

ABU DHABI – Discussion on the GAC independent secretariat  
Saturday, October 28, 2017 – 15:15 to 16:15 GST  
ICANN60 | Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Good afternoon, ICANN60. This is a discussion on the GAC Independent Secretariat, October 28th. [AUDIO BREAK]

Please take your seats, we have to restart. Thank you. [AUDIO BREAK]

We have to continue, we are already slightly behind and, yeah, it's not too practical that the coffee is so far away because you tend to bump into people and then take much longer. So please take your seats, we are continuing with Session number 4, which is a discussion, a final update about where we are with the funding of the GAC Independent Secretariat.

To give you a little bit of a history, you know that we have had long debates many years back about the need for such an independent part of what we now call hybrid Secretariat, which is composed of GAC support staff from ICANN, and of an independent part which is funded by GAC members, which since 2013, it has been performed by ACIG. I won't go into too much of the history about the reasons why and how we got there.

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We used to have three countries, donor countries, that funded this independent Secretariat for five years. We were able to use that money actually for almost six years. These three countries were the Netherlands, Brazil and Norway, who volunteered to help us to establish the Secretariat, and the first one or two years were a little bit of a finding process in what would be the right format and the right way to support the Secretariat. Since 2013, there have been public tender and ACIG was charged with delivering the Secretariat for us, and I think we had made the assessment previously several times.

And since 2015, since the Dublin meeting, it has become clear, and we've communicated this clearly to the GAC that it is not feasible for three countries to continue forever to fund the Secretariat for the whole GAC. This is not fair, it doesn't make sense, so the GAC needs to find ways to spread this burden on more shoulders. We've discussed this at every ICANN meeting since then, since the Dublin meeting in October 2015.

I can only say to you that already before I became the Chair, I've realized how much the Secretariat support from ACIG has contributed to the quality and efficiency of the GAC's work through various things, in particular the briefing papers, the attendance of ACIG people in a number of processes, be it PDPs, be it other -- the whole transition would probably not have been

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feasible for the GAC to follow and actively influence without support from ACIG on substance, on not missing what is going on, on being alerted, on getting draft elements for positions.

Of course, those who have been here for the last meetings for these years know how important ACIG, in particular Tom but also the two other persons that used to support us that were working behind the scenes have been to the conduct of these meetings, of the physical meetings. Even more to that, the support that we've received and I have received as the Chair in the past three years and the whole of the Leadership Team in the preparation of the leadership coordination work by weekly calls, correspondence, and so on and so forth, has been unique in the sense that I wouldn't probably have known how to cope with the workload that you face as the Chairman of the GAC without such a support.

So I really once more can only express my sincere thanks and appreciation to ACIG, in particular to Tom, which is the one that I've been working with the closest, but also to Michelle, who is listening to us from far away; from less far away than if she were somewhere else in the world, but still from far away at the late hour of the day. I can only express my sincere appreciation and thank to the amazing quality of work and the very good personal

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relations and working relations that we have had throughout these years. And this was really my view.

One of the key factors for the successes that we had as GAC and also for, let's say, allowing us as GAC members that have a number of other processes in our portfolios, allowing us to at least be, to some extent, informed and active and able to understand what we're doing here, it was to a great extent thanks to the work of the Secretariat and thanks to those who have funded the Secretariat.

We have since 2015 alerted to the fact that we need to have a better spread of the financial burden to fund the Secretariat among GAC members. My country has done all we could and I would like to thank Jorge in particular and Nicholas, another member from my team who is not here; we did everything we could to raise awareness, to support, help come up with ideas on how to do things with different legal bases, and also paid a significant contribution ourselves. We have had our President of the Swiss Confederation writing letters to all GAC members informing on a very high level about the situation and about the importance that we think this Secretariat, the independent part of the GAC Secretariat has to the success of Governments' participation in the GAC.

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Unfortunately, this does not have seemed to be sufficient. So I will now, with this introduction, hand over to Jorge from the Swiss Delegation who is the person that has been doing the hard work behind the scenes on following payments, and running after people, and taking care of the bank account together with Nicholas from our team. And he will give you an update on where we are at this very day with regard to the funding.

