
ABU DHABI – ALAC and Regional Leaders Working Session Part 8

Sunday, October 29, 2017 – 13:30 to 15:00 GST

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's Sunday, October 29, 2017, in Hall B, Section A, ALAC for the ALAC and Regional Leaders Working Session, Part 8, 13:30 to 15:00.

ALAN GREENBERG: We are trying to gather a few more people, and we'll be starting shortly. All right, can we have the recording started so we can start the session, please? Are we ready to go?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: [inaudible]

ALAN GREENBERG: We're ready to go? Okay. Welcome back to Working Session 8 of the At-Large leadership meetings at ICANN 60. The first item on our agenda is a discussion on public comments, both how the ALAC selects what to work on and the process we follow in fact in doing a comment, should we choose to. There was an e-mail sent a week or so ago that forms the basis of this discussion. I'd like to deal with what I think is the easy part first, how we decide

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to issue a public comment or not. It unfortunately does wrap back to the process we follow.

You will recall in the At-Large review, there was a comment saying we need to focus and decide what to comment on. Our response was – and we backed it up with historical records – saying we believe we’re doing a moderately good job of that. The number of comments we have made is ramped down very significantly over the last couple of years. They also said we need to differentiate between advice and comments. We in fact do do that. The web and wiki did not necessarily represent that very well, but I don’t think that is an issue we need to address at all.

The criteria that we have been using – and there are some exceptions, and I'll talk about that in a moment – are essentially a four-pronged approach. Do we have something substantive to say? If you look back on comments many years ago, you would find very often that we felt obliged to say something even though it might not have any real impact, and it was not necessarily unique. So the first criteria is, do we have something substantive to say?

At the other end, there are occasions where sufficient work has been done that we feel we need to make a token statement saying, “Thank you very much.” Those don’t take any effort at

all, and I'm not worried about occasionally doing those. And sometimes, it's simply a matter of politeness.

The third issue – and that comes back to the reason we exist – is, are there user implications? Do we believe that if our voice is not heard, there will be a real impact on users?

And the fourth one – and this comes back to an awful lot of the work we've done over the last couple of years – are there implications related to ICANN's overall organization, effectiveness, finance, or credibility? Because when it comes down to it, we can only be effective if ICANN is effective. If ICANN ceases to be, we are not likely to get a Chair in the extreme at the ITU or in the United Nations General Assembly. So ICANN's viability and credibility is critical to our existence, and therefore we do take an interest in it.

I have a hard time thinking of anything else that really controls what we do. One of the interpretations of the first one, "Do we have something substantive to say?" is a negative one. We believe other people are going to be saying something that we have to counter. I believe that goes into the substantive category, and occasionally, we think there will be arguments against something that we have to counter even though they haven't been made yet.

Now, I would propose that these are not absolute hard, fast rules. It's quite conceivable that next week, a comment comes up that doesn't meet these criteria, but we believe there's compelling reason to comment, and so be it. So I don't think we should have any ironclad rules.

But I guess I would first like to open the floor on, do these reasons – and to repeat the four, substantive, a token statement that we feel has to be made, there are user implications, or there are implications on ICANN's credibility, stability, whatever – does that form a reasonable substance on which to make a decision on whether to comment or not? Has something been left out there that is common enough that we need to include it in the list? I'd like to open the floor, and I see Eduardo first, Tijani – Tijani first, fine. I don't really care. And Eduardo, and Evan. So Tijani, why don't you go first?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you very much, Alan. I think that the four criteria you gave can be summarized in only one, which is, shall we make any impact regarding the interest of the end users? Because if you speak about substantive comment, if it is not substantive, [there] will not have any impact on the end users. If there is an impact on ICANN, anything that has an impact on ICANN will affect the end users. So more or less if our comment will impact

the end users, we have to have – even when we are only saying we support that, this is a position, and this impacts the end users. To say only thank you for that, this is negative. But to say we support, this is a position. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: May I ask a follow-up? How important is it to say we support in the most general case?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: When we say we support, that means that we don't support the other position. That means that there are several positions and we support this one, not the other. This is a position.

ALAN GREENBERG: Yes, there aren't always multiple sides, however. Okay. We have a queue. Eduardo?

EDUARDO DIAZ: I think making the four items there of the impact to the user is important, but also it has to be qualified within the remit of ICANN. So [having] talking about the resilience, the stability, security, whatever should be there, something there too because if it impacts the user – if I have a traffic light that

impacts the user, doesn't have to do anything with ICANN type thing. I'm just thinking more out of the box.

ALAN GREENBERG: I'd like to presume we don't have too many public comments on ICANN about traffic lights in Puerto Rico. So hopefully if there's a public comment or we were explicitly asked something by a working group, that it is within the remit. So I think we can assume that.

EDUARDO DIAZ: Okay. So following up on that is one of the things I always had problem with the comments is, how do we know when to comment? What's the process?

ALAN GREENBERG: Process we'll talk about next.

EDUARDO DIAZ: Okay.

ALAN GREENBERG: Evan?

EVAN LEIBOVITCH:

Thanks. A quick response to Eduardo, the Bylaws allow us to talk about anything at any time. Although we are recommended to [follow] within the public comment process and it may be helpful if there's an internal process that's trying to gather comments in response to a draft or something, that's helpful, but the Bylaws allow us to give advice on anything at any time. That's what makes us different from the SOs. ALAC is empowered and in fact charged in doing that about any aspect of ICANN, and we are able to make our own timing if we wish.

Having said that, it's definitely going to be more effective if there is a draft or there is a process going on and we give something in a timely manner while they're looking for feedback in order to modify a document or a process or something like that. But we are not bound to that limit.

I want to make a little bit of reference to the strategic meeting that was on last night when it comes to trying to figure out what is important to At-Large. I'm going to try and write up a summary of what happened and present out of that perhaps some recommendations. But one of the things that I found was very interesting was a bit of a gap between what ICANN thinks we should think is important and what the people at the table actually think is important.

