
ABU DHABI – ICANN60 Opening Ceremony
Monday, October 30, 2017 – 09:00 to 10:00 GST
ICANN60 | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

BRAD WHITE: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome ICANN's vice president of stakeholder engagement for the Middle East, Baher Esmat.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT: (Through Interpreter) Good morning. Ladies and gentlemen, dear guests from the Internet community around the world, welcome to the ICANN60 meeting that is called ICANN.

(In English) Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the ICANN 60th public meeting here in Abu Dhabi. Welcome to the Middle East and welcome to the United Arab Emirates.

I'd like to recognize and thank the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates for their great support and effort in organizing this meeting. And a huge welcome to our guests and participants from across the Middle East and the Arab Nations.

I'm also delighted to see members and leaders of the Internet community from the ISTAR organizations and from ICANN's

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.

supporting organizations and advisory committees all gathered here today.

As usual, ICANN public meetings have many sessions. In fact, we have over 350 sessions scheduled this week. So I wish you all fruitful discussions and a good meeting.

And now I'd like to invite Goran Marby, the president and CEO of ICANN, to give his opening address.

[Applause]

MR. GORAN MARBY:

Good morning. And to show the diversity within ICANN, I will perform my speech in Swenglish.

[Laughter]

Good morning. Thank you all for being here today. And welcome to ICANN60, the annual general meeting.

Welcome, Your Excellencies, ministers, and ambassadors. Welcome and thank you to His Excellency Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori -- sorry about my pronunciation -- from the Director General of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, which is also our host.

This is our first ICANN meeting in the Gulf Region, and I'm very glad to be here. The United Arab Emirates is in the forefront of

digital transformation in the region and a leader in infrastructure development and growth of digital services. The UAE is also one of the region's most advanced Country Code Top Level Domains .AE and the Arabic IDN .EMARAT.

We are enjoying the warm welcome we have received in this splendid facility and by our host in Abu Dhabi, the capital City of the United Arab Emirates.

And if you have any doubt -- if you have any doubt that you actually tell me what to do is that I stood up in Copenhagen and promised you that we should have the opening ceremonies in the afternoon. The SO/AC leadership vetoed that. So good morning.

[Laughter]

One thing that is very important for me and for my organization is that transparency creates accountability. And I'm going to share some of the highlights of that this year.

I hope you had a chance to look at the flowcharts that we now have on the website together with the manuals we have developed together with you over the last year. It's mapping out our sometimes little bit problematic structures and can make us all do a better job.

We also recently learned something called the accountability indicators, which replaces the KPI dashboard that we had before. And it's a way for us to better show our progress and how we work with strategic and operational plans. It's actually quite easy to use. Go in there and you can find a lot of information, anything from how many people from a fellowship program comes there to how we spend our money.

Another thing that we decided is to enhance the relationship with icann.org, the website. Sometimes even for me it's hard to find information there. We -- in Montevideo, the board decided to make a multiyear investment to make that no longer a problem. We are introducing a documentation management system with a new Web interface. This is going to take several years to implement because we have more than 120,000 documents there already. But it also increased availability for people to find documentation in other languages.

If you have any complaints, questions, please speak to Duncan Burns or David Conrad. We are also having a session about this, this week. The objective is to make sure that we stay within our missions and do what we're supposed to do.

And as you know, a new tradition is that we will have an open Q&A with my executive team this week. This is an ability for us to talk to you and for you to ask any questions you want to us.

But as always, this is not your only opportunity to talk to us. Please continue to stop me in corridors and ask questions. Please also ask my team questions. They probably have better answers than me.

But I want to change the subject slightly and draw your attention to something. ICANN is a fantastic organization. No one has done what we've done before. Together, you have created what is the user interface to Internet for many users around the world. That makes you important; that makes this meeting important. While we are not without challenges, many places around the world there are legislative proposals that can have a direct effect on our possibility to make policies. We don't judge from them. Many of them are for very good intentions, but sometimes the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

This week one of the items we talked about a lot is the European legislation about GDPR. Please come to the session about that so we can continue the discussion.

But think also about it not only from a tech law perspective, think about it also from an Internet governance perspective because we will see many of those. And we have to figure out together how we can be in the room, not to interfere with politics because we should never do that, but sometimes help and tell how Internet and ICANN actually works.