Something that I forget to say is that the contract that was established in 2013 with ACIG expired this summer. We have been able to, in a very flexible way [coughing] renew that contract this summer, together with ICANN and ACIG, in a way that it's flexible, that it is, for the time being, foreseen to last until the end of next year, provided that the resources are confirmed in advance in order to give ACIG, who has been extremely flexible with a very unsecure situation now going on for quite some time with not knowing whether and when and how much money will be available.

They also have been very flexible with reducing, on a very short notice, the support that we had from 2.5 FTEs full time equivalence to 1.0 equivalence this March and April in the hope that that would help us to guarantee the funding based on the pledges that we had at that time until the end of the year. So also there they have been delivering in a state of very high uncertainty

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on their shoulders in terms of how much money and when money would be available, which is a very difficult situation for a small/medium size company to actually work in, but we never, ever experienced any [indiscernible]. Despite all of this, we have received 100% or even more professional services from ACIG throughout all this period, which is again something I think is remarkable.

You may have noticed that there's a difference between 2.5 FTEs and 1.0 FTEs. There were some things we couldn't advance to the extent that we had wanted to. One thing for instance is the work on the operating principles that has not made too much progress since Michelle has not been at our disposal, who was working on this element; for instance, supporting us strongly on this one. There have been other things where we had to slow down progress because resources have not been available.

And with this, let me give the floor to Jorge from the Swiss Delegation. Thank you.

JORGE CANCIO:

Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. Jorge Cancio for the record. First of all, I would like to thank you all for your patience and also for your understanding when I have had at times spammed you with follow up questions or reminders or whatever on this issue.

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You see a diagram on the screen that sums up the situation and the requirements for funding the Independent GAC Secretariat. I think that it is good to be reminded that according to these minimal service arrangements that were introduced in May of this year, we are talking about one full time employee, one FTE; the cost for this arrangement is around 240,000 Euros a year.

And in the diagram you see four blue columns of each 60,000 which represents the quarterly payments that would be needed for financing 2018.

The smaller, or the tinier columns, refer to financing gap which Thomas explained in his email to the GAC, which refers to 2017, where we identified already a funding gap which relates to quarter four of this year and which affects, of course, the extent that ACIG will be able to provide services during the rest of this year.

So to cut the story a bit short, just to let you know that pursuant to common sense business arrangements, ICANN and ACIG agreed in the contract that was signed this summer that at the end of each quarter the GAC Secretariat Funding Association through the GAC Chair would inform ACIG if we had funds for financing the next quarter and the after next quarter. So this gives a reasonable and legitimate certainty to a company that the funds will be there for the services they are providing.

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On 30th September this year, we realized that there was this funding gap for the fourth quarter 2017, which already had been warned about since Copenhagen and then in Johannesburg. In spite of the efforts of two countries who had publicly pledged funds for this year, their contributions could not be made effective, so this was a key reason for this shortcoming, for this shortfall in 2017.

And as regards 2018, the other four columns you see, the orange color depicts what are the funds that are ensured through pledges made by member countries of the GAC, where also both the amount and the date of the payment have been assured to us bilaterally.

So just from the sight of the diagram, you will see that there's more or less a 50% shortfall for 2018, and this is, of course, not sustainable as we have explained in the emails communicated to the GAC. So this is basically the situation. I guess that the diagram can be circulated to the GAC lists so that you can see the details of the situation, but I think I'll leave it by that. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER:

Thank you, Switzerland. So the fact is that we don't have the money even to terminate, to pay ACIG for working for us until the end of the year. There's a gap of about 10,000 Euros left. And for



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the next year, where we would need, according to the contract, to know on a quarterly basis what funds would be available or whether enough funds would be available for the next quarter of the year, you see the differences between the blue and the red, or orange column, is what is missing. And this has consequences. And I think, let me give the floor to Tom to inform us what this means for ACIG. Thank you.

TOM DALE:

Thank you, Thomas and thank you, Jorge for that update on the funding contributions situation. It's with great regret, I have to confirm, again, as we advised you in the brief, in the updated briefing recently for this agenda item that ACIG is still preparing to terminate its services to the GAC with effect from the 30th of November.

Let me explain to you sort of how that situation has come about from our point of view and why we are still planning to finish at the end of November.