And so when it comes time to ALAC’s own policymaking decisions and its own research and its own policy work, we may find that there are a lot of things that ICANN may think are extremely important to us that we may not agree with. That’s a decision to be made internally, probably on a regular basis. There's a once-a-year policy meeting that happens. That might be a good time for At-Large to take stock and say, “What matters to us?” and to get policy expertise to do research on those topics and to focus on those things.

One of the things at yesterday’s meeting going around the table, what's important to end users according to everyone at the table? TLD expansion didn't come up once. So again, this is an example of something that ICANN may consider to be extremely important but for us at the table might not be. So I think it’s very important to consider our strategic priorities rather than what ICANN thinks we think they ought to be.

ALAN GREENBERG:

May I please ask? We’re talking about decisions on how do we make a decision whether to respond to a specific comment, not necessarily what do we focus on.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: But my issue was when a public comment comes time, then we get to go back to that strategic planning and saying, “Does it fit in with what we thought was important?” And that becomes part of the triage process of, “Do we answer it or not?”

ALAN GREENBERG: I would hypothesize that if something comes up that wasn’t in our plan but we decide on the fly it is important, we should do something about it. That’s the level of rules that we should be thinking of now. Sébastien?

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: I think it’s important that we have different roles and facets in that. We can't just express our opinion. It’s important if we have an opinion, but sometimes the opinion is, do we agree? And we need to tell that because at the end of the day in the comments, you will have just people saying, “No, no, no.” And it seems that some people within ICANN staff and maybe on the Board is considering the comments as a voting time where people agree or disagree. Then it’s also important that we say, “Yes, we agree,” or, “No, we disagree,” and we need to express it.

It was a time where we were thinking about two phases in the comment period. Maybe you want to [enter into the how] later in the discussions, and I will stop here. It’s up to you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Sébastien is making reference, I think, to something that was proposed a number of years ago, that comment periods have two phases. One, an opportunity to comment, and then an opportunity for other people to comment on the comments. It never worked because people deferred their first answer to the last day anyway, partly because of the time it takes to formulate a comment, partly strategically because you don't want to give someone an opportunity to say no. So that was a nice idea. It didn't work. I think we have to accept the fact that it didn't work.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Yes, but it's maybe something we need to take into account in our work, is that okay, we participate to comments, but what must be also important to take into account, it not just leaves the [staff to make the summary,] but either we do our own summary or we wait for the staff to make the summary, and at that time we as At-Large, ALAC, if we think that it's important, we can make another comment of the overall issue because if we leave that without answer from us, [it's why I was] asking you if you want to talk also about the process. But that's my point. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. Because of the last ATRT, the second one, I believe there is now a provision for questioning staff's summary. And that indeed we should do if it's something we feel important.

I thought I addressed one of the issues you just raised, but maybe I didn't do it clearly enough. If we believe for one reason or another there are going to be a lot of people saying no, then yes, we better say yes. That's one of the categories that I think we need to weigh in on. On the other hand, we see a lot of public comments which open and close with virtually no input. And just having a yes there just to show that we're busy, I think that's a judgment call that we have to make at the time. We have a queue however, and I should stop answering each point. Ricardo?

RICARDO HOLMQUIST: I understand your question is more a process than what we are discussing now, what kind of things we are going to answer. And in this process, [I'm imagining that] you or the ALT are going to decide at the first step if we're going to answer or not. Because if we said as ALAC that we're going to answer, we can build a substantive answer to what is a question, what the procedure or whatever we're answering. If we decide at the beginning that we're not going to answer, everybody will say yes, no, or whatever, but not more than this. But someone has to at the

beginning say, “We are going to answer,” or, “We need to answer this.” And if we need to answer this, we need to build something. But I don’t see the process here to take the decision.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Again, perhaps I needed to go back on the history. Basically, what we’re describing is indeed what we do now because as we responded to the At-Large review, we believe we do do good triage. These are the criteria that we generally use now, and I’m looking for affirmation that these are the criteria we should continue to use. Are we using the right measures? The process of who decides and how we do that, I would like to go in next once we finish this part of the discussion. And last, we have Seun.

SEUN OJEDEJI:

Yes. I think you just made my point because [I wanted to just] understand what is wrong with the process, what is wrong with the approach we’re using now. Because I think it’s fine as somebody just raises the need to make a comment, and then somebody takes it up and we discuss it on ALAC. I don’t think it necessarily needs to be on the ALT per se. The way we’ve been doing it is that it’s sent to the list, ALAC list most of the time, and somebody takes it up from there and goes to the wiki. I think that is fine. I don’t think it can be better than that, unless we want to have a full-time staff that would be doing that. But I

think what we have now in terms of how we do that is fine. In terms of what we say, I agree that....

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Time. Sorry to interrupt.

ALAN GREENBERG: Finish the sentence, please.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Sorry, excuse me, can I ask that the timer actually be a sound?

ALAN GREENBERG: I thought we had one. I heard one earlier today. I'm not quite sure why we're now saying "time." Please finish your sentence though. Now we have an echo. I may resign. Can our technical staff please identify the echo and remove it? Someone has nodded at me saying maybe it's gone. Good, thank you.

Okay, let's go on to the process. But to answer Seun, one of the problems is when we send it out to the list, there have been at times people say, "Yes, I'll answer that," and they may give a very personal answer. Often it's on perhaps language set rules which one person has an interest in, the ALAC has [no real] knowledge of it, and there's something not good about the ALAC

saying, “We strongly endorse this policy” where virtually no one on the ALAC has a clue what it means.

So just asking, “Is there someone who wants to write it?” is not quite enough. We actually do have to make a conscious decision. And that’s the process I’d like to talk about now. Right now, what we tend to do is when we have either an ALT (ALAC leadership team) meeting or an ALAC meeting, we look at the new comments that have come out in the last while and make a decision at that point. Sometimes we make a decision because it’s easy, sometimes we ask someone to go off and please read the documents.

