think it would be great to receive some feedback on the value of having community applications and why we have given a preference for community-based applications and why that is something that is valued by the GAC and by other members of the community. So I think one of the things that seems to be missing from our discussions so far is to remind a lot of people that are newer to this process of why we initially placed a high value on getting community-based applications and making sure that communities have an opportunity to get the TLDs, the domains, that match their communities.

So probably -- and I'm sure this is in many GAC resolutions in the past, the communiqués in the past, and may be as easy as just combining all of those into a document to send around to the working group, again, to remind those that may be newer to this process why we initially placed such a high value on community-based applications.

I think even just doing something as simple as that could be of great benefit.

And on the GAC representative from Iran, who I deeply appreciate because he is on every call and participates incredibly actively, he brought up the issue of rounds versus first come, first served. And we have certainly heard his views on that. And I would like to support the comment that he made. If

other members of the GAC or the GAC as a whole has some thoughts on the right way to allocate domains, that would be as well extremely beneficial.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Jeff.

Iran.

IRAN: Thank you, Jeff. And thank you, Thomas.

One request we could make, if other GAC members supporting this request to the group, to the co-chair, is they have a common meeting and they have meeting of tracks. In common meeting, each rapporteur responsible for the track make a report.

Would it be possible that at least that report of the track to the main group, if possible, be assembled and made available to everybody including GAC? At least those people who do not attend, or may not have time to attend, they could be alerted what's going on. And they may be encouraged when they read that, yes, now there's something important and they have to attend.

In particular, Track 3 mostly involves the issues relating to the GAC activities, not other track important but all of them. But

Track 3 yesterday in the discussion, most of the time was spent on Track 3 and many, many, many times referred to GAC advice, GAC advice, and GAC advice. So they are very carefully looking to this. This request to Jeff and to Avri may be considered and, if possible, that report, even a short one from each track at each meeting from the transcript, if possible, could be made available and distributed.

And, once again, thanks to Tom who actively participates in a quiet manner and monitoring and following everything. And he also did his best, but perhaps there might be more possibility for further report available to GAC members. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

United Kingdom.

UNITED KINGDOM: Okay, thank you.

Thank you very much, Jeff, for coming to the mic and explaining about the monthly diary of issues and the forward look in that way and look forward to us picking up on that.

And then, secondly, yes, I would be very happy on the CBAs, the community-based applications, to put together a paper on that

specific issue of the criticality of prioritization, the conceptual rationale for that and the previous GAC positions on that over the years of the current round.

Very happy to do that. So we'll prepare that. I won't be able to do it until probably late July because after Johannesburg, I'm going on holiday. But, anyway...

So I don't know if that fits with the time frame for the work track, but, anyway, on the work list. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Mark.

I see Switzerland.

SWITZERLAND: Thank you. And good morning to all. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record.

On this discussion on how to organize ourselves, I think that it would make sense to try to structure something on the basis of the existing topic leads we have. It's something that we have proposed a couple of times during the last meetings. But I guess that we would need some coordination from the leadership team to get that going.

There's also -- getting back to Jeff -- and thanks for being here for the fourth time, I think, during these sessions. I think that the monthly newsletter is really a very just for information source. But perhaps being aware that it is so difficult for the GAC members to actively engage in the work of the PDP with its so many design teams, work tracks, whatsoever, the answer -- normally we have one GAC member who is devoted to the GAC and ICANN between 1% and perhaps 50% basis those who have the more resources. And we cover of course not only the PDP and subsequent procedures, we cover everything ICANN. It would make sense perhaps that the PDP working group or its staff makes some more proactive engagement with the GAC specifically, bearing in mind this special character we have as government officials and our very limited resources for following all the topics.

And just to give a couple of examples how I would imagine that if we succeeded to give feedback to the community comment 1 and the community comment 2, which were prepared by Jeff, Avri, and PDP working group, but then we don't know what happens with that. And we cannot be there in all work tracks and follow up. And we cannot be in the conference calls and restate what has been stated.

So I think it's most important to take this cultural difference in a way -- into account, also from the side of the PDP working group,

which is supported by very able staff and give us proactively feedback on the CC -- your comments on the CC1, to the CC2, we have these follow-up questions. But these have to come to the GAC as a whole because with the very honorable exception of Kavouss, there's no one from the GAC normally in those calls. That's the first thing. So a practical feedback action, let's say, from the PDP working group.