As Thomas had mentioned, a new contract had been signed between ACIG and ICANN recently that covers the period up until the end of 2018. It provides for a range of services from 1.0 FTE up to a range of higher staff numbers. However, as Jorge has said and as you can see from the slide, it's clear that there remains a

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significant funding shortfall for the full period of that contract and that raises some concerns which we have discussed with the GAC Chair extensively and with Jorge representing the Funding Association over the last month or two.

The difficulties of ACIG, which is not a large company, it's a small company, our difficulties in working on a quarter to quarter basis rather than having a full understanding of the services that we can deliver for the whole of the contract are quite significant. They create work for us in managing the contract far more than any other contract that we have. And it creates work, of course, for the Funding Association and the GAC Chair, who has the role under the new contract in certifying that services can be provided and paid for.

So it's a very inefficient, expensive, and frustrating process to have the exercise reinvented essentially every three months or so, and it's not a way -- to be quite frank with you, it's not a good way of doing business and I don't think it's very good for any of the parties, including ICANN, which, of course, is important because they provide the formal payment mechanism to us.

So we have noted the information that Jorge from the association informed the GAC about, about a month ago now, and in our view the situation has not materially changed, so we continue to

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prepare to cease the services that we've been providing to you very happily and for the last four years from the end of November.

We are working with staff, ICANN staff, to provide information on our current functions and some advice. Whether it's a handover or not depends on what arrangements GAC and ICANN wish to have in place after we leave, but that's not my business or my problem, but we'll continue to cooperate with that and also, of course, to brief the new GAC Chair, whoever that is, on arrangements and the new contract and proposals to terminate that if things proceed as they seem likely to.

So we're doing all that work and I will continue to be available on a pro bono basis after the 30th of November for a reasonable time to assist the GAC Chair and the leadership group, who are the people who we tend to do most work with intersessionally, but also GAC members who have queries that we may be able to answer. We're not just drawing a curtain over the whole thing.

But to take a businesslike and professional approach, we will do that work, conclude it as quickly as we can and continue to work towards that end November date. So four weeks after the end of this meeting, more or less, we will have time to complete outstanding work, pick up action items that you request from the Secretariat coming out of this meeting, prepare the minutes in the usually way, and any other work, and at the present time, that

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is it. It's unfortunate that situation has come about. I have no criticism to offer of anyone, it's just what it is.

But, from our point of view, as a small business operating on a commercial and professional basis, we continue to think that at this point the only option that we have is to both cease our services from that time and to work towards a mutual termination of the new contract.

So that's all I have to say at the moment. Thank you, Thomas.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER:

Thank you. So this is the situation that we are in. And unless a miracle happens or-- well, miracles normally don't happen, but somebody makes a miracle happen or several people make a miracle happen or contributes a miracle happening before we leave here, so it's a question of a few days remaining that would assure us that these gaps will be filled until the end of 2018. That means that, as Tom has said, there will be no more ACIG Secretariat support from the end of November, i.e. in a few weeks' time from now.

This is the situation that we are in, so we felt that we have to inform you about this as we have always informed everybody transparently about the situation and the needs so it's the choice

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of the GAC members to what extent they can or want to contribute to making their life easier.

I'll stop here. This is the moment for comments and questions. I understand that the European Commission wants to take the floor. Thank you.

EU COMMISSION:

Thank you, Chair. Cristina Monti, European Commission. Beyond the appreciation of ACIG for the quality of their support and their work, as a donor, as a European Commission, we really believe in the importance of an independent GAC Secretariat for the credibility of the ICANN system. We have a number of complex and substantial issues on which we have to collectively provide advice on public policy implications, and therefore, being able to start from a neutral standpoint and to rely on that is very important. Therefore, we are really very concerned by the current situation and find it that it would really be a shame if for this financial gap we were to lose the expertise of ACIG.

We believe that the quality and impact of GAC contributions to ICANN processes would probably suffer from this, and we think that all of us, GAC members, are aware of this complexity and workload involved in participating in these processes.

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In addition, as was pointed out by you, Thomas, we are going through a change in leadership, and therefore, it's unfortunate that we find ourselves in this situation. At the moment, there is not much I can say. We are a donor, we are committed to continue in this, but of course, if this is not going to be enough, it would really be a pity. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, European Commission. Portugal.

PORTUGAL: Thank you, I'm going to speak in Portuguese. We have already had this discussion in several meetings in the past. The figures were presented to us, but I believe that here we still need to discuss the substantial issue.