If the ALT makes the decision, then we inform the ALAC to make sure that we don't have any great disagreement on the ALAC. We started that a while ago when we were having discussion with the review team about the ALT making decisions, and we made the simple statement saying, “The ALT doesn’t make decisions.” And I realize that on occasion, regarding public comments, we do. A relatively small one, but nevertheless. So now we go back to the ALAC on those.

But the problem with that is we only tend to have meetings every two weeks. Public comments are for typically 40 days, so if we don’t even look at it for two weeks, then we charge someone to go off and read the document please and they come back a

week or two weeks later, we get into the mode where if we decide to write a comment, it gets written and we have a few days left maybe to comment on it. We probably don't have a chance to vote before it's submitted, and it's far too tight.

We need to get into a process where we can use much more of the 40 days to formulate statements, pass it down in our community, pass it back, and get the comment really endorsed by us and not just written by one person with one other person reading it, which is often – or if not often, certainly at times – what happens right now. So the question is, can we come up with a better process? Carlton, I see your hand. Can we come up with a better process that makes sure we do things on a more timely basis? And I do have a thought on how to do that, but I would like to open the floor first. And I see Tijani first and then Carlton. Carlton first and then Tijani. And Alberto.

CARLTON SAMUELS:

Thank you, Chair. That has always been a problem for us, and one of the things – the way I would suggest we approach it is that every ALAC would come to office with an understanding that [there are] key policy issues that are of interest to the ALAC. Once those are established, you go about it as if it were a cabinet. So there are people who are assigned to follow one or more of these key policy issues. And then when time comes to

make any comment, those persons by virtue of having that portfolio would have been a little ahead of the pack in terms of preparation for addressing the issues.

That is something that we have tried to put in place when I was in the ALAC and you were there. One of the problems that we had is that we had too many of those issues. We were just spread too thin. And so Evan said earlier, we have to accept that we have to cut our coat to suit our cloth. We just do not have the bandwidth to chase everything. So what we must do, I believe, is just focus on the key issues, assign a responsibility for those, and then move it that way. Thanks.

ALAN GREENBERG: Tijani?

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you very much. First of all, I will list the current process used. Now when there is a public comment, staff send an e-mail to the list saying that, “This is the public comment. Who wants to comment on it?” And then the first ALT or ALAC meeting, we discuss all the current public comments and we identify the interest that we have to comment on it. Even if the ALT choose to comment on it and even if someone volunteers from the ALT

to make the comment, this is ratified by the ALAC meeting later. It is always two weeks or one week later.

So this process is consuming a lot of time because we have to wait until the next meeting, the next call. It might be two weeks, three weeks after the public comments start. So this is a time lost. And second, there is no awareness in our community that when we receive an e-mail about the public comment, we have to say immediately, “Yes, we have to comment,” or, “No, we don’t have to comment.” We always receive that and wait for the next call.

This has to change in my point of view if we want to improve the process. And every time there is a public comment, the e-mail is sent to the list saying, “You have until this date to say if ALAC should make a comment or not.” And if we have already a consensus about making comment, we can start immediately and give the pen to someone to hold it and to make the first draft. I think this is the way to improve.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Time, Tijani. Sorry.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Okay. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Alberto?

ALBERTO SOTO: Thank you, Alan. If these four things you mentioned at the beginning were listed chronologically, I think we should first determine if the public comment impacts the user or ICANN, as it was already said. If the answer is no, the other three will not be addressed. So that is a decision for a comment or not.

And then to save a little further time, if the decision is made to make a comment – it doesn't matter who, I'm just talking about the process – if the decision is that the comment will be issued, I think the first question should be if anyone is familiar with the topic to assign the responsibility to that person alone or with the support of other members to make a comment. If there is no one, we are in trouble because we have to look for someone who is familiar with the topic. We can look among our liaisons within other constituencies if there are other people, and that is how we might address, and then we should see how the process would be completed. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. Eduardo?

EDUARDO DIAZ:

There are many ways of doing this. I hear about current process and new processes. In fact, you know, I like [Carlton's] idea of putting in a graphic because when you look at it, you think the process is one way, and it's done differently because things are [peculiar] to the process.

But anyhow, [that's about how I do – I would] propose a new process. But what I will say is that if it is decided that we need to comment on a policy or whatever, I will say that the ALAC representative from each region should go back to the RALO and get input on that, get comments from the RALO, up to a point. If there is a RALO that doesn't want to answer, so be it.

And staff I will say should get all these comments and reconcile them somehow and present it to ALAC somehow. And then from that, then you do [the statement] because this penholding thing is what happens. I say yes, and I would put my own comment there, and maybe some of you will see it, some of you will not see it, and then it goes through and people vote on it. So I think that that will help also getting the region more involved in getting this input into ALAC. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. A couple of observations. Evin, did you have a remote comment? Please go ahead first.

EVIN ERDOGDU: We have a remote comment from [Dev.] He says, “As an FYI, some attempts were made to address this topic as part of the first At-Large review. See link, which talks about a policy review committee.”

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. That was Dev Anand Teelucksingh, or some other Dev?

EVIN ERDOGDU: [Yes].

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. A couple of observations. We do send out a message when a new comment is announced, and we get very few responses. But I will note that on the rare occasion we get responses, they're almost always situations where we decide a comment is not warranted. So again, it's someone who has personal interest, but usually it doesn't map to an ALAC interest. So although we go through that process, it doesn't work very well. So I think we have to acknowledge that.

It's fine to say we should assign assessment to somebody. Assessment often means reading dozens or hundreds of pages if you're not already an expert on this. That takes time, and although we do assign these things, it varies how quickly we get something back and if we get something back. I'm just recounting what happens. I'm not justifying it or whatever.

