

Current Environment

ICANN68 | Virtual Policy Forum – Plenary Session: ICANN and COVID-19 - Advancing Policy Work in the Current Environment
Thursday, June xx 2020 – 13:00 to 14:30 MYT

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Great. Thank you, Ria. So we'll start again. Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening. I'm so pleased to welcome you to the final plenary session of ICANN68, "Advancing Policy Work in the Age of COVID-19." My name is Sally Newell Cohen, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications at ICANN.

I'll be your moderator for this session.

So the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us all in innumerable ways. For ICANN the greatest impact has been on our ability to meet and interact in person. Yet while much of the world has been shut down, the ICANN community continued its work.

This was made all the more possible because the community is accustomed to working remotely, and at the same time, the SO/AC leadership, the Board, and Org moved quickly to prioritize its most pressing work.

While some COVID-related limitations have been lifted, the virus still is present, and limitations on our ability to travel and meet in large groups still remains. Despite this, our work must continue. The Internet community demands it and deserves it.

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.

In this session we're going to have a dialogue about the challenges of advancing the ICANN community's policy work despite the COVID-19 pandemic-related limitations. ICANN President and CEO Goran Marby and ICANN Board Chair Maarten Botterman will be joined by the leaders of supporting organizations and advisory committees to share their thoughts on the road ahead.

Now unlike a typical Public Forum, we are piloting a new format for this Policy Forum where we are going to focus on a specific topic. All speakers will address that topic, and we ask that all community feedback and comments relate directly to the topic at hand.

You'll have an opportunity to contribute after Maarten speaks, after Goran speaks, and again after the SO/AC leaders have spoken. So before we start, I'd like to explain a little bit of how this session is going to work.

So to begin, ICANN Board Chair Maarten Botterman and ICANN President and CEO Goran Marby will each share an update on how the Board and Org, respectively, are responding to the challenges. After each of them speak, we'll solicit your comments.

Now we have also invited the leaders of the supporting organizations and advisory committees on our panel. And they are: ASO Address Council chair, Aftab Siddiqui; RSSAC chair Fred Baker; ccNSO chair -- council chair, excuse me, Katrina Sataki; GNSO chair, Keith Drazek; GAC chair, Manal Ismail; ALAC chair, Maureen Hilyard; and SSAC chair, Rod Rasmussen.

Thank you all for joining us.

I'm going to be asking each of them a series of questions about how their community group is responding to the pandemic. This will also be followed by another opportunity for you to provide feedback.

Now, when it is time for your feedback, you're going to see this slide projected. Unlike the Public Forum, we won't display a timer; however, we will ask that you limit your feedback and comments to around a minute in length. This ensures that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

And as you can see on the slide, there are two ways to submit feedback during the session. The first way is by joining the queue to voice your question or feedback. And you can find the raise hand icon at the bottom of your screen. Selecting it will automatically add you to the speaker's queue, and your microphone will remain muted until its your turn to speak. I'm sure for many of you this is familiar now after all of these sessions, but when we unmute you on our end, it's going to return a note that's going to be sent to your screen requesting that you also unmute your mic. And you have to unmute your mic also or we won't be able to hear you.

When your name is called, that's your queue to speak. And please be sure to state your name so that we have it for the record.

The second way that you can participate is by submitting a written question into the Zoom Q&A pod. Your question again will be entered

into the queue, and it will be read out loud by the session's remote participation manager, James Cole. And then that will be your turn.

We ask that if you're wanting to share feedback, please don't put it in the chat as it won't be added to the queue. So if you want it read out loud, you want to make sure you put it in the Q&A pod.

Real-time interpretation is also available for this session in Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic. Information on how to use this feature is available on the session page on the ICANN68 meeting schedule. A link to it is also available in the chat.

And if you do want to ask your questions in one of the available languages, we ask that you give participants a moment to put on their headsets.

All right, and with that, I'd like to ask Board chairman Maarten Botterman to start off with his comments. So Maarten, over to you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Thank you, Sally. Thank you for that, for your excellent opening statement and for organizing this. And thank you all for joining this session today. Good morning from Rotterdam to all participants from Europe and Africa. Afternoon, evening, or night from other parts of the world. I'm really looking forward to hear everyone's thoughts and feedback on the challenges of advancing the community policy work during the pandemic.

No matter what challenges we face, whatever the result of the pandemic or some other unexpected event that may occur in the future, it's important for us to band together as a community to overcome them and continue to do our work together.

In times like this, the community relies on the Board for steady leadership, timely and informed decision-making and transparency.

Throughout this pandemic, the Board has endeavored to be informed, proactive, responsive, pragmatic, and understanding of the profound impacts that community members are experiencing, and what is coming to us in ways that haven't happened before.

COVID-19 for sure has forced us to change the way we all interact and meet. While it has challenged us to find new ways, we found also some new benefits in this way of working. ICANN's multistakeholder model is based on inclusivity and giving everyone an opportunity to participate in our policy development process. The community has conducted much of this work remotely for many years, and this is why we've been able to move forward over the past six months relatively successfully.

At the same time, we do miss, and I miss, the valuable human connections that happened in ICANN meetings, the opportunity to shake your hand, to have a short side conversation, or even dinner together.

Perhaps we can compensate this a little bit like with the fikas, the coffee half hours during ICANN68. Face-to-face meeting is what we

learned to appreciate and cannot do right now. We are fully cognizant of that.

As we work to chart out the future of public meetings, including the upcoming AGM that will be virtual as well, we'll be armed with the lessons we learned from two entirely virtual meetings, and we're committed to continue to improve.

One thing we know with certainty is that to be truly inclusive, we must continue to offer these robust remote participation tools, whatever else is happening. We learn to appreciate this even more.

So I want to thank everyone who has been involved in the setup of these meetings and for seeking ways to enhance interactivity and collaboration. Staff, but also in the community. And this has been a team effort, and we're all reaping the rewards of your hard work.

The Board itself has also adapted to the new circumstances. We've aligned -- realigned our operational priorities and remain committed to make progress against our goals.

Above all, the Board has a duty to ensure that ICANN is fulfilling its bylaws-mandated responsibilities, and this includes making sure that ICANN is in a strong, stable financial position.

Recently we finalized the FY21-25 operating and financial plan which included some changes made in response to the current global circumstances, and we believe that these changes were necessary to ensure ICANN's continued success.

The Board is also examining the best approach to updating ICANN's five-year strategic plan. As the event of the past few months have shown, we must be able to adapt to new, unforeseen situations. What we know for sure is the future is uncertain, and we need to be able to continue to do our mission, whatever that future is.

Continuous updates to the strategic plan will allow us to evolve our goals and objectives to meet the ever-changing needs of the global Internet community. The Board has been working closely with ICANN Org to better understand the risk landscape, and we're very appreciative of the information that has been very professionally collected and presented.