A few years ago, the GAC members decided that there should be an Independent Secretariat for the GAC, and at that time, we looked at the rules of the game. We knew that Brazil, Norway, and other countries were going to make contributions, but they were going to do so for a certain period. And it was clearly defined. Everybody knew what that period would be.

Therefore, if we identified the need to have an Independent Secretariat and then the countries did not make their

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contributions, I would like to know whether those countries believe it is still important to have an Independent Secretariat. Portugal, which is not a very rich country, so to speak, is a donor country. And we've found the way to make a contribution. Of course, it is not easy for the Ministry to make a payment to an organization like this one, but we found the means to get to a solution because, in fact, we cannot question the quality of the support we receive. And we believe that, in fact, we could be making a contribution to an enhanced GAC because that is the result. We have a better informed GAC.

In summary, I think that the discussion should not only focus on figures, we should focus on what the GAC wants. Does it want an independent Secretariat or not? And if it wants an Independent Secretariat, it would have to pay for that. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: I have France, Norway, and Brazil on the list so far. France, please.

FRANCE: Thank you, Thomas. And I have to say, as one of the five Vice Chairs, I can only join you, Chair, in expressing my gratitude to ACIG and to Tom in particular for the excellent work a they've provided so far for four years. Before I joined the Leadership Team, I was not aware of the amount of the work that takes place

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behind the scenes and intersessionally, and all this work really relies on the help that is provided by ACIG. And I really don't know how we could have achieved so much without the help of Tom and ACIG. So I would like to thank again Tom a lot and I deeply regret this unfortunate situation, and I can only hope that a miracle will happen. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Norway.

NORWAY: Yes, thank you, Chair. We just wanted to add, have a voice to what the European Commission said and underlining the importance of this Independent GAC Secretariat and what we can achieve in the GAC with what we do in the ICANN environment. So I just want to stress and urge countries to step up and be part of the financing on this Secretariat.

We also want to, on this occasion, to really thank the efforts by the Swiss Government, and especially Jorge and our Chair, for their efforts to try to get countries to be part of the funding community. Thank you very much for that work that you have done. So yes, thank you. And we also would like to urge countries to really consider to become a donor, together with all the other



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countries that have stepped up, that we can be able to continue securing this important function for the GAC. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Norway. Brazil.

BRAZIL: Thank you, I would like to add my voice to those who have expressed their sincere thanks to ACIG, through Tom and other colleagues from ACIG who have worked with us throughout those years. The support that was provided by the Independent Secretariat cannot be overemphasized. The importance it had in providing the GAC with tools, with advice, with early warning of things that were happening across the systems, and which us, as Government representatives, that have also competing tasks that cannot be fully dedicated to this as much as we would like to have more time, we have other responsibilities, so the importance of the Independent Secretariat to assist us has proved invaluable.

I'd like also to take this opportunity to thank the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, CGI.br. As you know, the Brazilian multistakeholder body that oversees and is responsible for many Internet governance related activities in Brazil for providing very generous assistance for a number of years and even this last year some very significant contribution.

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It is important to indicate that the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee by doing so acted out of the belief that by strengthening Government participation it would strengthen the multistakeholder model as a whole, because as part of the multistakeholder pact should also deserve attention.

Now, that leads me to comment the following: we, through the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, we could make that contribution for a number of years, but in case that would come from the Government itself, we would not be in a position to do so. There would be no legal basis for that.

I have heard in other occasions from Government representatives that in many cases the same situation would be there, there would be no legal basis. ICANN is not an International organization, there's no assessed contribution, so for many of us that would lead to insurmountable difficulties, including to my own Government. As I said, we are very happy to be able to count on the Brazil Internet Steering Committee that has more flexibility, but the Government would not have that.

And that leads me to conclude that we are working in a very unique environment. ICANN is a very unique and very challenging for Governments to participate differently from other constituencies that maybe have more people dedicated and a large maybe basis or a pool of resources, and Governments have

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to rely basically on information that we receive filtered by either ICANN or provided by the Independent Secretariat.

So therefore, I'd like to make a call that that particular situation [inaudible] should be recognized. As countries, we have something that is not always recognized within ICANN, that the participation of Governments accepted to participate in this environment, and not be in the driver's seat, to have an advisory role is something that I think is of tremendous value to the system. I think this is something unique. I don't see many places in which that can happen.