It's not uncommon for us to decide we must make a comment on this and we just don't get around to it. The person who volunteers gets busy, they don't find the time to do it, and we finally give up. Sometimes at the last moment we'll write a comment, vote on it, or comment, submit it, and then vote on it, but often we just don't get around to it. So those are the kind of things that are happening right now, and I'm not sure assigning it – given that people have time constraints on their real lives make it somewhat problematic. We have Sébastien and Tijani.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: I think we need to go a little backward here. There is a public comment, and if we just start to take into account what we have to do when they open, we are already late. [And] how we can work beforehand? And there are two ways.

ALAN GREENBERG: I'm sorry. Please go ahead, Sébastien.

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET: That's okay. No worries. There are two ways. First, when it's a topic where we are already participating, we know when and if a public comment will happen. For example, that's easy for all the Work Stream 2, we know that the public comment will be open after this meeting, and how [we will] prepare to answer to participate to those comments.

Second, we have nobody in this, but we can go to the list of the possible upcoming public comment, and it could be a good way to be ahead if we look at that and not just at the one who open. And I suggest that we take that into account in the future review on how we work on the comments and we go through the possible open comments for the future and we try to assign people, a penholder to those topics too. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. Tijani, very short because we're 15 minutes over and we have our guests already in the room.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you, Alan. Just to say that the current process permit to all members of ALAC, of At-Large, all members, including the RALO members, to receive the e-mail that the staff sent as soon as the public comment is open. So there is no need to have

another intermediary stage to ask the RALO Chairs to go to their members. I think the problem is the interest. We need people to be interested, to tell us if they want us to make comment. Otherwise if people are not interested, nothing will change.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you. Just for the record, Sébastien, we now do publish in the list of comments upcoming ones. At least we're trying to. That's a relatively new innovation.

Thank you for the input. We will obviously have to continue this, I suspect both on some future ALT call and ALAC calls. And we will get better one way or another. So thank you all.

We now have a new topic. We are running late. We were going to do 15 minutes of preparation for the GAC meeting. I think we have pretty well consensus on the mailing list on one of the more substantive items, so I'm going to say we will run over. We will probably not do that item today, but we'll give our speakers the full amount of time in this session even though we are starting late. And the subject is public responsibility report and update on ICANN Learn. I'll turn it over to Ergys.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Thank you, Alan, and thanks again for the opportunity to address the group. I think we'll start with a quick update on the

Community Onboarding Pilot Program, and then I'll hand over to Betsy for an update on the new ICANN Learn platform which I am certain will make most of you I hope happy.

The Community Onboarding Pilot Program, formerly known as the mentorship program, was designed about two years ago. At the time, the IANA functions stewardship transition was taking place, and a lot of the conversation was centered around the notion of volunteer burnout and overall fatigue. So the purpose of the program was really to improve overall engagement of newcomers as well as improve retention rates. One of the key features of the program is to match members of the community who have been around for quite a while and have a lot of experience with those who are new members or newer members of the community.

To date, we have had four SO/ACs participate. The ASO, RSSAC, and SSAC for various reasons have decided not to participate. One of the common threads for the three of them has been that they don't see a value in the program for their own respective communities.

As we do with most of our programs, but particularly with our pilots, at the end of each year or cycle, we take a much closer look at looking at success factors and also identifying areas of improvement. At the end of FY17, we took a much closer look at

the onboarding pilot, and we found that overall, the concept for the program finds a lot of support across the community, and it provides a bridge between newcomers and those who have been in the community and are a lot more active and participating, especially in the policy development process. So there is a gap, at least a perceived gap that the program [meets.]

We also found though that in terms of improving and looking forward, there are quite a few areas that we'll need to focus our attention on moving forward. One of the key findings was that the coordination internally could improve a lot more. That includes both within staff, between us as program managers, and the policy liaisons, and also from within the communities, and from one community to another community.

We also found that the overall transparency and information about the program was lacking. For example, there wasn't a lot of information out there as far as what the program is about, who is participating, what the purpose is, and things of that nature. The communications aspect was also lacking, and this is related to the information transparency. The wiki at the time was not necessarily populated with information that was useful. There were also not a lot of regular blogs or pieces of information emanating out of the group, and just again in general, not a lot of updates.

Lastly, one of the findings was that the quality of the materials that were being produced was quite uneven from one community to another. A lot of that of course reflects both the resources the communities have but also the priorities that these communities have. I have to say that since we had concluded this analysis, a lot of progress has been made, and a lot more of the communities and constituencies that are participating as part of this program have made progress. You can find all that information online, and you can actually see all of the different packages that the communities have prepared. And a lot of it is quite substantive in fact, including this group's.

So what are we going to do about this? One of the main things goes back to the notion of improving overall coordination, is that the decisions about who will be participating in the program needs a lot more consultation with the policy liaisons. As most of you are probably aware, those of you who have been following the program closely, the selection process for participants hasn't always been very clear. And a lot of it goes back to miscommunication from the onset and how the program was set up from the beginning, but our goal is again to look forward rather than dwell on the past, and we have an opportunity now to improve how things have been running.

We also feel that there is a great need to create similar structure around the program. Specifically that means to have clear goals

both at a high level, across the different communities, but also within each specific community and for those goals to be made public. We feel that the accountability factor and the transparency factor far outweigh anything else. In fact, there's really no good reason why not to be completely transparent and accountable about any ICANN programs, but specifically about a program that deals with onboarding new members of the community that could have so much more value.

So by ICANN 60, we had agreed that we will create a much more robust wiki space. This will include all of the names of past participants – this information wasn't there, so it may sound basic, it just wasn't there – as well as making available all the materials that have been produced in the past year.

We had a meeting about two days ago with the program participants, and we got a better idea of expectations and also the bandwidth that each community has and the priorities that each community has set for themselves as far as this program is concerned. And I will touch on that just a little later. I'll consult my notes since it's still very fresh.