And the second thing is whenever there are questions affecting the GAC -- and Kavouss was referring to all the discussions in Work Track 3. But also in Work Track 2, there are lots of things that affect the GAC. We would very much welcome also communications from the PDP working group, a short, crisp, succinct and clear communication asking for feedback on specific questions. And we as governments with our slow procedures, with our limited resources, we would be then able to get that in our consultation procedures, hopefully get to consensus positions, or prepare compilations with our feedback to those questions so that we don't end up with surprises where we have completely different opinions only because those who are able to actively participate in the calls are not aware of our opinions or they perhaps know something about our opinions but the narrative, the history, the subjective understanding of the opinions of the governments are perhaps not fully understood.

So I would finish with this, but I think feedback on the inputs we give and proactive questions on issues that are evidently of concern to the governments and to the GAC.

Thank you very much.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Switzerland.

I know that it's still early in the morning and yesterday was an intense day, but this is actually the opportunity, this meeting, to exchange on this large list of important items, so just to encourage you to participate actively in this discussion.

And thank you for South Africa to do that. Thank you.

SOUTH AFRICA:

Thank you very much, Honorable Chairperson. I'm always obliging and usually quite brief.

I would like to -- first of all, I think Switzerland actually covered most of the points that I wanted to cover in terms of the unique challenges that we face as GAC representatives, but not to repeat the issue, I would like to also go into the aspect which was mentioned by, I believe, Jeff, on community-based -- what is it? -- the community involvement.

I think for me, the underlying concern there -- and I hope it has been addressed -- I know that there are, in other countries, in some countries, these community-based organizations that are quite well established in terms of Internet-related issues, but in the developing countries in this sector, I think we're fairly struggling, so I'm just wondering whether they also, in actually encouraging this involvement, have looked at the issue of a broad-based strategy on outreach which would ensure that whoever is actually inputting into the development is not just, you know, biased towards one group in particular that is in one region in particular, but there are some efforts to actually ensure that, you know, you have a more sort of inclusive kind of outreach that would facilitate that particular process.

And I would like to add that having said all that, I do think that it is a good approach but I just think that it would be useful to ensure that it is as, you know, broadly inclusive as possible. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I have Indonesia and then Iran.

INDONESIA: Thank you, Thomas. In the GAC engagement, I think the most -- the most important point is how the -- the -- the policies is set up

with taking into account not only the global public interest but also the country's interest. Because it may happen that the global public interest is not in line with a particular country's interest. So I think this is -- I discussed this yesterday in a short discussion with Jeff Neuman, and I think it is -- it is his -- one of his hard jobs is how to make it -- those two kind of things meet together so it can -- it can be acceptable from the country interest, government interest, but also available for the global public interest.

Now, just for an example of this is the use of character -- the country characters. The country characters is decided in the ISO, and the country also sit in the ISO to make the ISO-3166, so when it is agreed in the ISO, then back at home it is already considered as the asset of the country. Now, if it is then used by other countries abroad, first of all, we'll say, "Well, our asset is being used by somebody else." It's just like geo names, you know, using the .AMAZON and .SPA and so on and so on. So it's something like an asset of the country.

And secondly, it may also happen that the word, the character, can be used for other top-level domains which is not suitable for a country.

In Indonesia, for example, there are national interests where some Web sites for some are not acceptable in Indonesia.

.PORNOGRAPHIC, for example, is not acceptable in Indonesia for adult pornography, so it will not be nice, for example, for the IDN or ID to be used as part of the top-level domain of pornographic Web sites, for example.

That's the kind of things that should be taken into account is how to make the global public interest and the country interest might be -- can be taken into account. Both of them. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Iran?

IRAN: Thank you, Thomas.

Just following what my dear friend Jorge mentioned, first of all, any -- every time that he attends the meeting and there is an issue of the GAC, he very kindly remind everybody at the meeting that these are the GAC advice and need to be taken into account, so he's making all available points when it comes to the discussions.

However, as he mentioned, there is no sufficient participation.

What I suggest, Chair, for your consideration, and GAC leadership, that you may kindly ask a volunteer for each of the tracks. Either active participation or at least reading

participation. Reading the results. And then preparing themselves for the common meeting that happens. So that would be very helpful that X would be responsible for the Track 1 and Y for the Track 2 and so on and so forth. If they could attend the track meeting, so far so good. If not, at least read the result of that and participate in the main group and reflect the issue and also communicate with the GAC members on the list and get their views.

This is the participation that we need.

And last, and not least, I would like to sincerely thank Jeff and Avri for the very, very constructive, active, and -- devotions and dynamic discussions, and to the best of their possible availability, try to remind the people of GAC advice at every point, but in fact, according to a Prussian proverb, until the baby does not cry, there is no milk. So we have to raise our points. Then we'll be replied. If we are silent, there is no reply. I don't think that anyone will take care of us unless we ourselves do that, so we should be cautious of that.

But once again, thank you to the two co-chairs for their efforts and for their collaborations. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Iran. No more questions or comments?