Another key issue for the Board is how to better understand the global public interest in our decisions, and we started to pilot a framework for that. And you'll hear more about that over the months to come.

Along the same vein, how can we best leverage the data provided by the ICANN legitimacy survey and the CERT Accountability and Transparency Review Team. There's a great deal of valuable information being generated by the ICANN Org and community. The Board is keen on finding new ways to incorporate it in a decision-making process.

And this specific attention to the human aspect we've also introduced with the Board sociables where we talk about other things than ICANN matters that keep us busy. So we learn to know and appreciate each

other also better as people and colleagues and stand together in facing all the new uncertainties.

With this pandemic, it's certainly shifted our priorities. We have not lost sight of the goals we set up. We are committed to move forward with our work and keep the community informed as we do so.

And last thing I want to stress is the importance of fostering an environment where everybody feels welcome and safe to contribute their voice, their thoughts. The Board is committed to ensuring ICANN is a harassment-free environment, and I look forward to recommendation that come out of the Anti-Harassment Working Group as well.

So, again, thank you to everybody for joining today, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Back to you, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you so much, Maarten. It's really interesting to hear what the Board is doing and how they're planning for this.

I'll open it up now and see if there are any comments or questions from the community.

James, do you have anything?

Current Environment

JAMES COLE: Yeah, there's one comment from Rubens Kuhl: A Policy Forum should be more about advancing policy development than a series of webinars. Policy development activity was very limited, despite requests from community leadership.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay. Thank you.

GORAN MARBY: I'd like to comment on that?

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Please, Goran. Go ahead.

GORAN MARBY: The ICANN Board and Org is here to facilitate the discussion within the community. We sort of have the room, but it's very much the community decides what to fill those rooms with.

So I take your comment, and I guess that the SOs and AC leaders, who have been very much involved in setting up the actual schedule for this meeting, can comment back later.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Very much with that.

Current Environment

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay. Thank you. I believe we have someone else in the queue, James?

JAMES COLE: Yes, Sebastien Bachollet has his hand up if we want to throw to him, please.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you very much. Sebastien Bachollet. As Goran in the previous meeting asked me to speak in English, I will keep, but I want to say thanks the all effort made to have a multilingual meeting today. And I want to appreciate also the fact that you have around the table the leaders of the SO and AC and the leader of the Board and of ICANN Org. I think it's a very good way to have this exchange.

Definitely the exchanges decrease with the way it was set up after the Zoom bombing with just webinar. It was painful for a lot of us, and I think we need to work together to find a better way to go for the next meeting if we want to avoid this type of decrease of comfortability and way to work.

I know that the Board didn't take unanimously the decision to go again virtual for the next meeting. I would be interested to have some inputs on what was the other suggestion, and if we can take that in a discussion for the future, because I think it could be one way to go, if I understood well the proposal, but I don't have the elements for the moment.

Current Environment

Thank you very much for your time and for your answer.

Thank you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Thank you, Sebastien.

On the Board, just like in any decision we take, we have serious discussions about all the aspects in depth. In the end, we stand by the decision we make together. But all input in the Board is always heard, and I think it's very healthy and useful to do so. But for sure, the decision that stands is supported by the Board. So thank you for that.

Goran, you wanted to comment as well?

GORAN MARBY: Thank you, Sebastien.

On the first part, yes, we agree that we should continue to evolve how we do this meeting virtually. And with the help of technology we're having, with the help of your input, I think we can all agree -- we all know that there are improvements that has to be made. And I'm looking forward to your feedback so we can make sure to make the next ICANN meeting even more -- even better.

The second thing I would also add to what Maarten said is that we are coming back in the discussion a little bit later in this conversation, which is really about the -- how do we return into sort of -- some sort

Current Environment

of meetings. We all are going to talk about that, so I hope you will get more answers about that later.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran and Maarten both. I believe we have one other question in the queue and then we will move to Goran.

James, if you could read that.

JAMES COLE: There's actually two questions. The first is from James Bladel: There were numerous sessions covering various aspects of DNS abuse. Were all of these separate sessions necessary? Did we miss an opportunity to consolidate them into a single session and simplify the agenda?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: All the sessions were organized either by the respective community groups or at the community's request, for instance, the plenaries which involved a cross-community organizing group. We hope the sessions were complementary and collectively provided useful information and discussion opportunities.

So for the future, we will continue to work with all community leaders, work that has been done -- very much facilitated by Org to make sure sessions continue to be streamlined and effective as much as we can.

Current Environment

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Maarten.

Goran, anything to add?

GORAN MARBY: No. I think it's a fair question, James. I participated, as you know, in many of them. But I also have a number of reflections. When it comes to things like abuse, different parts of us have different knowledge about it. I think that one of the good things with this is, yes, there's been many different discussions but it's sort of slightly different but, also -- it sort of brings up people to have the same knowledge. And I think that's -- that has been a positive as well. But you know me, I often see the positive.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you for that. We do have another question in the Q&A and then also someone wants to speak. James, let's go to the Q&A first.

JAMES COLE: Sure. Pardon me. I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of your name, Sivasubramanian. His question: During COVID, as meetings take place online and also in general for all ICANN regular calls, is there a device policy? For example, when Google came up with G Suite services, at least during inception, the applications such as email and chat were to be set up only on devices that followed a device policy, made easier by device policy software that the user had to install. ICANN meetings would be safer if there is a device policy and

Current Environment

an easier way for participants to install software with some form of provision for some form of layered anonymity.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you. I -- so ICANN is -- the ICANN community, I think, should have the right to participate on the devices they choose. We're trying to sort of do that in the best possible way. Now, we have everything from Apple users to Google users to Linux users, all of that, and we're trying to give -- we're trying to build the tools so you can use many different types of devices.

Inside ICANN Org, we have our own policies about what kind of equipment we are using. That's cost efficiency and that's training and all of that.

But I think ICANN community members would agree that they should be able to make their own decisions which kind of devices they're using. Funny enough, usually during ordinary ICANN meetings, we've also seen, I think, the average device -- amount of devices every ICANN participant has at an ICANN meeting is, like, four or five, which means they have many different devices at the same time.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you.

Current Environment

I believe we have next a voice. Someone has raised their hand to speak.

James, if we can have that person open up their mic.

JAMES COLE: This is Volker speaking next. Volker, please unmute yourself and you are good to go.

VOLKER GREIMANN: Yes, thank you. Volker Greimann speaking.

I think for the community, it is essential to be able to share and exchange opinions and discuss matters of importance to us. For this, it is important to have some venue to have open discussions.

The past meetings and this meeting especially felt a little bit like a meeting where everything was just panels and Webinars with very little time for Q&A at the end because all the speakers and the panelists took up so much time. But there was very little ability to exchange -- actually exchange opinions. And I think that should be improved for the Hamburg meeting to allow more open, free-form discussions and less structured pre-planned discussions. Thank you.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Thank you for that. I think this and other input will certainly be very welcome also via the system that Sally has.