And we also agreed that collectively, we need to identify and define the goals for FY18, but also beyond that. And part of that conversation was along the lines of, "Is there still a need for this program? Is the current way fit for purpose? If it's not, what does

the community want? Or does the community want anything?” And the overall consensus was that, yes, again this fills a gap, but the current way in which it is structured, it may not be the best way moving forward.

So this is a work in progress over the course of the next few weeks and months. We will be working with the community to identify what it is that we need to do better and also continue the conversation on whether or not this is something that we may wish to continue in future years.

We also identified ICANN Learn as the main platform that we need to use and leverage to post information about the program. This will serve as a central repository of all that information, and it’s a tool that’s free and available to all. With all the new changes that Betsy will touch on a little later, it’s the best tool that we have presently at ICANN to share information of this nature because we can make it interactive, people can take quizzes, and really, we can gamify the whole process and also have certifications and things of that nature.

The last slide here is just a list of ICANN 60 participants. This is just for your reference only. Most of this reflects the list of previous participants with a few exceptions. But by and large, those who have participated in the program to date have been pretty much – the core group has been quite static.

As far as some of the key takeaways from our face-to-face meeting – and I'll consult my notes here – overall, the group felt that there's really no shortage of newcomers at ICANN, but the proportion of those who are participating actively, especially in the policy development process, is very small. So is this an issue of capacity? We need to dig a little deeper to identify what the concerns are, and we need to do this collectively. This is not just a staff issue. It's not just a community issue. It's a staff/community/Board issue and something that we need to address collectively.

Also going back to capacity, people don't feel comfortable going to working groups. Again, they don't feel empowered, they don't feel that they necessarily have the skills. Perhaps sometimes the criteria to join a working group – at least newcomers feel that – are way too high of a burden for them to overcome. So that creates an interesting dilemma for us, and this program is one of those that has a lot of potential to provide people with information, the tools, and the knowledge that they need to overcome some of those concerns.

And one last point, one of the comments was that we need to really break down the concept of capacity along the lines of attitudes, confidence building, which in this case is very important because a lot of people felt, “Yes, fine, it's not that I don't have the capacity or the knowledge, I just don't feel that I

have enough confidence to participate in the policy development process.” It’s intimidating. You are working with individuals who are experts in their field, and all of a sudden, here is little me trying to participate in this environment that at times is not the friendliest, and once people feel that way, it’s very difficult for them to make positive contributions.

So I will stop here, and I think Alan, if you don’t mind, we can take questions now or perhaps let Betsy go. Whatever works best for the group.

ALAN GREENBERG: Betsy, roughly how much time do you want for your presentation?

BETSY ANDREWS: I can make it quick.

ALAN GREENBERG: We have 30 minutes left. We manage to run out of time for everything we do, and I don’t want to run out of time before we even let you talk.

BETSY ANDREWS: Why don’t I go ahead and speak, and then we can answer questions collectively?

ALAN GREENBERG: Okay.

BETSY ANDREWS: Okay. Hi, I'm Betsy Andrews. I work with Ergys in the Public Responsibility Department, and thank you very much for having us here today. I want to tell you a little bit about ICANN Learn, so we'll move on to a couple more slides. ICANN Learn is your tool for capacity development. We present education and training opportunities. It's going to become more integrated into programs such as Onboarding, the Fellowship, and NextGen. At-Large is actually a great model for the use of ICANN Learn because we have the At-Large capacity building webinars as a course on ICANN Learn, and I'll tell you a little bit more about how this is going to change as the ICANN Learn platform is evolving.

ICANN Learn is currently available in six UN languages, which is great, but we understand the need for more languages is also important, so that's another thing we'll be addressing. Next slide, please.

The new ICANN Learn platform is going to be launching in December, and it's going to look like this. As you see on the screen, it's going to be a bit more interactive with a few more

options that meet some of the needs of requests that have come up. One of the main things we're going to address is to make more technical training available because that has been a big gap in the existing platform.

As you see on the screen, there's a welcome screen. That little banner at the top is going to be changeable, and it could be changeable depending on the group that you're in. So that's significant to this group in that when you register on the ICANN Learn platform or if you're already registered when you're brought over to the new one, we will have groups that you can self-select to assign to, so we can have an At-Large group.

Within ICANN Learn in this At-Large group, we can have targeted messaging at the top, and also if we can go to the next slide, you'll see -this is all going to be on one screen, it just didn't fit on one slide. So you can see down at the bottom where there's "message board" and then there's a poll and contests and frequently asked questions. All of those fields can be tailored for the particular group that the learner is involved in. And if the learner is involved in multiple groups, then all of that targeted information will appear there.

This is going to give us an opportunity to use data to our advantage, so we'll be able to provide a lot more reporting back to people who are compiling courses in terms of how much of a

course are people finishing. If everybody is starting on lesson four, maybe we want to look closely at lesson four and see what's going on. Another big change that's going to be happening is that the new platform is better able to be buffered at lower connection speeds, and also it's going to be automatically resized for multiple devices. So it'll know if you're on your phone, on a tablet, or on a computer, and it'll be optimized for that experience.

There also will be an app. There's currently an app on iOS, so with your Apple products, you can use the app. And it will be coming out on Android. What that will allow you to do is to download a course when you're well connected, and then take the course on your own time if you're in an area that doesn't have great connection, or if you're getting on a flight, you can then take the course. And then when you're connected again, it will upload your data into the system so you get credit for the course.

Speaking of credit for the course, one thing that you will have heard a lot is everyone wants certificates. Everybody wants to have credit for the courses that they've taken, so this is something that we're taking to a different level. There will be a transcript available for the courses that you have completed along with the assessments that go with those courses where necessary. There will also be a certificate that you receive.

ICANN is a non-accredited institution, but there will be a certificate of completion assigned at the end of courses. And also, we'll have a badging system. If we could move on to the next slide. Actually, let's just skip on to the next one after that.

