ABU DHABI – ICANN/GAC Operational Processes
Tuesday, October 31, 2017 – 09:45 to 10:15 GST
ICANN60 | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

ROB HOGGARTH: Thank you very much, Thomas. I'll wait, Julia or Gulten, for a thumbs up so we can start the next session.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Thank you. I just ask my fellow Vice Chairs to come up to the top table. Thank you.

ROB HOGGARTH: For those of you who aren't looking to the back of the room, Julia's been very [inaudible] stop, go, stop. So I'm holding off for the moment. I have two thumbs up. I'll consider that the symbol. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Thomas, for giving staff a few minutes during this session to talk a little bit about processes and procedures and capabilities in terms of the operations of the GAC and how the committee works going forward. The purpose of this session if you see the goals and our expectations are to provide you with information about a planned evolution for certain GAC

operational processes that I think started under Olof, but something that we're continuing.

Two, essentially to set up the feedback loop with all of you to share with us opportunities that you think we have to do better, to provide more support, to make your work more effective or more efficient, and finally to again begin the process of issue spotting. Maybe for a couple of minutes here, although I know we have a pretty tight time table, but subsequently in terms of giving us input and feedback in terms of how the committee's operational processes and the various logistics and other work that we do operate effectively for all of you.

There's a relatively simple background to all this, and that is that there is frankly increased workload for the GAC for all of you, there is additional work in terms of responsibilities for the Empowered Community, there are recognitions that additional specific reviews I believe is the term are being started by the ICANN organization, and as many of you have recognized with the new gTLD subsequent procedures, there's always an opportunity for a new work team or working group to be formed.

There's also an increase in expectations from the GAC in terms of being a partner in this Empowered Community. And we view it from a staff perspective a very critical role. And we've looked to Tom and Olof as great examples of this, of being able to help you

meet those expectations collectively as a team and as a committee within the ICANN multistakeholder community.

You've also, and I guess I'm a little part of this, witnessed over the last eight or nine months some substantial operational changes: administrative, Secretariats, and within the support function. It wasn't that long ago where ASIG had three, or Tom three and a half people helping to support the work of the community. And over the last several months, we've lost two or two and a half of them in terms of functioning capability.

We as an ICANN GAC support team have been able to absorb some of that and be able to continue to provide services like the elections and the meeting planning for ICANN60 and on into the future, but these are issues that, you know, we're trying to find ways to do more for you potentially with the same amount of capabilities or even less.

And then finally, and I think this was expressed in a number of the presentations and planning pre this meeting, is the fact that this meeting for the GAC is really one of transitions. In the opening plenary session, I shared with you that just since Johannesburg, 50 participants from your various members have changed through either retirements or reassignments. And if you expand that over the course of an annualized basis, that's about 40% turnover within the participation and the participants of the GAC.

Now granted, we have a very small sample size and this may have been a very unique period, but I think we do recognize that as much as we've come to love, honor and respect many of you, you're not here forever. And so, the processes of the GAC need to be sufficiently sturdy and stable so that it can withstand those transitions.

We just witnessed a leadership transition and I think some have certainly observed to me anecdotally that the operations of the GAC in the past have largely been a function, at least from the leadership team, of the personality of the GAC chair. And something that some of you have come and chatted with me about is, is within ICANN 3.0 or whatever we're calling ourselves after the transition, is that an appropriate place to be or should we be looking at more stable and secure processes and ways to look at things?

Also here during ICANN60 we're witnessing transitions in other communities. And as the GAC is a much more full time partner with some of these other groups, we see that the relationships with the GNSO where that chair is changing, the SSAC where that chair is changing also will impact how you all conduct your work over the next year.

And we also recognize and I think the GNSO advised you all just yesterday that the GAC liaison will be changing. So there's an

ICANN 60
ANNUAL GENERAL
ABU DHABI
28 October–3 November 2017

opportunity to look at that role and what that does to enhance your work or help you in your relations with other groups.

And then finally, and you've all been hearing about this and it's been a big theme this week, you've got changes at the board leadership as well. You've got a new leadership team on the board, a new Chair and Vice Chair. The relationships between the board and the GAC are very important. What can we be doing for you that helps that collaboration, that partnership that you have with the board? You all know that with the BGRI meeting yesterday, that Markus Kummer is leaving the board, so now you'll have a new partner liaison at the board with Martin coming in and taking on that role. So, many changes. And in a period of these types of changes we're looking to help you in terms of clarity and consistency.