Sally, maybe you can tell a little bit more about how feedback can be provided because that's really part of what we want to do to make sure we continue to improve all the time.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Certainly. There's a survey that you can complete, and that's a great opportunity to share your thoughts. And I think that the community and the Board will be eager to get that feedback because we are looking for opportunities to continue to enhance the sessions and the value of them and how the time is spent. So thank you for that.

I think in the interest of time, speaking of that, we will -- we will have more time for questions. But I'd like to now ask Goran if he could spend some time sharing his thoughts.

I don't know if you're speaking, but we can't hear you, Goran.

GORAN MARBY:

I share Sebastien's frustrations to find the mute button sometimes. Sorry.

Anyway, before I actually begin, I would like to thank everyone that has made this virtual policy forum possible. There has been a great -- I think we're actually working very good together, the community, the Board, and the Org. And the collaboration has been quite tremendous. I know there are things we have to improve. There are always things we should learn from this, and I take responsibility for what I'm doing. But it's been really good.

But before I actually start, I would like to start by congratulating Olivier Crepin-Leblond, this year's recipient of the Community Excellence Award. The award recognizes many years of significant contribution in the ICANN community. And if I was here, I would ask you all to stand and give a big applause. I think one of the things I really miss with this one is that I can't stand there and actually give him a big applause. It's sort of...

I also would like to recognize the efforts of the community selection panel, the Org team, and all Olivier himself for arriving at the very creative solution that at least allowed us to honor him in one shape or form in a virtual way. I encourage you to watch the interviews with Olivier and the selection panelist Margarita Valdes on ICANN's YouTube channel. Please go there.

And, again, Olivier, from me and from everybody else, congratulations. Well-deserved.

I was thinking about some of the comments you made here. And I guess when I think -- the last four days, we had many meaningful discussions. And I think very productive sessions, and it's actually given me much more time to participate and listen in to many of the sessions.

I think that it's good that we have this last session because this is really about lessons learned and how we can improve going forward. But with that said, I'm impressed with the -- how well we work together and all the things you actually have done at this time.

So let's talk a little bit about ICANN Org because the question is what we've done. I think the first thing to recognize is that during this pandemic, what we've seen is that the world really depends on Internet. And many doors closed thanks to the pandemic, and people around the world turned to this thing we call the Internet for any type of interaction. And ICANN has a very important role in that. We do things that is necessary for people around the world.

My responsibility as the ICANN Org President and CEO is for the ICANN Org organization, which is here to facilitate the community dialogue, to implement what the Board decides, to follow up on those decisions, to do our technical work which includes running the IANA, and make sure that also work, for instance, to engage with governments to make sure there is no legislation that has an impact on ICANN's ability to make policies, et cetera.

And it's also -- this is defined by the bylaws. So I'm going to talk about some of the things that we've been concentrating on for the last couple of months. I think one of the first reflections is this. One of the first things I did with my team when I joined four years ago was to start planning and -- thinking and planning about risk. What can go wrong? It was not -- it was not an overnight change. It's been a gradual process.

But together with the Board, the Board Risk Committee together with my staff, we have started to actively work on continuous plans if something goes wrong. I tell you, we never planned for the pandemic;

but we had some of the tools there to make it possible to use them when this happened.

Just a small example. We very early on, actually in the -- during the ICANN Cancun meeting, we closed down our offices and made sure that people was working from home.

And I want to give a big thank you to my staff who has been, over this time, working from home, sitting in apartments, sitting in houses, taking care of children, working in the middle of the night. And they've done a fantastic job to support the community and us and the Board -- the executive team and the Board during this period. And I really want to thank you for that. And they're doing a remote meeting completely remotely as well. I'm very proud of that.

Other things you know -- and Maarten mentioned it as well. We work very hard to make sure that one of the most important assets we have is actually money and financing. And we have, as you know, have to be shifting some -- goal shifting some priorities in this response. We updated financial plan, as Maarten talked about as well, because it's insecure -- it might sound boring. But if we couldn't finance what we do, it would be very problematic for you as well to do your job.

Many of you mentioned during this conversation, yes, there's been -- it's been a lot of activity around abuse. And I happen to believe that's a very important discussion. ICANN's role in this is sort of we support and facilitate the discussions within the community. This is very much

a discussion that belongs within the community, how to take the next steps when it comes to abuse.

Our role is -- apart from the compliance work we're doing, is, for instance, to do the tools that we're building, the tools that -- we talked about DAAR, the health indicators, and the new thing I can't remember the name right now, the reputational feed as we work with the contracted parties. So these are things that we have done and we've been doing over the last couple of months.

Another thing we're doing, which is sort of related to abuse but it's not to DNS abuse as defined here, it's actually abusing the actual DNS system, one of the things we set out during this period is to work -- over the last couple of years, there's been a lot of different attacks on the DNS systems around the world. And we realize that -- many of us have realized that.

So during this period, I announced the creation of -- and I can't do an acronym on this because it's going to be very complicated -- the DNS security Facilitation Initiative Technical Study Group. I think that I will now ask you to come up with a better -- a better name for that project.

And what that is doing -- and it's under the leadership of one of our Board liaison -- the SSAC Board liaison Merike who is coordinating this effort. And what I think we've done there is we've brought together some of the best minds in cybersecurity, DNS security, network architecture, and emergency response coordination. And they will provide recommendations to what ICANN should do when it comes to

increased collaboration and engagement with stakeholders in the DNS ecosystem and to help improve security about the actual DNS systems around the world.

If a DNS system -- if a top-level domain gets compromised, everything that happens under it is now compromised. So you can imagine if a top-level domain gets compromised the effect that will have.

But during this period as well, we have continued our work with government engagement, IGO engagement. We have sent out -- we are starting to send out more information what we do. We do different kind of papers with information going forward, which is something that has been very appreciated by you, and because of that, we are going to increase that kind of thinking paper for the community so also you can see what we do.

So when it comes to -- So one of the things that became very obvious of us when we entered this pandemic period is that we have to sort of rethink some of the ways we are engaging with you in the community because you often work -- you work in your specific groups, but you also cooperate, you know, so in between different parts of the community as well.

So we try to -- we sort of embraced remote participation and tried to figure out new ways of engaging with the community. For instance, the GSE has been hosting regional events virtually, so to make sure that we sort of, in the region, continue to have a good engagement with people, and they have been very popular. And we choose specific

items we talk about, we educate ourselves what the region thinks about, but also have a good conversation.

We also taken the opportunity to add more additional courses and offerings on ICANN Learn platform. It has been around for a couple of years. You will see we have improved that a lot, and we're putting a lot of effort into it because it's an important first platform for new committee members to learn the information and skills needed to be an actively informed participant. Don't tell anyone, I take some of the courses as well because even if I'm not seeing myself as new anymore, I learn a lot by doing it.