I also would like to extend a heartfelt hopes for our friends in Puerto Rico and its neighbors that they will experience a speedy recovery in the wake of the devastating Hurricane Maria and emphasize that we have a strong desire to keep our promise ICANN 61 in the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan.

[Applause]

The best thing we can do for our friends there is to actually go there and spend a lot of money.

[Laughter]

As you know, one of the reasons we're here is to say goodbye to a dear friend. Someone who has influenced me a lot over the last 18 months. Someone we will be missing seeing in the halls, dinners, was really a pillar of our community. And I would like you to join me to give a round of applause to Beth Crocker.

[Applause]

[Standing ovation]

Beth, we will miss you.

[Laughter]

And we also miss that you enabled Steve to accomplish his run with ICANN. And it is like they usually say, "Behind every successful man stands a surprised woman."

[Laughter]

Every year the ICANN leadership award is given to an outstanding individual in our community who demonstrate extraordinary commitment to ICANN. It's awarded to people who remain true to the community's core values chosen by the ICANN org executive team. This year, there is no other choice -- and I think you will agree. So please come up and join me on stage, the well-deserved winner of the leadership award is our chair, my friend, Dr. Stephen Crocker.

[cheers and applause] Tomorrow, of course, we will have the real tribute to Steve.

And, Steve, by the way, according to my instructions, you should stand up because you are taking over after me.

Yes, boss.

Yes. It says here, "Hand over to Steve." Thank you very much.

[Applause]

DR. STEVE CROCKER: That was very kind and not entirely expected.

Well, it says, "Thank you, Goran." But I think I'm going to start off with saying, "Thank you, everybody." This is a bittersweet

time. It's been a long run, and I will miss the excitement. But we have work to do.

So thank you, Goran, Your Excellencies, Mr. Hamad Obaid AL Mansoori. Also I'd like to welcome the Minister of Telecom of Yemen. Ministers and ambassadors, ICANN community members, colleagues from other Internet organizations, ladies and gentlemen, welcome all of you to ICANN60. It is wonderful, indeed, wonderful to be Abu Dhabi. It is well-known that this Emirate hosts the Formula One Grand Prix, an annual event defined by breathtaking cars, adrenaline rushes, and screeching tires. Kind of makes you wonder why they invited us. Those are not exactly the qualities that define an ICANN meeting. We do hear screeching, of course. It doesn't come from the tires. This will be my 19th time I've welcomed you to an ICANN meeting. And, as I've already noted, it will be my last.

By now you know that Cherine Chalaby will succeed me as chair and will be welcoming you to the next meeting ICANN61 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Cherine and I have been working very closely together in a symbiotic relationship. He has been teaching me Arabic, and I have been teaching him to count in binary. Progress is slow.

[Laughter]

Nonetheless, we make a good team, talk often about where ICANN is now and where it should be going in the future.

My greatest source of pride when it comes to this organization is, quite simply, that it works. Furthermore, it works better and more inclusively than many ever thought possible. The security, stability, and resiliency of the Domain Name System is in good hands. In the early days it was called "The ICANN experiment." We don't hear that any more because the experiment has proven successful.

But ICANN's growth has made me reflect on several key points. I learned a very important lesson very early on that one must always be -- there must always be a thoughtful balance between process and a focus on mission.

As ICANN continues to grow, so do our processes. Goran already made reference to documenting all of our processes. It is a wonder to behold.

But I occasionally become concerned that at times the processes may impede rather than facilitate our ability to get the job done.

So processes should be developed based on need, not on the expectation that they may be needed. And our focal point must be, should be the work needed to be completed.

And implicit in all of this is it's time -- it's always time to re-examine whether our processes are, in fact, working effectively for us.

With the IANA stewardship transition behind us, the new empowered community is quickly finding its footing.

That's what it's written here. I don't know how quickly it's actually finding its footing. There are a lot of details that need to be worked out. And the positive news is that everybody is working their way through the pieces of these. Both the board and the organization are embracing their roles in the supporting -- in supporting the community and planning for the future. I am, however, not without some concerns. Much has been written of late about the growing distrust of institutions, institutions of all types, be they government, business, or even religious.

Too often that distrust is rooted in a perceived lack of transparency and accountability. ICANN's commitment to those qualities cannot be overstated. They are and should remain a critical part of our DNA.