So I think that that should lead to a recognition that some special assistance should also be provided to assist Governments to fulfill their roles. And I come from a country in which we are fully convinced that if Governments are in a position to fully exert their roles and responsibilities, the system as a whole will benefit.

So this is what I would like to say at this moment, to regret the situation we have come at. We would certainly look forward to have the assistance as being provided by the Independent Secretariat on a permanent basis, however, if it is really the case, if that miracle doesn't happen by the end of this meeting, we'd like to request all of those involved in the system to think of how we can make sure, especially us the Government, but not only us;

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I think this is how we can make sure that our participation remains relevant and well informed. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Brazil. Mr. Morris?

MR. MORRIS: Thank you, Chair, and [inaudible], everyone. I want to echo the previous [inaudible] distinguished colleague. And I would like also to express my sincere gratitude to all the colleagues of ACIG, especially Tom, who have done an excellent job as the GAC Secretariat. So if you leave us, I will miss you.

Therefore, like many other member countries, we also contributed to the GAC's Secretariat funding this year and we also have the intention to continue the support of funding the GAC Secretariat, but we still are under the review of our Congress, but it is confirmed and we will definitely contribute this year.

And finally, I very much appreciate Jorge's efforts on the GAC Secretariat arrangement. Here I would also call for our GAC colleague [indiscernible] and show their support for the funding to [indiscernible] miracle happen. Thank you.

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THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Austria.

AUSTRIA: Thank you, Thomas. I fully want to support what Portugal has said. Yes, it is in some cases complicated to find a legal way to spend money for something that is not an International organization, but there are other examples, the Red Cross is not an International organization. G8, G7, G20 and then many more things are not far away from International organizations and there's no problem to spend money on that. I think if one really wants to support ICANN, to support the GAC Secretariat, there will be a way to find that. It is complicated for Austria as well and we found a way, so we are a donor country and I am very proud of this.

I think if we regard Internet governance and the work we are doing here in the GAC and the support of the Secretariat, which is essential for our work, if we take this seriously, then we should contribute to the work and to the functioning of the GAC. If we don't, if we are not willing or not able, or if we do not support it, then I don't have a problem in my case to explain to my Minister why Internet governance is so important when I'm not ready to support it. So I urge all of my colleagues here who have not done so yet to rethink it. As we said in meetings before, we are more

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than a hundred countries here, if everybody spends \$100, each country, then it's a giant step forward.

So I think being a civil servant in the Government for some 30 years, I know if one really wants, there is a way to do that, so please reconsider it at home, speak to your colleagues at home, and please find a way because otherwise we will have the situation in the GAC we had in the past and I think nobody wants to face that, to have a GAC without the Secretariat, without a working Secretariat. Thank you very much.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Austria. And time is short, so whoever is willing needs to be quick. Nigeria.

NIGERIA: Thank you very much. I think first I would like to empathize with Tom and ACIG to sort of -- I've been put in a situation to work [inaudible] pleasure. However, I think the point being made by Brazil about the legal situation for countries to make the contributions goes beyond just legal. It also shows what exactly is the impact countries are having in participating in ICANN, especially given the items that have been discussed earlier in this very event, it really shows that positions made by countries here in the GAC, they are not just brushed aside, or just ignored.

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However, if the fact that we have an Independent Secretariat is supposed to help, you know, a situation where we have an enhanced GAC, then it would be really disappointing if the whole situation stopped before that enhanced GAC begins to manifest.

Having said that, I have a question about the back shot that is being shown here. And forgive me if I'm wrong, I want to clarify, if you say that the [inaudible] that orange or pink, I don't know what that color is, if it's confirmed transfers, I believe that means that is money that has already been received, even though it's supposed to address the required transfers at those times in the future.

So if that is the case, I don't see why the contract should not be able to go beyond November this year, especially if we're showed, given the comments that everybody in the room is giving to ACIG, which means that if they continue along this track, we may get the enhanced GAC that we are all looking at and that will hopefully encourage other countries to look for ways and means to contribute to then fill in the gap for the future.