And of course the ones that you often see are policy development support teams who continues to facilitate the community ongoing policy development. And it's actually been --we sort of expected -- we didn't plan for it. We sort of expected the lower participations in many of the working groups that we are supporting in all time zones (indiscernible). You, community, haven't missed a beat. It's quite fantastic the engagement you've done, the amount of meetings you do, the amount of things that you do. And my team is really grateful for all the help we get to set those up.

So coming on to what we also talked about here, what's going to happen now. A couple of months ago we started to do meetings with the SOs and AC leadership and we've gone through different things we talked about and one of them of course is what's going to happen with the ICANN meetings now. And based on that conversation, we came one a paper, which we have re-sent to the SOs and AC leadership, and

I hope we can talk more about it, is we don't expect to wake up one day and we will have full meetings the day after. It will be some sort of phased approach going forward.

The intention, my hope and my belief, is that we go back to face-to-face meetings again, but it will be challenges. Will people be willing to travel? Can they travel? Will there be travel restrictions? A lot of things that we have to work out, and we have to work out together both -- during different phases, how do we interact? How do we support the community the best way going forward?

So I'm looking forward to this conversation, and I'm looking to get your input. It's not going to be the end of the conversation. And I also want to give a big thank you to the SOs and AC leaders who are with me on this call today because they have done fantastic work and been very, very important in those discussions, and they are always making sure that whatever happens, this becomes a bottom-up process when it comes to the most important thing we do, that's facilitating meetings, because that's where the community is.

Thank you very much.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you, Goran. I appreciate the commentary.

We're going to open it up again now for community feedback. So again, you have the options of raising your hand or writing in in the Q&A. I believe we have one person that would like to speak, and as a

Current Environment

reminder please speak slowly because this is being interpreted and also state your name for the record.

James.

JAMES COLE: The first one in the queue is Mark Datysgeld. Mark, the floor is yours.

MARK DATYSGELD: Thank you very much. This is Mark Datysgeld, BC, incoming GNSO Councilor. I would very much like to congratulate the ICANN staff specifically in the virtual coffee breaks. This is something that I think we complained very much about last time, about the lack of interaction, about the lack of communication between members of the community. You didn't get any chance to have this organic interaction. And I've been to pretty much all of them. Not only is it good to get to know more about some members of our community in a very randomized way, and it's super interesting, but at the same time, the staff that was facilitating that experience was, you know, very supportive. They worked really hard to, you know, get everyone involved. And I would like to ask exactly that we expand that, since we're going virtual anyway. I would like to see way more of that. I would like to see more interaction, more activities. I would like to see more things because I got to know many things about members of the community that I didn't know. I even now know that Cheryl, you know, used to play RPGs, which is pretty cool.

Current Environment

So, yeah, just a bit of an ask. Or even more, whoever organized this, empower them even more. It's been super positive, I think. And this is a way for us to continue having these organic interactions even during difficult times.

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Mark.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you, Mark. Someone has to come up with the suggestion. We should do social calls more regularly in ICANN and move them around the regional spaces. And I also am very happy that I'm slowly teaching you Swedish by saying fika.

(laughing).

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran.

I see that we have Jonathan Zuck in the queue. We'll unmute you, Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK: Thanks. Jonathan Zuck here for the record.

Current Environment

I was going to take this question, and I don't know if it's the right time to ask it, but since we're doing more and more offline, I know that OKTA and others are looking at new technology solutions. Things like Slack and other tools that might make our -- I want to call it offline but it's still online but off -- off meeting, off Zoom discussions more structured and more -- more productive. I think it's something that would help in the times between meetings.

So I was wondering how those conversations were progressing.

GORAN MARBY:

I can answer that. So we -- I think I'm going to market the survey that we do. All those things that you come -- you come up with, we're going to look at. And that's one of the reasons why we do the survey. And I think the survey is even more important this time, because there is so many bright ideas. To have -- to have ongoing social platforms where you can interact, I know that for instance many people are using Skype to be able to do that. So -- But please, Jonathan, we will take that (indiscernible).

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Okay. Thank you.

We have one more comment in the queue, and then we'll go to the next part of our discussion.

James, could you read that, please.

Current Environment

JAMES COLE: Sure. This one comes from Marita Moll: There will probably be a period when some countries are fairly open within the country/region. Hopefully there's some thinking happening around facilitating regional meetings in the meantime.

GORAN MARBY: Yeah, I think we downloaded the paper and the sort of proposal that the SOs and AC leaders, they're going to come back with it as well. But the -- the -- the idea of a face meeting is maybe, yes, we can do regional meetings as the first step, but there's one thing that we're a little bit afraid of as well, and we haven't figured that out and I need your help on this, because a part of the ICANN meeting is you're meeting. So what would happen, for instance -- let's say, you know, an ordinary policy meeting is like 1500, 1700 people. So when you have policy discussion, we can bring 200 people in, and a thousand people has to sit outside. Will that create this fantastic thing of working together or will that create an unequal footing? These are questions that we have to work through together, and really looking for your input.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay. I would also add to that that regional and topic-specific meetings are a part of the early phased return, subject, of course, to local laws and prevailing restrictions. So that will be something that you'll learn more about soon, I think.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed thus far. As a reminder, there will be additional time for feedback and comments towards the end of this session.

So now we're going to shift the conversation to the leaders of ICANN supporting organizations and advisory committees. Welcome again to all of you.

I'm going to be asking each leader a question specific to their community, and then afterwards we're going to have a few full-panel questions that everybody can take a stab at.

So I'd like to start with Aftab Siddiqui, who is the chair of the ASO Address Council.

So, Aftab, much of the policy work of the various Regional Internet Registries is conducted on mailing lists accompanied by periodic meetings. The RIPE meeting last month was held as a virtual meeting, as will be its September meeting. The next -- I'm sorry. The next APNIC meeting will be held virtually as well.

How has going virtual impacted the RIRs and the overall ASO NRO work, and what suggestions do you have for ICANN as a result of your community's reasons experiences going virtual?

AFTAB SIDDIQUI:

Hi, Sally. Hello, everyone. Aftab Siddiqui.

Yes, you're right, the only physical event in the RIR calendar which happened actually happened in our neighborhood in Melbourne, and it was early February alongside APRICOT, and some of the friends from ICANN were able to attend that one. In fact, that was the last event in any members' community calendar, because right after that one, I came back home and then got the message that there's a travel ban till end of March, and then it became end of June, and now it became end of December. Hopefully we'll be able to travel next year.

But, yes, as you said, the PDP process, the policy development process of every RIR is slightly different, but mostly rely on all the email discussion and consensus on the mail. But in some of the RIR cases, you have to have consensus, some call it voting on-site, especially for the APNIC. So the September meeting which is going to be tricky, which again is a virtual event, of how the policy development will work.

RIPE, of course, became a virtual event. The next will be a virtual. ARIN became a virtual, and it's going to happen with LAC- -- LACNIC at the same.