You could also express yourself about the discussions that we had on geo names yesterday. That would be a good opportunity to use that.

For your information, that discussion will continue tomorrow afternoon with a longer -- even longer session, so we hope that you will actively participate in that one, too.

Switzerland?

SWITZERLAND:

Thank you, Chair.

Jorge Cancio for the record.

On geo names, I would just like to kindly draw your attention to an email I sent to the GAC list this morning where I tried to summarize my -- our first thoughts on this issue on the straw person proposal, on the discussions we are having, but I just would refer you to that email which tries to sum up, in my limited English, the thoughts I shared with you during the sessions yesterday both here and in the cross-community session. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Switzerland.

I see United States.

UNITED STATES: Thank you. And thank you, Jorge, for sharing your thoughts, but just to clarify, when you say these are "our" views, I just want to make sure that that is not representative of the entire GAC. I assume that's not what you meant, but just to make that clear. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you. I assumed they meant their views as a member.

He's nodding.

Other comments? Questions?

Yes, Jeff.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thanks. I know this is a little unusual for me to raise my hand, and so --

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Jeff, I think the GAC has opened up fairly significantly, and I don't think we have a problem with your raising your hand, so just go ahead.

JEFF NEUMAN: Thank you. If I could ask a question to everyone as to -- since we do have a session tomorrow, I would like to ask a question of: What would make the session valuable to you? What would you like to discuss tomorrow and how can we make it as valuable to the GAC as possible?

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you for this very constructive question.

So GAC members, feel free to respond now or, as you may know, the moderators have offered some time slots to actually take in comments or feedback from the session. I think it's today from 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 5:00 or something like that. Which is not easy for us because we are basically constantly in meetings, but at least I think this is a good attempt to, again, be responsive to comments, so just wanted to highlight this. And -- yeah.

The U.S. and then Switzerland.

UNITED STATES: Thank you.

In part responding to some of the preliminary views of the Swiss government and based on the conversations we had yesterday, I still think, despite all the statements made yesterday, that there still seems to be this perception that what was proposed in the

straw man was -- excuse me, straw person, straw horse -- that it was somehow a proposal, and I just wanted to perhaps just clear the air, particularly with Jeff here, just to reaffirm at least my understanding that this is not a proposal and that, again, you know, urge everyone to take this as an opportunity to have a conversation and a dialogue. It's clear that we're not all on the same page and we -- I'm not sure anybody sees the straw man as the solution, but again, I just -- I really urge us to take this opportunity. It's a cross-community working session, and to be fair, I've had issues with just about every cross-community session that's been organized and perhaps there's some room for improvement in how they're organized. I could, you know, take issue with every single one. But I do have to respect and appreciate the value that this offers us, particularly as governments who find it difficult to participate in PDP efforts. That, you know, I -- I do appreciate the opportunity that's been given to us as governments to engage in a way that's not typically the norm.

So I'll leave it there. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, United States, and I think you raise some very valid points that these processes are new and I think they -- these attempts to have a cross-community dialogue are a valuable

effort to go in a direction that we all support, and of course nothing is perfect and whenever things are not as we think, I think we -- at least I try to help, hopefully constructively, to join others in getting these things as interact, as community -- as cross-community as possible, and it was -- I think GAC was very present at yesterday's meeting so we had a -- quite an intense dialogue. And, yeah, we need to use these opportunities that are offered to us for this dialogue because this is the only way that we get the model working. If we don't talk to each other, then probably we'll not find the solutions that are in the interests of us all.

So I strongly support the urge of the U.S. delegation that we use these opportunities, even if they are not perfect -- but we're also not perfect either -- to really engage in a dialogue whenever we can.

Further comments? Switzerland, yes, sorry, forgot you, and then the Netherlands and U.K.

SWITZERLAND:

Thank you. Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record.

I -- we are, of course -- and it couldn't be less -- all for dialogue, and I'm personally very proud to have started, I think it was in Helsinki, these open exchanges with the PDP working group co-

chairs which we have been continuing doing all this time, and I've been always -- we have been always strong supporters of cross-community dialogue.

At the same time, it is true that there's room for improvement, and that on issues that are of common interest, the dialogues have to be prepared in conjunction, and this is something that maybe has -- may have led to some misunderstandings. Especially with this straw man person which has been used, be it willingly or not, as a discussion paper, and if you use something as a discussion paper, it of course frames the discussion. That is a fact of life. All policymakers know that.

But apart from that, and returning to the question from Jeff, I think that it would be really very useful to look into what the -- what the issues have been in the application of the applicant guidebook of 2012 to the geo names as top-level domains. Where it worked, where it didn't work, where there is room for improvement. But in order to make those, let's say, normative judgments, we need to know the facts, we need to know the issues, the details. And then, after looking into the facts, we will be able to enter into a discussion about what are the best options to resolve any possible remaining problems or issues.