So except this is showing pending contributions, then I can understand, but if it's showing confirmed transfers, then we can bring it forward and begin to apply it towards payments to ACIG. I know for a fact that our country, we are working towards -- we've pledged to make contributions for next year. And even if it's not

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going to come from the Ministry, we are working with some of our Internet related agencies to make those payments, and it's going to happen. However, obviously, that would never happen if the Secretariat is terminated from now. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Nigeria. And then I'll give the floor to Jorge maybe to explain. The gray column is the rest of the money that has been pledged for this year that would have allowed us to continue to have more time to then secure the funding for next year, because not all of the money that has been pledged has actually been paid or the orange column is not transacted. This is not money that has been put on the accounts of the funding association, but this is money that has been promised on black and white with a particular date by donors who said, "We are able to deliver this amount by that period."

So there has been noted the red one is not what has been paid, it has been confirmed that it's going to be paid. The blue one is what is needed. So the gaps are there for this quarter, for the next quarter, for the second quarter. The only one where we have enough money is the third quarter. And all the other quarters we don't have enough money that is confirmed. Confirmed means that we have a confirmation in writing from those countries who are paying, by when they will pay the money.



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And this is the part of the contract that, in order to continue, we have to have the money confirmed on a quarter to quarter basis, which is already like the least sustainability and stability that we said, "Okay, if we go below that, this is really not workable." So I hope that explains it.

Maybe Jorge can complement me if I missed something else. Thank you.

JORGE CANCIO:

Thank you, Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. As I said before, the contractual arrangements are established between ACIG and ICANN, which the GAC is indirectly a beneficiary for the services, provided that at the end of each quarter the GAC has to confirm to ACIG and to ICANN that funds will be there for the next quarter and the after next quarter. So on 30th of September, 2017, we had to confirm that we would have the money for the fourth quarter, 2017, and the first quarter, 2018.

As said before, we couldn't confirm neither of those. For the fourth quarter, 2017, although there were pledges made publicly, those could not be materialized because of different issues and of course, the goodwill of the officials who made those pledges is in no way put in question, because in the end we are only public civil

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servants and sometimes budgetary processes In Parliament, in Government escape our control. So no diminishing at all.

And for the rest of the orange or pink columns, just to clarify that those are confirmed pledges, which have been confirmed to me bilaterally by those making those pledges in writing and explaining, "We will make this transfer, and I can confirm you that this transfer will be made, and I can confirm you also the quarter where this transfer will be made."

And again, if I were in the shoes of ACIG, this is of course, good to have these pledges being confirmed to the GAC Secretariat Funding Association through my person, but this is, of course, not set in stone and it is very far away from having the money in the account, which was what our distinguished colleague from Nigeria was referring to.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Next is Argentina, and then the African Union Commission. Thank you.

ARGENTINA: Thank you, Chair. This is Olga Cavalli from Argentina. I had a similar question to what Nigeria asked, so thank you, Jorge, for the explanation. And I would like to also thank ACIG and

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especially Tom for their outstanding services. And of course, this is very important for the GAC. Argentina was one of the countries that agreed in 2012 that we should have this Independent Secretariat. And I also would like to agree with what Ambassador Benedicto Fonseca said from Brazil, we had a similar situation; it's difficult, not only from a formal point of view, but also from a bureaucratic point of view.

And responding to Portugal and the European Commission, we find a lot of value in the Independent Secretariat, but also we would like to stress the fact that for developing countries, sometimes when you talk about this at a national level, priorities are different. Not all the countries have the same priorities. So internet governance is important, but there are other things in some countries that sometimes are more important to consider.

Thank you very much, Tom and ACIG, for the services, and I would like also to thank the services provided by ICANN as a Secretariat, Rob, Gulten, Julia, Fabien, they are extremely valuable and also Olof that we miss him a lot. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Argentina. African Union Commission.

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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION: Thank you, Thomas. Most of what I wanted to say has been addressed specifically by Nigeria. I would like to see the opportunity also to introduce Mr. Adil, who is now the new member of GAC from the African Union Commission, but at the same time I would like also to express my voice and to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for the work that they have done. And we feel very sorry for the fact that we are in this kind of situation.

And I would like to call up on all African member states who are here to do their best effort to create miracles if it is possible, because we still believe in miracles and we think we can do a lot of things. And we would be working at the African Union Commission with our Embassy to make sure that the Independent Secretariat will exist and continue to support the GAC itself. Thank you very much.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you.