There are a number of potential areas of evolution that we are looking at in terms of improving support for you. These are the major categories. And please don't get scared; I have a slide for each one but I will just very briefly go over each one of them. But, these areas of member management and record keeping. Leadership support. Meeting management. Participation in transition processes. Informational expectations from all of you. Our communications tools. What we have, does that work

effectively for you? And then again, tracking and archive functions.

And I'll just touch very briefly on each one of these, again in the spirit of issue spotting and in hopes that you might hear something and you say, "Yeah, that's something we need you guys to change or fix or work on."

Let's look at membership management first. Just very briefly. And I'm sorry, I've been so focused on talking, I haven't been changing slides. Membership management. A number of areas that we've looked at include a definitive member list and sets of information. How do we keep that information? In the world of new GDPRs and various circumstances, how do we assure that what ICANN is doing in terms of preserving that information that that is kept confidential and only provided to the appropriate people?

Consistency of tools and information. I've noticed that we don't really have a -- we have general templates and expectations for how you inform us about joining the GAC as a new participant, but looking to make that a little bit more rigorous in terms of a template or a form. So if the information we collect from one country is the same set of data that we collect from another country. So that you are comfortable knowing this is what I need

to do to change my information or so that we can have a consistent process for adding advisors, that type of work.

Clear rules about the information availability and how it's used and stored. Methodology for volunteer management. Tom has mentioned this several times, how not only do we keep track of who is on each work team or working group, but how do we set up and be clear about the expectations for what your responsibilities are as a volunteer in a working group in terms of participation, informing all of your colleagues about what's going on, and keeping everyone up to date. Those are a number of areas just within membership management that we've looked at.

In the case of leadership support, something where I've spent the bulk of my time in my first 12 weeks working with you all is, you know, looking at the new role of the GAC and the Empowered Community. Many new responsibilities in terms of providing recommendations for members of review teams, how do you do that? How can we make that effective and efficient? What are the criteria? When the board takes an action, you know, how do we inform you of that? How is that information supplied in an effective and an efficient manner?

And there are all sorts of additional, I think, operational areas that members of the ICANN community are concerned about with respect to ICANN operations and the ICANN budget and the ICANN

priorities. How can we help you engage as a community, as a committee with that area of work at ICANN so that you're at least aware of what's going on.

From a leadership perspective, and you'll hear a little bit about this from me this afternoon, you've recently worked on updating the operating principles in some very specific ways. You introduced this concept of expanding the Vice Chair roster, if you will, on the leadership, and from what I've observed in a very short time, that's very effective, but there's not real clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the Vice Chairs providing guidance for them, having you understand better what they are doing for you and on behalf of the committee, I think is very important and something we would like you to consider looking at that we may offer some ideas about.

And then just, you know, generally looking at overall the operating principles, we'll devote a whole session to that this afternoon in terms of understanding where there may be gaps or opportunities for providing some more clarity on those.

On the meeting management side, a number of you are very experienced and have regularly come to ICANN meetings. But then many of you also joined us in the back of the room to put your little green sticker on your name badge to show us that your new members. How do we recognize you as new members and

new participants at ICANN meetings? What do we do to help you prepare for the meeting?   Is the agenda a creation concept effective and efficient? Is it providing enough input for all of you to suggest and recommend items that are going to be important to you?

There's also the issue of intercessional activities as well. There's not just the engagement and capacity building workshops that the Under-served Regions Working Group has put together, but as we've seen in the most recent period, ICANN will announce an opportunity to have community members meet in Brussels for a particular issue. Who attends from the GAC? Is there a system for coordinating that? Many opportunities in that arena as well to look at things.

You'll probably be hearing from the new leadership team, the current leadership team has just begun discussions with the ICANN organization about enhancing communications and collaboration with the ICANN organization, expanding the regular calls with the leadership to include the CEO for example. But there may be other ideas or concepts that you have that that relationship can be improved.

You have a board communiqué clarification call after the ICANN meeting within a month and a half or so. How do we inform you

about that? How do you participate most effectively in that? This is another area of improvement.

In terms of participation in transitions, issues of, as I noted earlier, organizational continuity, onboarding new folks and to a certain extent off boarding people as well. What's the process for saying good bye? How do we capture that knowledge and that experience before it leaves us?

And, you know, again from a newcomer perspective, really setting up the right processes and capabilities so it's your first meeting, you come up to speed, we provide you with the appropriate background materials that allow you to become much more effective as a participant early on.