So the badging system will be broken down into these categories, and when you take a designated number of courses within each category, you'll receive a badge. So we're working on making this more of a gamified system, particularly for newcomers who are used to apps and online learning environments to make this a reward system where people can really track their progress and see what's going on. We can also use the badges as a prerequisite for things like perhaps the Fellowship program. When somebody attends, they can indicate how many badges they've collected, so we can understand what sort of base knowledge of ICANN they have, in addition to using ICANN Learn as a capacity development tool in specific groups and communities within ICANN.

So this is just a taste of what's coming. We're rolling it out currently, it's going to be ready in a few short months, and you'll obviously hear more about the At-Large capacity development webinars courses if you are attending the capacity development session on Tuesday. And I'll be there, but Ergys and I can answer any questions about public responsibility support now. And we'll both be around all week, so if you have additional questions or

ideas about ICANN Learn, I really welcome the opportunity to converse with you. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you very much. I have a queue. Tijani, Eduardo, and me so far, and Vanda.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Thank you. Ergys, I will not come back to the past years since you enumerated all the weakness of the system and of the program, and I am hoping that this will never happen again. It was a pilot program. Now it is not a pilot anymore, is it?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [It's still a pilot.]

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: It's still pilot? Okay. Even if it is still pilot, I think that the implication of the community is absolutely needed. A program for the community made by the staff behind the community is not useful. So anything that will be done in this program should be done with the community. If we all agree on that, I think everything will go smoothly and very well. If we don't do that, it will be a problem.

As for if we have to continue this program, yes, we have. It is a very good program. It is a genius idea. But it wasn't done in the right way. And I hope that in the future, we will have really very good cooperation between the community and the staff to have better results. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you. Ergys was rather honest about how poorly some things were done originally, and I think we all understand that and we have a commitment to try to do it better. So let's not rehash the sins in the past. Eduardo?

EDUARDO DIAZ:

Thank you. I have been around ICANN for a while now, and I see a Fellowship program, I see a NextGen program, and now I see an Onboarding program, and I'm confused. The perception if I try to categorize this is [that the NextGen is] for the elite, Fellowship is for everyone there, and this is the middle, [Onboarding]. If you can explain what the differences with all these programs are because we have an outreach program within At-Large too. And we talk about this, and we talk about mentees, other people call them coach. I see all these efforts which I understand the purpose of engaging people here, but come on, people move around. So if you can comment on those differences.

ERGYS RAMAJ: Happy to do so. Thank you, Eduardo, for the question. I would inverse the order. I would say that NextGen – because you're talking about university students and then you have the Fellowship program. The Onboarding program – and I spoke about the confusion a little bit earlier – is you've got both the Fellowship and the NextGen programs, they are newcomer programs. The Onboarding program, what it aims to do is to develop the materials from each respective community that clearly delineates and outlines how is it that you as a newcomer – so coming as an example from these two programs – how can you better engage with each community. So this is the next step after these two newcomer programs rather than an overlap.

EDUARDO DIAZ: Well, what I see now in the Fellowships is their development is going from Fellowship to coach, and then to go forward, not going into onboarding. But I'm confused.

ALAN GREENBERG: Next, I'm on the queue. A very short question. I haven't looked at ICANN Learn for a long time, I must admit, but the last time I looked at it, a fair number of the courses were so bad and so obsolete that I couldn't in good conscience recommend them to

anyone. How much assurance do we have if we tell someone to go to ICANN Learn now they will not find courses like that?

BETSY ANDREWS: Thanks, Alan. We do not disagree with you. Moving to the new platform, the outdated courses have been either revised significantly, or they won't be moved to the new platform. And we have new content coming, specifically technical content but also new content coming in partnership with other organizations that I think you'll be quite proud of.

ALAN GREENBERG: Bless you. Vanda?

VANDA SCARTEZINI: Ergys, I had an opportunity to work a little bit with Janice in this program, and what I saw that was [lack] is the demand of the new people who join here. It's more coaching information, and one thing that is important to have this distributed around. For instance, someone who comes here from my country, they need to reach me there and talk with me, and I can explain all the [inaudible] all the issues around.

So focus on the needs of each community will help. And not only online issues because online issues is not enough for the people

have the feeling to belong. That's the lack of the sense of how to connect people in each region with the people who are in the Onboarding program. Just an idea.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you, Vanda. Olivier?

OLIVIER CRÉPIN-LEBLOND: Thank you. I've looked at the ICANN Learn platform as it stands at the moment, and I'm very happy to see that it's moving to something better than what there is at the moment. The current courses are a mix of videos for some of them, cut-and-paste from static material like brochures, and then some real courses with questions and quizzes.

First question, are you planning to impose a standard to have a sort of certain format of a course so that it would be stimulating courses with questions and things? Because frankly, I like the ones with quizzes and stuff. It gives a sense of achievement for people when they're going through them, while the other stuff just puts people to sleep.

And secondly, in the search, I've just noticed one bar which is a search for a topic. The problem is if you just have a blind search like this, then you might end up with 200 hits for something that

you don't want. Are you associating this with the taxonomy of terms and categories? Thanks.

BETTY ANDREWS:

Yes, thank you, Olivier. Those are really great observations. For the search, there are multiple ways to access that. You can browse through the catalog, you can divide by categories, you can divide by badges, you can divide by language, and you can divide by groups, so there are lots of different ways to go at it. So if you are a member of a particular community within ICANN and you want to access things that are targeted to that community, you can go in that way. Or if you just want to learn everything you can in Arabic, you can go in that way as well.

And in terms of courses moving forward, we will have templates that are standardized. And assessments are a really important part of that, not just so that the people in the backend of the course can see what the learners are learning, but it's also really helpful for the learner to know, "Am I understanding the key concepts that the instructor wants me to understand?"