So policy development process is still happening. Of course, the process is a bit slow. You don't have that aggressive mic queues. You don't have aggressive discussion on the floor during the coffee break debating the pros and cons of the policies. But it is still happening. And hopefully we'll try to -- and we'll try to adapt.

One thing that we -- what the numbers community has done, we have increased at least tenfold number of events we were doing in person to virtual events. At least in the Asia Pacific region, we have -- so APNIC is doing networking from (indiscernible) events. RIPE did a virtual event. It was very well attended, like hundreds and probably I can say like more than 500, 600 people attended one of the plenary. So it's happening and we are getting used to it, but someone raised this point that.

But someone raised this point that the interaction and the networking part is missing. And just like the coffee sessions, I attended one of them. It was quite nice. RIPE did the same cooking-at-home session. It was a brilliant idea. I couldn't do it because it was 6:00 a.m. in the morning for me but something more relaxed and more open to discussion, open for comments. Of course, there are security concerns about Zoom bombing, who can come in, who cannot. But if you have registration in place, you can let people in, who can come in and who cannot. Then it's easy. Keep it small but as many as possible so that people can engage with each of them.

The only problem I have with the virtual event ICANN has arranged, from the numbers community point of view, we couldn't share the numbers update to the bigger ICANN community that we used to do at all ICANN events. That was the only missing piece. But I'm here if you have any questions on that one. I'm happy to share.

Current Environment

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you so much, Aftab. It's great suggestions, and I think it's a trend we're hearing about, just more opportunities to interact on a more casual level. So thank you for that advice.

The next question is for Katrina Sataki, the chair of the ccNSO Council. Katrina, the ccNSO is looking at conducting simultaneous policy development processes for what I believe may be the first time.

During ICANN67, the first Virtual Community Forum, while ccNSO members may have attended sessions on their own, the ccNSO did not hold an actual session. However, I do understand that the ccNSO has been conducting policy Webinars for ccTLD managers and the GAC, among others. You've also held a few important sessions this week.

So my question for you is: What difference do you think using a phased return to ICANN's large face-to-face meetings will make to the ccNSO's priorities and their pace of work?

KATRINA SATAKI: Thank you very much, Sally. Hello, everyone. Great to be here with all of you.

Yes, Sally, that is true. We do not overdo it with our PDPs because the scope of the ccNSO policy development is -- in ICANN bylaws is very limited.

Yes, we are about to start recruiting new volunteers to our fourth PDP, while the third one is still ongoing. Yes, for the first time in history, we'll have two PDPs happening in parallel.

It is also true that we decided not to have any sessions that we had planned for the Cancun meeting. However, probably wouldn't be fair to say that we substituted them with Webinars. What we did, we started using Webinars long before this pandemic, as if we knew something.

The idea was to reach to those ccNSO members and nonmembers who are not regular participants at face-to-face ICANN meetings because, again, let's be fair, it's not that everybody can come to face-to-face meetings. If you come to a meeting, it means that you have necessary resources. That's money, time that's people to send to those meetings.

Therefore, we decided to make ccNSO more accessible to those who cannot come to face-to-face meetings. So, therefore, we had those Webinars in place before -- before the pandemic. So that experience, of course, helped us. We tried to broaden the scope of those Webinars. Yes, indeed, we do quite a few regarding our PDP -- different PDPs.

Even though face-to-face meetings -- for those who work on policy development and policy-related work, the face-to-face meetings usually mean very good progress, maybe sometimes even a breakthrough. But most of the work happens between those meetings. When you come to a face-to-face meeting, you discuss specific topics, but the main work is still done between the meetings.

Therefore, yeah, if we talk about your question, well, if -- I'll start with the pace of work. Our PDPs usually take years. And it's -- I don't think that going from face-to-face to virtual would add significantly to those years so that people start retiring long before a PDP is done. But, yeah, it might -- it might have some impact, of course.

Another thing, we talk about priorities, if something like going from face-to-face to virtual had an impact on our priorities, then probably something would have been wrong with our priorities in the first place. So priorities will not change, I think, from at-large.

What might change is the tools we use to get to those things that need to be done and means that we use to discuss them, to advance the work and so on.

So a phased return, probably I will talk about the plan a little bit later. So for now, it's -- that's it. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thanks very much. I appreciate that response. It's -- I think as we're learning more -- and you've already adopted this -- that there are great ways to be more inclusive of people who have difficulty attending meetings. Thank you for that.

The next question is for Keith Drazek, chair of the GNSO. So, Keith, the GNSO Council has perhaps led the way in terms of looking in great detail at its current and upcoming projects and using a number of project management tools. There are also ongoing discussions about

how to manage the GNSO's existing workload, which includes three major PDPs and pending projects.

So how is the GNSO Council prioritizing all of its activities? And how does the lack of face-to-face meetings impact progress on PDP outcomes?

KEITH DRAZEK:

Hi, Sally. Thank you very much. And hello, everyone. Glad to be here. And welcome to all who are participating.

I think there are three sort of buckets there. There's, you know, an update -- brief update on our current work, a look ahead to our future work and how we're prioritizing that, and then maybe a brief observation on our working methods.

So I think it's important to note that the GNSO Council began its sort of -- it's 2020-2021 work prioritization back in January before this pandemic was on most people's radars. And so we, I think, got a bit of a head start in terms of some of the discussions, the preliminary work that we engaged in. But obviously that has been changed a bit with the -- with the advent of the current situation.

I'm pleased to report in terms of the ongoing PDPs that you noted, the three major PDPs that we've had in flight for many years now, that they are all three on track to continue to conclude their work this year.

We've got the EPDP phase 2 work that's on target now to conclude its work at the end of July.

We have the RPM PDP working group that's on target to conclude its work in late Q3 or early Q4.

And the subsequent procedures PDP work that's on target to conclude also in late Q3 or early Q4.

So I'm pleased to note that -- including this week that the activity and the commitment and the engagement of the people participating in those PDP working groups has not flagged. And if nothing else, it's actually, I think, picked up and there's a commitment of those groups and the leadership of those groups and the membership of the groups to really drive these ongoing PDPs to a conclusion.

So I think that's important to note. And the work and the commitment and the time and the effort is not insignificant. It's really something that people have doubled down on to try to bring these in for -- you know, for good landings this year, which will actually clear the decks for our ability as a GNSO Council to start initiating new work.

We have a tremendous amount of work in our pipeline right now. We're already over capacity in terms of what we probably can handle. But as these three PDPs -- and the RPM PDP, I should note, the phase 1 work of that is what's due to conclude this year.

The conclusion of these groups will give us the opportunity and the bandwidth as a GNSO community, and the broader community, to be able to start some of the new work that's before us.