What we do and how we are defined will always be framed by how well we adhere to transparency and accountability.

Some years back, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis said, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant," but it is far more than that. That light of transparency will illuminate our path forward. As we go down that path, we should also feel pride in the accomplishments of our recent past. The new gTLD program, in general, is one of such success as is the growing proliferation of Internationalized Domain Names.

IDNs have become a welcome mat to an online world from which many have felt excluded, simply by nature of their language.

Another accomplishment which I feel very good about is the growing adoption of the Domain Name System Security Extension, otherwise known as DNSSEC.

In this day of increasing online threats, I feel very positive about the security and resilience of the DNS. As most here know, earlier this month we had planned to change the cryptographic keys that help protect the DNS. Those plans were postponed when the office of the Chief Technology Officer got new data indicating that too many Internet Service Providers and network operators were simply not yet ready for the key change or "roll" as we call it. Rather than risk having a large number of Internet users lose connectivity with the DNS, the decision was made to postpone the key change until the new information could be

fully evaluated. Almost immediately we explained to the world why we were postponing the roll. And, with very few exceptions, almost everyone supported our "go slow and get it right" approach. Again, transparency paid off as did our growing depth and focus on technical issues.

At the end of the day, ICANN is, indeed, a technical coordination body, something that was too often lost on politicians and government officials a couple of years ago as they debated the wisdom of the IANA stewardship transition. Our technical mandate is more than important. It is the central reason for our very existence and needs to be front and center as we look to the future.

In the early days we used to say, "Networks bring people together."

And, by extension, so does ICANN. Witness that we're all here.

I'm proud of our diversity and the inclusion that so often defines an ICANN meeting. It is my hope that, as various constituencies select their representative board members, they do so carefully and with great deliberation. Diversity should always be a factor in their decision making.

The Board members should reflect the careful, respectful, and reasoned thinking that frames the community constituencies.

Even though our mission is largely technical, we are human beings who carry within ourselves an innate desire to be heard and to be treated with respect and kindness.

You've heard before my recurring theme of encouraging empathy and compassion. Those are not qualities you will find mentioned in our mission, but they are qualities that will help us fulfill our mission.

Please know that, as I leave the ICANN board, I do so with gratitude and with pride, not pride in what I have done, but pride in what we have all done together.

We have validated the ICANN model and changed the way the world views us.

Whatever I may have contributed to this organization pales by comparison to your contributions. Your tireless efforts leave me humbled and leave me honored. And for that, all I can say is thank you.

[Applause]

I'd like to call on -- Baher, are you going to introduce Alan?
Thank you.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT: Thank you. Thank you, Steve. And thank you for your leadership and years of service at ICANN.

I'd like now to invite Alan Barrett, CEO of AfriNIC.

[Applause]

ALAN BARRETT: Good morning. I'd like to thank ICANN for giving the ASO the opportunity to address this meeting. The ASO is the Address Support Organization. And we sometimes refer to ourselves as the second N in the acronym "ICANN."

ICANN is not only names. It's also numbers, and the Address Support Organization deals with those numbers. You might see some slides up there.

The Internet numbers are managed around the world by five Regional Internet Registries.

And, when the five Regional Internet Registries work together, we call ourselves the NRO, the Number Resource Organization.

But, when we're inside the ICANN space, we use the name ASO, the Address Support Organization. It's almost like two names for the same organization. It's a little more complicated than that. But, if you think of ASO and NRO as two names for the same organization, you won't be too far wrong.

So thank you, ICANN, for letting us address you.

The RIRs make their policy in 10 meetings per year. There are five RIRs, and we each have two meetings. So our policy is not done inside ICANN. That's why you don't see us very much. Perhaps these five minutes will be the only time that you hear from the RIRs during this meeting. But we are very active throughout the year in our own venues.

So everybody is welcome to come to the RIR meetings. On the screen there is a list of the next five meetings over the next six months. There will be one in each of the five regions. I'm sure you'll be able to download these slides later to review the list.

Now, what have we been working on recently? I'm so glad the IANA transition is over. That kept us busy for quite a while.

This year we've been working on the ASO review.