So if you want to create a course in the future, you won't be locked into a particular format, but we're paying attention to things like cost. Video courses are very expensive to produce, and if we can produce three courses that are not videos for the

cost of what one course would cost that's a video, that's something we need to consider.

So there are different things that we're looking at in order to optimize the platform that we have and the timeline that we have to be able to offer more, but this is definitely great feedback and the kind of thing that we want to keep in mind moving forward. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you very much. Next we have a blank card placed strategically between Evan and Judith, but I'm told it is Evan.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: Thanks. I have one question for each of you. For Ergys, you mentioned about the challenge of getting people involved in working groups, and they're in the midst of [their own] experts and that. It's way more than that. It's also the time commitment. You can't dip your toes into anything. The moment somebody gets into a working group, even a single working group can have two meetings a week in what seems to be endless. In At-Large, by definition everyone here has a day job that has nothing to do with Internet governance. And so there is a challenge, it's not necessarily an answer, but I think this needs to be front and center.

Unless you want to burn out the people who have been here for a long time and totally intimidate the newcomers, there has to be a way to get involved in this that allows somebody to come in gently without saying, “Well, you're either putting in eight hours a week, or don't bother.” And right now, there's no middle ground if somebody wants to get truly into the policy, some way of easing that in.

This is not a simple question, this goes to the root of how ICANN does its policy, but if there's a genuine want to have ALAC and people who don't do this as their main gig involved, that has to be job one. And I said something in the Skype chat that says out of all the time that I've worked in education management, the five words that strike the most fear into me are, “We've created a new platform.” And so in thinking about what's already there, there's Mozilla Open Badges, there's Moodle, there's Khan Academy, there are dozens of organizations that have started this and done this well. And you talk about cost. Something that facilitates community uploads into the [inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Time. Sorry to interrupt.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: And, well – it was for two different people, sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: [No, it was just you.]

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: Sorry, it was cheating, but –

ALAN GREENBERG: Please finish up.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH: Okay. Anyway, could you sort of address something that won't be obsolete in five years. When a new platform needs to come along and new staff comes in and whatever, what's the plan for stability and ongoing engagement?

BETTY ANDREWS: Thank you. I think I understand what you're asking, and I'm going to jump ahead of Ergys because I need to speak at Newcomers in five minutes. One of the reasons why we have made these changes – I say new platform because it's going to look new – but one of the reasons why we've made these changes is so that it will be more compatible with other platforms out there to help facilitate more partnership.

And a lot of other things that are going into it have things like streamlining accessibility so that users who are using visual impairment software or audio impairment software have more ease of use and have better access to that information. So when I say new platform, it's not just something shiny and new for the sake of shiny and new. It's something that is easier to access, and by that nature, lowers barriers to participation.

But in terms of content, like with what Olivier was talking about previously, one of the things that's important on the platform moving forward is to make the content relevant to what's going on right now. And so that's really something with content development strategy that we'll be employing.

So when we say new platform, we don't just mean how it's going to look and feel on the screen. We also mean the whole strategy behind capacity development is something that we're taking a look at, and together with the community and the Board, we're sort of changing our approach to it to make it more effective and to reach more people.

EVAN LEIBOVITCH:

Do you have a strategy for community uploads to augment the professional stuff that you're putting on?

BETTY ANDREWS: We do in the sense that we're going to form an editorial panel that will oversee that, but I think it's a challenge to just have community upload access. We do have the wiki, but with ICANN Learn, there has to be some process of vetting the content so that we know what's going into it.

In the past, the strategy was to take comms materials and make them more digestible, so that's where we get the kind of courses that Olivier was referencing that's maybe a brochure that's created in a different way. But in the future, we want it to be more dynamic learning materials that people can interact with and have a takeaway from. So it's a bit of a different animal now. It's a teaching situation, a learning situation as opposed to just information that can be gathered in a static way.

So no, there's not a solution for that right now, but it is something we're aware of, something we want to happen, and so we want to facilitate a process so that that can happen smoothly and accurately.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. We have four people in the queue. We have Seun, Glenn, Hadia, and Ricardo. I will accept other people to put their hands up, but if we run out of time, they will not be called upon.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: [inaudible]

ALAN GREENBERG: I'm sorry.

ERGYS RAMAJ: You can give it a try, see if I can answer it.

ALAN GREENBERG: Okay, the next person we have is Seun, however.

SEUN OJEDEJI: Thank you. I think one of my comments that's been mentioned by Evan is because I remember that this started with Moodle. It's moved from Moodle to something different, then it moved into something different again within the span of three years. So I think it needs to be clear, it needs to be focused and not keep changing platforms unnecessarily. [I've felt] that this also have cost implications attached to it.

The other thing I wanted to say is that I know I have an account on that platform before. I just logged in now and it's not going through. So to what extent when you change the platform or you have a facelift or feature change, to what extent do you keep the records of the users on the platform? And is this also integrated with – is it just a new account platform on ICANN [various] login

pages? Is it going to be integrated in single sign on in the long run? Thank you.

ERGYS RAMAJ: Can I quickly address those points?

ALAN GREENBERG: Please.

ERGYS RAMAJ: I'm going to keep it very short. The current platform is not fit for purpose, and that is the reason why we're changing it. The new platform is SCORM compliant, and that is why we needed to have technical content because as an organization that does a lot of technical work – not exclusively – we need to be able to provide our community with content that is technical in nature, so SSR-related content. And yes, there will be a single sign-on. There will be no more six interfaces depending on the language you speak. So there's progress.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. We have three more speakers. We have about seven minutes total, including responses. Glenn is next.

GLENN MCKNIGHT: I'll be fairly quick. I'm pleased to see that you're addressing the issue of slow Internet access and off the line access, like using [Rachel as a serval,] that's a common practice we use with IEEE. A number of things. There are four points I want to make.