In terms of the prioritization of that new work, I think it's important to note that the GNSO Council is starting to look at things in a slightly different way, and that is at a program management level as opposed to simply a project management level. And I want to commend ICANN policy staff colleagues for the support that they've provided to the GNSO Council this year as we've sort of made this transition and evolution towards the way of looking at things a bit differently.

The concept of the program management is that we're looking at other dependencies and trying to make sure that as we initiate new work, we understand, you know, what else in our workload prioritization table, you know, we actually have the ability to make educated, informed decisions that will take into account the other dependencies that might exist out there with other parts of the community and other parts of the work.

And the project management is really the focus on managing our PDPs, the policy development processes, within our remit for gTLDs. And that's where we're continuing to implement the PDP 3.0 reforms that we've talked about quite a bit. And I'd just like to note for the community that the GNSO Council will be running at some point after ICANN68, before ICANN69, a community Webinar to give an update and an explanation of the PDP 3.0 improvements and the implementation of those with some experience there. So we look forward to getting out more information on that in the near future.

And then I'll just wrap up by talking a bit about working methods. I think so far -- and in part because the GNSO community already has

it's stakeholder groups and constituencies and each one of these groups typically operates and meets in a virtual way, that I think were very well-trained over the course of time to be able to do work virtually. I think we have not seen a drop-off in the progress and the good work and actually the substantive work that we do in our PDPs and in the various parts of our community.

But I do note the question is really: What are the impacts to our ability to work towards consensus from the lack of face-to-face engagement? And I think to me it comes down to relationships. So much of what we do in the ICANN space and the ICANN community and our policy development work talking about implementation of policies is based on relationships. And my concern, I think -- and what we need to try to figure out how to manage and how to mitigate is the negative impact on our ability to continue to expand our relationships, deepen our relationships, and have those hallway conversations where you sort of try to work through the really tough issues and to come back to the group and try to figure out is there a path forward here that we can come together and compromise and reach a consensus position. That I think is the challenge that I see for the GNSO and the broader community in terms of being able to get our work done and to find that consensus and compromise.

So I'd like to just wrap up by sort of agreeing that finding the opportunities for, you know, the social engagement, the personal engagement, and having those opportunities for conversation is really important.

So I'll stop there.

Thank you, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you so much, Keith. I think it's -- congratulations to your Council because it's a tremendous amount of work, and to keep the momentum, it speaks well to your planning, right? It speaks to all of those things. And you're right, there's a lot of goodwill in the relationships. And continuing to find ways to build those is going to be an important challenge going forward. So thank you.

The next question I have is for Maureen Hilyard, the chair of ALAC.

So, Maureen, one of the challenges that we've heard you mention is how virtual meetings and the reliance on good connectivity and robust online tools, including interpretation and translation, can have a more substantial impact on participants from underdeveloped regions and for those who are less familiar with ICANN policy processes, irrespective of where they come from.

So what suggestions does the At-Large community have for facilitating participation by these impacted community members? And are there other budget priorities that we should consider at this time in order to achieve this?

MAUREEN HILYARD:

Thank you. Thank you, Sally, for that question. And of course lots of suggestions have come through. But when we consider the challenges experienced by the majority of our volunteers, we're trying to encourage to -- the volunteers we're trying to encourage to participate with us in At-Large, we do realize there's little that ICANN can do about personal experiences with regards to Internet use which we take on as a responsibility when we sign up, even though we may not realize the extent to which this involvement may eventually -- what it will eventually entail.

And it affects issues such as connectivity and accessibility.

The realities of the diversity of issues that our members have to deal with is a very wide scope, so that trying to even consider a one-size-fits-all solution is hardly practical. Even looking at personal circumstances in which our volunteers have to work during their lockdowns, lack of personal space, dealing with family, work and ICANN activities simultaneously has had a major impact on the participation rate for some. But there are also other issues, like dealing with screen fatigue or Zoom connection issues.

But I think one issue that we feel, in a practical sort of sense, that we could better deal with, because virtual outreach has become a new norm for us, is that our development teams are wanting to create new online learning programs for our newcomers. But they have been discouraged, in fact deterred from having any access to ICANN tools. So we can't use ICANN tools so that we can more easily import our ideas into what is the standard course development mechanism.

But at the same time, there is little encouragement for the teams to be able to experiment with other tools that we might be able to check out which might -- you know, that might be a different way of doing what we need to do more effectively.

And At-Large has to be a little bit more creative as to how we do things, because our job is to encourage people from a very wide, diverse range of backgrounds and capabilities. But we're trying to get them to engage with us and the work that we're doing and ICANN activities. And just letting them know that they're paying their own way as they go.

So financial assistance is another common request, of course. And for these virtual ICANN meetings, it has been suggested that -- I'm just putting it out there, that the per diem that would normally go to leaders who would have been funded to go to an ICANN meeting anyway might be available to those who have contributed greatly to the work of setting up and participating in our meeting sessions. You know, as possible compensation for what they do in between ICANN meetings as well, and that could go towards the cost of Internet connection, you know, before, during, and after an ICANN meeting.

But I think possibly one of the most -- one of the discouraging things about online meetings is that -- that we in At-Large really work hard to ensure that it doesn't happen is the potential for a disconnect within a community between our members and their colleagues and leaders. You know, we have a community Skype chat, which is very active and helps to socialize our community and maintain social connections

with each other. This is really important for keeping our community together. It's free, but it does need a community that feels that it's actually connected in order for it to be effective. And on this chat, for example, we share the good times, like Olivier's recent award, along with the challenging times, like the recent earthquake in Mexico and getting that assurance that nine members of our community are okay.

So in the end, you know, while financial assistance would be welcomed if we could get it, it's probably more important that we're supported to make use of tools, including translation tools, that will encourage people to want to engage not only with our work in a more creative way but also with each other, by being able to grow and strengthen our community, enabling people to keep in touch and to share their concerns and experiences with each other as well as with other communities, as Keith mentioned, during this already challenging time.

And I think that, like, we need to, you know, continually impress on ICANN that these are things we need.

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thanks very much, Maureen. All thoughts for consideration, for sure.

The next question I have is for Manal Ismail, the chair of the GAC.

So, Manal, the GAC has been working more intersessionally in recent years. It also is actively engaged in a number of PDPs and cross-

community discussions which obviously have a workload impact for GAC members who volunteer for these groups.

How is the GAC prioritizing its work and how is it handling intersessional and virtual meetings, especially in view of the importance of the GAC communique that is issued at every ICANN meeting?

MANAL ISMAIL:

Thank you very much, Sally, and good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, everyone.

So, Sally, as you mentioned, the GAC -- previously the GAC did most of its business while in session, face to face. Now, with the current challenging circumstances and the repeating virtual meetings, of course we had to change this in order to deal with the situation and cope with the challenges imposed by the virtual setup.