So I think that's quite logical, and no options should be really preferred, and we should start on the basis that the 2012

applicant guidebook was the result of a very long cross-community discussion process where all the parties intervened which has had an interest in where the board took final decisions.

So I think, again, for making it useful would be very good to look into the issues, where it worked, where it didn't work, and then we could take the discussion forward. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Switzerland. Sorry.

Next is the Netherlands. Then I have the U.K. Then I have Brazil. And then we may have to wrap up. Iran.

NETHERLANDS:

Yes. Thank you, Chair. Thomas De Haan, for the record, Netherlands.

I think part of the friction we see now with this proposal or idea or way forward is the fact that I think as governments, we -- our role is to advise, to judge proposals according to the public policy -- public interest. So I think basically we are not designing the structure or making proposals ourselves. So what I think -- one way of getting out of this maybe kind of continuously friction which comes back, one of the things which I would

propose, or as a way out, is to have our GAC principles on geographic names maybe updated with the advice we have given in the consecutive years, taking on board what we think was good in the applicant guidebook, and in this way come up with a, let's say, updated position of the GAC on geographic names.

Meaning that the GNSO has concrete, factual document to relate to when they're making the proposals. Because I think in another way, we will not get out of this constant friction of being -- being confronted with a proposal which we -- as basic nature we will be very critical on, as Switzerland did, and point out all the negative parts or the parts which will not function. Maybe this function, of course, is one thing we have as a GAC but giving more proactive guidance on what we think are the principles updated up to now with all the experience we have would be a way maybe to come out of this frictional situation. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Netherlands.

U.K.

UNITED KINGDOM: Yes, Thank you, Chair. First of all, very briefly just to echo the U.S. comment about the paper that described as a straw man, I

think that was a misnomer. It was not -- a straw man proposal is usually designed as a kind of starting point that then gets further refined. So it was wrongly titled in that way. It was explained that this was a distillation of all the inputs at the time of the Webinar. And some of those inputs will be examined in the course of this cross-community dialogue and either given a thumbs down or a thumbs up, let's look at it again, look at it further, see what can work, drop what's a non-starter. So I understood it in that way. And in conjunction with the background paper that was issued at the time of the Webinar, which I thought was a very effective briefing at ground level, if you like, of why this process was undertaken.

So I remind colleagues to go and have that background paper from April in their back pocket.

I agree with Switzerland that the applicant guidebook is for us a kind of start point. And if the cross-community sessions is going to invite representations about adjusting what's already there in terms of protection in the applicant guidebook for the current round, what is the rationale for making those adjustments so that we understand fully what stakeholders are saying doesn't work, as Switzerland described, understanding what doesn't work in terms of the views of stakeholders who want to make changes. So we gain a better understanding of that.

And, also, this is me speaking very dispassionately, if there are stakeholders, including governments, who want to extend the protection that's currently in the applicant guidebook to geographical names which are significant, what is the rationale for that? And how are you going to define what that extension should cover in terms of geographical names? I'd like an understanding of that because I don't really understand. And I think there were points made yesterday about, you know, what is the problem here. Why are we spending a lot of time on this? What is exactly the problem? Defining the problem, the extent of confusion or whatever it is or infringement of some national rights and so on. Some clearer definition of the problems that are then the rationale for extending the protection. That's what I would like.

The U.K. government is perfectly happy with what's in the applicant guidebook now. We don't see any necessity to extend protection of geographical names. And we haven't expressed support for repository ideas and so on. We haven't done that because we just do not see the scale of any problem that requires adjustment or extension of protection in the current applicant guidebook. So clearer definition of the problems, the rationale for extensions, for adjustments, for stakeholders who see the need to diminish the competition, why are they saying

that? That's what I would like to see coming out of the discussions and the cross-community exchanges tomorrow.

And appreciate very much Jeff and Avri's sterling work on this because it's a wide -- there's a wide disparity of views and inputs and so on. It's a very challenging process. And I deeply appreciate all the work they're doing. Thank you.

CHAIR SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Mark.

And, in fact, it is already one minute past 31. And given that we only have, I think, 45 minutes with the board, if I'm not mistaken, then I think that those three who wanted to take the floor, we'll catch up with you later or you may bring your points in if they are relevant for the discussion with the board.

But I think we really have to ask the board now to come on stage -- or not on stage, to the table here, tables, and not lose time. So thank you for your understanding.

And I also see there are a number of spaces in the front, in the front row among the member states. So, please, board representatives, come to the front and use all the free seats that we have.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]