INDIA: Thank you, Chair, I'm from India. I have seen this contribution pattern. The way I see it, that in the past it has been ad-hoc and only a few countries have contributed. The way I see it, I just have two suggestions for here which you can consider. One is that I just

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know no country had been cast upon and responsibility to contribute something. Whoever wants to do it, they do it voluntarily.

Now, from the GAC side, if we just inform each country what they should contribute, maybe in proportion to its GDP or something, at least -- we're not being mandatory, but they will have a responsibility to contribute. And they will know what responsibility they should have. Right now, there's no communication to any country how much they are expected to contribute. That could be one way.

Alternatively, it could be that all of us manage the ccTLD domains, which gives us money. Now, GAC can decide as a collegium or as a whole that a share of that revenue which comes from renewal or new registrations from TLD will be shared with the GAC to maintain the GAC Secretariat. Either of these two systems will ensure a steady flow of money and will not leave it to the variations that are possible. It's for everybody to decide. Thank you.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you, India. New Zealand.

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NEW ZEALAND: Thank you. First of all, thank you for ACIG's valuable support and for the efforts of Switzerland to raise money. We have not talked much about the possibility of the ICANN organization financially supporting the GAC Secretariat. I was just hoping for the Chair's comment on whether there's anything further we can do to convince the ICANN organization to help.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER: Thank you. To answer that last question, I have had more than one discussion about this, and the answer was that we couldn't expect money from ICANN. ICANN is aware of the situation, they are willing to support us, and that is linked to what I said earlier, they are waiting from us to hear how they can better support us, but you won't get any money. You would need to convince the community that is part of the budget making process, we would need to reallocate money in the budget; that is not so easy, and so far have no signals that this is going to happen.

To answer a few other questions, the issue about whether or not developing countries can or should contribute to this, the budget has so far -- the current funding is coming around 80% from Europe, European countries. Not all European countries are extremely wealthy nowadays, so it is a shared burden and it is, in particular for countries that have less resources to spend time on the GAC that profit the most from the briefings, in addition of

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course to the Leadership Team, but it's definitely helping those who have limited resources to contribute.

And any other organization, you have everybody paying a share. Sometimes it's as India said, it's the GDP or something else that is the basis in the ITU, in the EPU, you have a unit and then like here, on a voluntary level, you define how many units you contribute to a system. We discussed these things earlier, but I've talked about a number of ways that we could think of; nobody has picked this up and said, "We must do this, or we must do something."

So we may still, once we've realized how it is to work without ACIG, actually pick these things up and then trying to come up with a more sustainable scheme. But in the end, whether you do it voluntarily or compulsory, everybody needs to pay, or more people need to pay. And whether we say, it should be the developing countries, or no, it should rather be the developed countries, throwing the ball at each other is not necessarily going to help.

And also, the issue of the legal challenges. We also had to be quite innovative to find a way to pay 50,000 per year to ACIG through an arrangement that was not foreseen. In the end, it's a question of a political will. It's up to us, GAC members, to explain the importance of ICANN or of the Governments' representation in ICANN.

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And I don't think it's a point to what extent we are happy with ICANN's performance; the fact is if we are less present, it will not perform to a higher satisfaction of us, so I don't think to say that, well, we are not satisfied with 100% of what we get, which is probably something that we all share, that everybody shares, because nobody gets 100% in this system, to say that, well, okay, then it's not worth contributing. That's everybody's decision, but it doesn't raise the chances that the outcomes will be more taking into account our issues than if we are stronger and better organized.

So I'll stop here. I think everything that needs to be said is said. What we need now is concrete action, very quickly, i.e. before we leave this meeting on Thursday, otherwise what will happen is what Tom has explained to us, ACIG Secretariat services will stop by the end of November.

Okay, I think this is very clear. But of course, we continue to be available for people who have questions or ideas to make miracles happen, but time is very short.

Thank you. So with this, I think we need to move on to the next session, which is one of several sessions about the GAC's participation in the Empowered Community.



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Again, you will find a briefing paper in your documentation. And let me give the floor to Ghislain, one of our Past Chairs who has volunteered to move things forward to further expanding our knowledge for participation in the Empowered Community. Ghislain, please go ahead.

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