Question number one, did you survey the community for exactly what their training needs were? Number two, what tools [do you had] report back to the At-Large community, meaning the RALO Chairs, on who has taken the training and what courses they took? Number three, there was a policy development pilot project that was really not a training course, it was sort of a synopsis of other materials. It was not really a training course. I wonder if that has become a course. And number four, are there metrics for the number of people who have enrolled and the number of people who completed the course?

ERGYS RAMAJ: I'll take one of those, and then I'll direct you to Tuesday's session in which Betsy will be speaking to the capacity building group, and with more details about what's been happening with ICANN Learn. But on your question on community engagement, the answer is, yes. About a year ago at the organizational level, we had conducted a lot of research about what is the demand out there in the community, what are the priorities. Now, we haven't built any courses that address those points because in terms of

content, we will rely upon the community to build the content. We are not the content providers. We are providing a platform and we are facilitating the creation of the content, but the content needs to come from you, from the community in collaboration with us.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thank you. Hadia?

HADIA ELMINIAWI: Okay. So my question was about [E-learning,] ICANN Learn. How do you measure the effectiveness of this program? Because it's mainly basically courses and training online or offline. How do you know that you're succeeding in what you're delivering or doing?

ERGYS RAMAJ: One of the things we look at is the completion rate of courses and the retention rates of users. And we have seen that over the past year, the level of interest has dropped significantly. A lot of that speaks to the quality of the platform and the quality of the courses that are available on the platform.

Now, the single sign-on issue hasn't really helped. The provision of courses in the different languages hasn't been what we

wanted it to be. So all of those things are things that we look at in terms of KPIs. So that's our strategy.

It has been a very thorough process over the past year that we've been looking into this, and we've of course spoken to the community at length about what are their concerns, what are their needs, what are their wants. So to an extent, I'm not going to pretend that this new platform is going to solve all of those issues, but it solves most of the ones that we've identified.

HADIA ELMINIAWI:

I think the problem was never with the platform or the access to the platform. The problem is with the content. And even if the platform is not that great, still, if you have excellent content there, people will find a way to access and make use of it.

ERGYS RAMAJ:

Yes, and moving forward, as Betsy alluded to earlier, this will be a collaborative effort with the community to develop the right content, the content that is needed for your community by your community.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you. Ricardo?

RICARDO HOLMQUIST: This is directly for you, it's not [education]. It's about the programs. As Eduardo mentioned, there is NextGen, Fellows, and there is the new program you mentioned. I was a fellow for two of the last three ICANN meetings. For the Johannesburg meeting at least, you need to be a prior fellow to be a fellow in Johannesburg. So I don't see coordination between the three fellowships. The NextGen I understand is for less than 30, but then if you're a fellow, you can be fellow four times, five time, six times, and I don't see the real difference with the new program you're mentioning. I don't see a real coordination between the Fellowship and the one that is new. Maybe if Fellowship is only once or maybe two, that's all. But you can be fellow five times and not enter in the new one.

ALAN GREENBERG: I don't know the answer, but I'll tell you what I hope the answer is. The Fellowship program is run largely by staff, and you get selected by staff to be a fellow. I am presuming in the Onboarding program that we will be able to designate someone and saying, "That's a new person. They seem to be really good potential. We would like them to be within the onboarding [inaudible]." So I'm hoping that that is the difference between the two. I won't comment on whether someone should be a fellow 17 times or not, but I'm hoping that we will be involved in selecting the people for the Onboarding program. We are almost

out of time, but I just used a minute, so I'll give a minute to Tijani.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

Thank you very much, Alan. Even the fellows are selected by part of the community because the selection committee is composed of – okay, so I would like to tell you that I have been following the ICANN Learn since its inception with Nora and Chris and then with Ergys and Betsy. I am really thankful of those people because they are really listening to what we say. I always give my point of view, and they are always improving the platform even if the platform is not perfect now. But there is a big difference between the platform when it was conceived and the platform now. And now they are going to another level of this platform, and I hope it will be much better. So I cannot say anything about those people, they are wonderful, and I think that the community won a lot from this platform. Thank you.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you, and I will give Dev 30 seconds, eating into our 15-minute coffee break.

DEV ANAND TEELUCKSINGH: Sure. Public service announcement that the Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee will be meeting here at 3:15 PM, and

one of the things that we are doing as part of the 90-minute session is have an introduction to ICANN At-Large geared towards ICANN Fellows and NextGen. And this is part of the program that [part of the] Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee has been doing, and trying to really reach out to the Fellows and NextGen and to any newcomers at the ICANN meetings. So please attend and help us out. And of course, join the Outreach and Engagement Subcommittee if you care about these issues.

ALAN GREENBERG: Thanks.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: [If we could have a few seconds to respond to] [inaudible] Can Ergys have...?

ALAN GREENBERG: Can Ergys have two seconds to respond to everything? Can we have a two-second timer, please?

ERGYS RAMAJ: One, two. I'm done. No, very quickly, just a quick correction that the selection committee for the Fellowship program is fully community-based. Another correction is that the number of

times that you can participate in the Fellowship program is three, the maximum number of times. Not four or five. People could come back as coaches, but that's not necessarily a fellow.

We are currently – and I think you'll all be pleased to hear this, I'm the review guy, apparently. We are currently reviewing the Fellowship program. We're looking at everything, how it's been operating, whether it's fit for purpose, and of course, there'll be a community consultation into this once we crystallize and we get to a point where we ourselves understand better what it is that we want to do and we want to get out of it, keeping in mind what we've been hearing across the different communities at ICANN.

So I don't have a specific date by which we will come back to the community with more specifics on this. Hopefully in the next couple of months or so, but I cannot commit to that because of bandwidth issues, first and foremost. But we are looking at the Fellowship program, we are reviewing it, and there will be changes.

ALAN GREENBERG:

Thank you very much. I do apologize for saying it was staff-driven. It is community, but it's not necessarily our community, and that's what I was trying to highlight. We reconvene in about

14 minutes, and we're talking about our favorite topic, working groups.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]