So as you rightly mentioned, Sally, the GAC has been working more intersessionally since there are no face-to-face meetings to wait for. This helped to streamline our work and distribute the work evenly throughout the months, but at the same time, it implied an increased workload and required GAC members to allocate more time and more effort to GAC work intersessionally. And all of this, of course, in addition to their day job obligations and challenging time we're living in.

Virtual meetings also extended the footprint of the GAC virtual meetings. We started moving our bilateral meetings, in cooperation with the different SOs and AC leaders, off the meeting week. We have also taken the working group meetings off the meeting week as well. So all this is moving intersessionally and increasing the work that is being done intersessionally.

We also reconsidered any agenda items that are just for information to GAC members. Either it's being circulated in writing or being provided through webinars; again, adding to the intersessional work.

On prioritization, the GAC have been calling for and trying to work on prioritizing its work for several years now, but I believe this, with the current situation mandating us to consider reduced sessions and shorter agendas and so on, prioritization is now being better achieved as we started discussing this and coordinating across the different constituencies with the SO and AC chairs already on the panel.

I believe this started even earlier than the COVID situation, I have to be fair, but I think it was enforced more and we were obligated to act even more quickly with the COVID situation and given the short time frame we had, especially for the Cancun virtual meeting where we didn't have a lot of time, so we had to coordinate how to shorten the agenda.

So the remote meetings, like anything else, poses challenges but also offers some opportunities. So if I may start with the challenges.

A main challenge for the GAC in specific is the drafting of the communique, which you already highlighted in your question. So the drafting of the communique remotely, without any face-to-face interaction, is an exercise that is suffering a lot with lack of human interaction, face-to-face engagement, side talks, small drafting groups discussing and negotiating text and so on. But so far, we're coping with GAC members' flexibility and understanding, and members are even using the breaks to discuss and negotiate over email until we resume the sessions.

The second challenge, which I'm sure is not limited to the GAC, and I think Maureen already hinted to this as well, is the technical challenges affecting participation of those suffering from connectivity problems, whether because they live in areas with poor infrastructure or because of unaffordable connectivity or other reasons. And the third challenge, which is again, I believe, won't be limited to the GAC, is the time zone always disadvantaging part of our membership. So we have witnessed a very good number of GAC participants, but I personally believe, and this is just an observation, it's not supported by any figures or numbers, but I believe that not everyone is attending every meeting now, as we used to have at face-to-face meetings. They are being selective. And probably one factor is the time of the session in their time zone. So it's difficult to have all the GAC members in one room, in one session during the face -- the virtual meetings.

That said, the GAC has put in place two things to help address the time zone challenge. So in terms of participation to the sessions, the

GAC leadership organizes daily briefs for those who are disadvantaged by the time zone of the meeting and are missing certain sessions because of the painful hours. And we are already witnessing GAC members joining those daily briefs, held by the GAC leadership at both ICANN67 and ICANN68.

The second thing we agreed to have is allowing 48-hour period for GAC members to review the communique at their own time zones, which, by the way, also released us from worrying about the quorum, should we not meet the required threshold at any of the virtual meetings, which have never happened so far, by the way.

So apologies in advance to the community if the communique they expect to be out immediately at the end of any face-to-face meeting is now delayed a bit after the end of any virtual meeting. So it takes us now 48 hours to get it adopted and approved and posted publicly.

So to close positively, opportunities offered by remote meetings include the prioritization, which I already mentioned. I will not repeat that again. But also, I would say help to strengthen the remote participation of GAC members who used to have -- we used to have minimal number of GAC members joining remotely during face-to-face meetings, and only for certain obligations, whether reporting on a working group or presenting on a certain topic. Now, I'm sure, or at least I hope, that when we're back to face-to-face meetings, we will continue to witness an increased number of remote participants. So the virtual meeting served as an excellent opportunity to strengthen,

enhance, and prove that remote participation is an integral part of any ICANN face-to-face meeting.

I'll stop here, and thank you very much, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Thank you, Manal. I really appreciate that you articulated the challenges in a broader way, but also the creative solutions that the GAC has arrived at to overcome some of the challenges. So thank you for that.

There are two more questions, and then we're going to open it up for community feedback again. But the next question I have is for Fred Baker, the chair of the RSSAC.

So, Fred, the RSSAC has not traditionally relied primarily on face-to-face ICANN meetings to advance its work, although it does meet at ICANN meetings as a group periodically and at other meetings such as the IETF.

Has the current environment affected the pace, prioritization, or progress of RSSAC's work?

FRED BAKER:

Well, I would say no, not necessarily. As you note, we are distributed worldwide. And we do our work quite often in email or using audio-video conferencing capabilities like Zoom. We also have historically

had workshops in between ICANN meetings. So the fact of ICANN going virtual basically moved us into our daily work environment.

What it has meant is that we couldn't rely on going to some place to have a meeting in order to say, "Okay, we're going to do that" but rather, "Okay, let's distribute those meetings at different times." So, for example, the RSSAC this week is meeting, I think, four times -- four or five times. But only one of those is actually on the ICANN schedule. The rest of them -- they were meetings where basically the RSSAC participants would be having a conversation anyway. So we simply said, fine, we have got a work party and that's going to do what it's doing. So, no, I wouldn't say it has materially affected the pace or prioritization or progress.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: That's great. Good. Was there anything else you wanted to add?

FRED BAKER: Well -- the one thing that I think the RSSAC benefits from in having face-to-face ICANN meetings is meeting people that aren't RSSAC who usually when I get to talk with them, they say, "What in the world are you and why do I care?" And so we get to explain ourselves. We can go have a tutorial in a room, or we can have a hallway conversation or something like that. And it does provide a place where we can meet as a group and shake hands and get to know one another.

Current Environment

Working remotely in email and that kind of thing, you never really hear the person's voice. You see the words they say, but you never hear the person's voice. And knowing the person actually helps materially with those conversations. So ICANN meetings have been useful for us in that sense.

And then over the last year, Manal has invited us to talk with the GAC. And Maureen has invited us to talk with the ALAC, so presenting to the rest of the community. Letting the community know us, I think that has been a value for the face-to-face meetings.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN:

Fred, thank you very much for that. It's interesting.

The last question we're going to ask before we go to community feedback is for Rod Rasmussen, the chair of the SSAC.

So, Rod, the SSAC has now had two virtual DNSSEC workshops, at ICANN67 and ICANN68. These have always been well-received. In addition, SSAC recently formed a new work party on DNS abuse, and I understand that it's also conducting outreach to seek new members. So my question for you is: What challenges does going virtual present to ongoing SSAC activities and outreach and how have you handled them?

ROD RASMUSSEN:

Thanks, Sally.

So the SSAC has always worked on a cadence that involves a lot of remote participation. And so, so far, the lack of face-to-face meetings hasn't had a huge impact on our ability to get things done because we already had a regular cadence of work-party meetings that were already scheduled for convenient times for our members to be able to get together and advance our work. The -- and that continues pretty much at the pace we've been continuing.