From an informational perspective we're very interested in getting feedback from you in terms of how you absorb the information that you receive. This whole concept that some of you may have heard about push versus pull communications. I've noticed that primarily the work that we do with you now is pushing through emails. But then some of you tell me, "Well, I don't really pay attention to any of the emails until about three weeks before the meeting." How do we become more effective and get your attention or some of your bandwidth earlier within the cycle for a particularly important matter? Is that a manner of labeling the emails? Do we need to package them? Do we need

to create a register? Are you more comfortable with pulling the information off the new GAC.ICANN.org website? We'll have a session talking with you about that tomorrow where Fabien will give you an update on that, but that's a potentially new tool that will present us with many new opportunities.

And then some of the ICANN staff have approached us; when they want to share information with you, they ask what's the best method. Some have recommended the concept of webinars. How might that help you or your colleagues back within your governments be able to learn more about ICANN matters and issues? So another area of exploration.

We'd also like your feedback in terms of the transcripts, minutes and meeting reports we provide to you whether they are just from a typical session here at an ICANN meeting or when you want to know what the CVC leadership just discussed on its last call. We currently don't have real specific protocols as to when you can expect to see the minutes. We've adopted and evolved over time a certain format. We're interested in your feedback as to whether that works. And then ultimately, how do we archive all of that on the GAC website in an efficient manner so that you can get the information when you need it?

Generally, communications as well as an issue -- and I'll speed to wrap up, Thomas, because I know that we've got a number of

other items to get to today; but not only the communique drafting process, but the circulation and the provision of the communique after you all have completed with it, and then what about the capability of you looking back, and particularly as a newer participant, how do you learn what happened in the ICANN56 communique and absorb that information and be able to track that information in a way that's useful to you?

A major area of investment from ICANN in the last several years has been in translation and in interpretation. There are times where that works perfectly. There are many times where some of you or just your colleagues generally within the ICANN community recognize that there's not enough of that or not the right targeted approach to that. You've seen, and we may talk about this later today, even during ICANN61 we've had some challenges from a scribing perspective. How do we share that information and work to make that as efficient and effective for you as possible?

Tracking and archives, which I mentioned before, again is from a language expectations perspective very important. For you as a new participant or someone who will only come back and visit us from time to time, how can you be able to share information again back with your governments or some of your colleagues in your own language? And what variety of languages, what scope

of languages, and how many documents do we actually produce are all areas that would be very helpful to get your input and feedback on.

These are important areas that we're very interested in hearing more information from you all about. We probably, Thomas, don't have a lot of time to talk about that today. I want to be respectful of the agenda. But I wanted to just underscore for all of you our interests, our enthusiasm and motivation to help you in all of these areas.

Granted, we can't do them all at once, and change is often best done evolutionarily, but I think getting guidance from you in terms of what should be prioritized, what we look at first, what can provide the best return on investment in the fastest period of time is certainly something that we would welcome your input, certainly when we're in the back of the room or at some of the networking receptions, and definitely via our email and other connections between meetings.

And I promise to follow up with you as we do introduce ideas and different ways of operating that are not substantive, don't affect your deliberations, but that we hope will improve how you get your work done and accomplished. Thomas, thanks very much for the opportunity for some time about this this morning.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Rob. And thanks to ICANN and your team to do efforts to facilitate easy participation and lower the barriers. And in fact, before the coffee break, I want to inform you for those who haven't seen it yet, this notion of lowering the barriers to people in particular with limited resources in order to allow for an inclusive and informed participation in the GAC and in ICANN is something that we've been discussing with everybody that we basically had interactions with in the past months.

And you have seen that we've discussed this also in the leadership call with ALAC and we have realized that this is a very common concern or common issue, and we have proposed to work on a draft statement, a joint statement between the ALAC and the GAC that would recognize the challenge and urge ICANN to do all it can to facilitate informed and inclusive participation through lowering the barriers in ICANN's processes.

So if this is possible and if you support this, we'll talk about this also in our [inaudible] session with the ALAC this afternoon. We would basically adopt this. It's not a piece of advice. It's a statement. It's something that is new, but we thought that this is an opportunity to show that we share something and we're willing to work on it together. We can discuss this later, but please have a look at the document that I sent out to you early in

the morning because the objective is the same, is to allow as many people, governments, to participate and interact in an informed way in ICANN.

So thank you, Rob, for this and this is the coffee break. Please let's try and not take more than 15 minutes. We are slightly behind schedule and the coffee is not just right here. So try to be back in 15 minutes time, which is 10:40. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]