Like the other ICANN supporting organizations, we have to have a review every five years. And the review is to determine whether the ASO has a continuing purpose in the ICANN structure and whether any changes are needed or desirable to improve its effectiveness and also whether the ASO is accountable to the Internet number community.

So we contracted an external consulting company to perform a review. They held interviews with many people at ICANN

meetings and at RIR meetings during the first half of 2017. They published a report in August 2017. ICANN has called for comments on that report. There haven't been very many comments, and the one or two that I saw seemed supportive.

Right now the status is that the NRO executive committee -- that's, essentially, the heads of the five RIRs -- is considering the recommendations in the report.

And we've not yet published our -- the results of our consideration. But we expect that the next step will be that the NRO EC publishes the results of what we think of the 18 recommendations in the report. And that will then go to community consultation before we do anything concrete about it.

The Internet Technology Health Indicators is a project which came from the office of the CTO in ICANN. They wanted to measure how well the -- the health of the system. So is that information accurate? Is it up to date? Are there errors in various levels of systems or protocols or designs? And the Regional Internet Registries agreed to work on the part of this that relates to Internet numbers.

And, when I say, "Internet numbers," we're really talking about IP addresses and autonomous system numbers.

So, because we work in five regions, we asked the registration teams in the five regions to look at what they thought we could do to measure the health of the system. They came up with some recommendations. And there's been a draft that's been published. I'm not going to read out the URL. But a proposal was published. You can download the slides later to see what the URL is, and we're in a call for comments.

So people in our community can comment on the way we're proposing to measure the health of the numbers system.

And we'll be looking at things like the accuracy of the records that we keep and possibly the response time of the databases that we use where you can look up those results.

So we expect to discuss this during the next RIR meetings over the next few months, and possibly next year we'll start implementing.

Another thing that the ASO does is to elect two of the ICANN board of directors, seat 9 and seat 10.

And so this year we've started the process for appointing seat 9. That's the seat currently held by Ron da Silva. And we're currently in the nomination phase.

So, if you have people that you wish to nominate for the position of ICANN board seat 9, nominations are open. There is

just one restriction, and that is the person may not come from the Asia Pacific region because seat 10 is occupied by Akinori Maemura who is from that region. And we cannot have both 9 and 10 from the same region. Okay. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, Alan. And now, please join me in welcoming His Excellency Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, the Director General of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates.

[Applause]

H.E. HAMAD OBAID AL MANSOORI: Steve Crocker, ICANN chairman, chairman of the board, Your Excellency Goran Marby, ICANN president and CEO, Your Excellency Mr. (saying name), respected delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I'm delighted to address the opening of this annual Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Number conference. The significance of this event stems from the fact that ICANN has always been the safety valve for the Internet world. With a 4 billion Internet penetration worldwide we can touch the unique role of this organization in maintaining the

momentum of the Internet which has become the nerve of life for the human sustainable development.

ICANN functionality from registration management to dispute resolution and the new top-level domains have become so important that cannot be missed. Therefore, I take this opportunity to thank ICANN and commend its vital role in our life of today and tomorrow as well. And now allow me to continue my speech in Arabic.

Respected ladies and gentlemen, it's not easy to discuss the impact the Internet has on our life in just a few minutes. For the generation I am from, it seems like a mythical journey between two different eras. We need to remember, for example, how difficult it was for us to look for information 30 years ago compared with that quick click that takes mine or your child to obtain any information over the Internet. The Internet has evolved to the extent that it has become a historical leap between two eras, "human Internet" time and "Internet of Things" time. According to recent estimates, the number of "things" connected to the Internet today exceeds 8.4 billion devices and it is expected to increase to more than 20 billion by 2020. In this evolving digital environment, the quantity and quality of data has been growing extensively. The amount of data created by human beings over the past few years exceeds everything produced by humans over the course of the entire

preceding history. By 2020 the amount of information online will exceed the amount that was online in 2009 by a factor of 44. Let's imagine the evolution that Internet is expected to experience in the near future. For example, every minute there are 571 new Web sites created on the World Wide Web. On Facebook, over 73,000 likes are made, over 100 terabytes of data are received, and over 30 billion pieces of content are shared. And also numerous hours of videos are also broadcasted. And which are also having more than 300,000 Twitter -- tweets over the Internet. This is the situation, how can be the situation in five years from now.

Ladies and gentlemen, we in the United Arab Emirates have realized the importance of the Internet very early. That's why our journey with it has started with ICANN's early days. In 1999, less than one year after ICANN was founded, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, God bless him, launched the first Internet city in the area and tasked it with keeping up with the developments and envisioning a digital future and ways of making UAE into a regional center for information and communication technology. While many were wondering about the feasibility of this approach, Internet and digital technology companies started lining up to come to establish their businesses in the country, benefiting from the

available incentives such as the developed digital communication, information and Internet infrastructure in addition to, most importantly, the support provided by the country's leadership. Approximately one year after the national project started, our good leadership launched the first nationwide electronic government in 2000. At the same time, the Ministry of Finance released the first in kind electronic payment service, the Electronic Dirham Initiative. Gradually what was viewed as a fantasy became part of daily life for millions of people in this land where hundreds of government and non-government services were moved from physical desks to online.

In one meaningful step in May 2013, our good leadership launched the Smart Government Initiative to offer government services on mobile phones followed by what is called Smart City Initiative.

Statistics shows the prevalence of digitalization in the United Arab Emirates. Nowadays, Internet penetration in UAE is one of the highest in the world. With 90% of population online, UAE is ranked the first in the world in terms of smartphone usage. According to 2017 statistics, 81.5% of phones registered in the country are online.

At the government level, UAE is globally ranked the eighth in government Online Services Indicators, OSI, based on the United Nations eGovernment survey 2016, and the seventh according to IAC International eGovernment ranking for 2017 done by the Waseda University in Japan. By the end of 2015, 96% of priority government services have become digital.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, we stand on the threshold of a new future as we are preparing, with the guidance of good leadership, for that day around the corner where we say goodbye to the last barrel of oil exported from our country. We are preparing to enhance the readiness of the future, doing everything possible to launch the fifth generation of broadband network and implementing the Internet protocol IPv6. We are also developing an integrated legislative system for exchanging data and making it available to all and finalizing network connectivity between different Emirates.

After our government launched the Government Accelerator System in 2016 to accelerate the achievement of Emirates' national agenda goals through 2021, our leadership launched the first round of government annual meetings to shape the evolution of our country over the next 50 years with the aim of making the Emirates the biggest design lab of the future. We believe that since the Internet has helped our development programs in the past, it can likewise create an industrial

intelligence-based future of the fourth industrial revolution. You may have been following the recent establishment of the new ministry that deals with industrial intelligence. The new ministry will be headed by young minister Omar Bin Sultan Al-Aulamaa.

Ladies and gentlemen, seeing that Internet accessed by four billion users all over the world, we always need to remember that there are many other millions who are still too far away to reap the benefits of the global resource. I am quite sure that ICANN is doing everything in its power to ensure readiness to accommodate another one or two billion users who are going to join the Internet in the next few years. In today's world, Internet has become a basic right, along with other human rights such as the right to have access to water, air, and good life.

Welcome once again. Wishing your conference -- I congratulate Dr. Steve Crocker for receiving the Annual Leadership Award. And we are presenting a gift for him and wishing him all long life with health, with prosperity, and appreciation for his role in the Internet. Please come on the dais to have your gift and present.

[Applause]

BAHER ESMAT:

Thank you, His Excellency, and once again, thanks to the TRA for the wonderful hosting. We still have one more item on the

agenda. So raising awareness is something many of us do at ICANN. But little do we know about raising awareness using sand. I'm delighted to introduce the first sand artist in the Gulf and Arab world who uses sand to raise awareness and tell stories. Please welcome the Queen of Sand, Shayma Al Mughairy.

[Applause]

[Music]

[Applause]

Thank you, Shayma. Thank you very much. What an amazing way to say things that maybe words cannot say. Thank you.

Now, before we wrap this up, as a reminder, there are a few events taking place at the convention center and around the city. Please be mindful of taking photographs, especially of people and buildings. There are some special rules about photography, so be aware and please, always ask permission.

Lastly, don't forget we have a health and safety center staffed with qualified paramedics, if you need -- if you need any help. The center is also where you go if you lose anything. You can find the number -- the phone number of the center on the back of your badge. That brings us to the end of the opening

ceremony. Thank you very much for joining us, and have a great meeting.

[Applause]

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]