The biggest impact I'd say we've had to deal with is that people's day jobs or other personal issues that they have to deal with because of the pandemic may have affected their ability to contribute to the -- whatever work they were previously doing. That's been probably the biggest impact we've had to deal with. That's something we've been able to adjust around for the most part, especially since we have a review process that allows people to catch up on things.

And as far as having two now virtual ICANN meetings, ironically, we've actually had, I think, some of the best attendance we've had at some of our things, like, the DNSSEC workshop you mentioned, and our own open SSAC meetings. We held those as well. Probably -- definitely, I'd say, we had the largest attendance and the best interactions on a Q&A basis where we've had the ability to take on questions from a wide variety of folks and answer those in realtime. So that's something we're looking to incorporate, I would say, even once we start getting back together face-to-face, is doing a better job with being able to take some more -- kind of from-the-floor, in the chatroom-type questions and work with that because we had some very -- we were

able to get into some interesting technical conversations around a couple of our topics that we may not have done in the past. So that was good.

The -- we do miss, as others have mentioned, the relationship-building opportunities. Especially a lot of the meetings, we typically would have bilateral meetings with other SO/ACs or some organizations where there may be a specific SSR-related issue where folks will want to talk to us.

And while we have scheduled and done some of those virtually, those are -- those are a lot harder to put together than being able to find some time to get together at a face-to-face meeting which makes it a lot more convenience.

And then, of course, all the hallway conversations and the like. I would also say kind of the side bar conversations where you can see just looking around the room where somebody looks confused about a topic that you may have been talking about and you can actually drill in off that on the spot, right? Those are some of the interactions that you really miss.

Especially when you start talking about some of the technical events, technical things we deal with, you can lose a room really quick virtually and not have a clue because you're all staring at me right now and your faces are frozen with nice smiles on them. When it looks like that, it's a little harder to understand. Somebody might be going "huh." That's something we've noticed.

It will have an impact on our work going forward. SSAC does an annual workshop where we all get together in a face-to-face meeting for a good part of a week and really advance our work. That usually happens September. Obviously not happening September this year. There's some contingencies around maybe doing that in December, something like that. That's something we have to work around.

Our admin committee does get together in the same vein multiple times during the year, and we've had to do that virtually. So far that's been okay. Our staff has done a great job of shepherding things along.

But there's certainly going to be some impacts of being able to get some of that nitty-gritty stuff done where you just have to get together to get through things. There's at least one of the work projects we're working on that we're kind of spinning our wheels on a bit internally just because we haven't had a chance to get together and have those kind of side-bar, in-the-bar conversations that tend to smooth those things out and lend to solutions.

But in general, I think we're getting things done. There is, I think -- I'm seeing this ICANN-wide -- a bit of frustration. We've been at this now three, four months and people are getting a little stir crazy or tired of being cooped up or what have you. And that is maybe getting a little frayed at the edges, if you will, as far as keeping things in the nice, professional manner all the time. So it's -- while nothing serious or anything like that is going on, I think we all have a little bit of -- we have to do a better job just in general keeping on top of ourselves as far as making sure that your frustrations with the world situation

doesn't creep in on what you're doing. We're all challenged with that on all facets of our lives now. So nothing new there. But it's good to remind ourselves of that, I think, from time to time.

Just for clarity's sake, we do have a work party that's going on on abuse where we have invited guests. What SSAC is looking for, though, is more members. We're a bit down on our membership. We've had some folks leave us over the last couple years. And we did a big revamp project on our membership and our skills and all that and took a hard look at that, which we got done. And we were all excited about because we finished that up in February. And we were getting ready to kind of hit the trail to recruit folks at the upcoming meetings and some of the face-to-face things we do with our members throughout conferences around the world. And those all went away.

And, Sally, you and your team have been helping us on that. We hope to do that virtually now. But kind of threw a bit of a curve ball at us. So we're trying to figure out how to best do outreach on recruiting new members and diverse areas of the world, diverse backgrounds, and fill in some of the thinner areas we have in our own skill sets. So we're looking to do that. That's probably our biggest challenge going forward, is doing that when we had some bigger plans to do it in kind of a more personal way.

I'll stop there. Thanks.

Current Environment

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you so much. I think it's a point well-said that there are certainly plans that we all had in place that we're not able to accomplish in the same way.

But I thank everyone on the panel because you've really provided great insights into the challenges you face, the opportunities that have come from it, and some really creative solutions of how to manage going forward because this will continue for some time.

So thank you, all. I recognize we only have a couple of minutes left. And we had hoped to have a little bit more time for feedback.

I know there is one message from the Q&A that we were going to read out, and then I think I'm going to turn to Goran and to Maarten for any closing comments.

James.

JAMES COLE: Thank you. This comment comes from Jorge Cancio: As seen in the chat, there's an appetite for reconsidering the number of face-to-face meetings in a post-COVID time, considering the carbon footprint and other circumstances. Maybe a combination of one or two face-to-face meetings needed for informal and spontaneous interaction and virtual meetings may be sensible.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Okay.

GORAN MARBY:

Sally -- thank you again for asking this question. It's unfortunate that we had started to -- it was a little bit from -- (indiscernible). We started to actually calculate the carbon footprint for ICANN traveling, which we are posting as well. So it's definitely something that -- it really comes out of a conversation with community members such as yourself because we wanted to be -- add that to the conversation because there is a carbon footprint cost.

When it comes to your question, it's really, yeah, it's a very good question. But we need to figure out a way to have this conversation with you and the community.

We are here. We are here to support the ICANN community, its work, and facilitate that work. The meeting strategy is an extremely important part of that. That's why we engage with the SO and AC leaders who will engage with you through the different constituencies to start having the conversations to do this.

I don't know if we're going to end up -- I don't know the answers to the question. And I shouldn't know the answer to the question because it belongs to you. We are here.

And actually, Rod, you made me said something that made my heart a little bit warm. You said "our staff," and I took that as a compliment because that's what we are. We are your staff. Thank you.

Current Environment

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran.

I'd like to turn next to Maarten, first, for any closing comments. And then, Goran, we'll come back to you, if there's anything else you'd like to share.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Okay. Thank you very much for a very engaged discussion. And also, I think the format worked very well because you also experience how in different parts of the communities different thoughts are now brought in and coming together.

And this is the process that we really like to support, as Goran said. This is where we are to support you in doing this as well as possible. And all these suggestions are on the table.

Really appreciate the good input, the engaged participation to the very end.

And for many of you, this may be the last session at ICANN68. For some others, there's still more to come. But I also would love to use this opportunity to rather than over drinks after the day -- at the end of the day to thank you, truly, for your engagement again and for being here.

Yes, this is not the world we hoped for. Things have changed. Yet, we are committed and engaged in addressing the issues together. And I really appreciate that.

So looking forward to also the comments that will come afterwards in the evaluations and, further, to the next event which will be an AGM, not a Policy Forum.

So when you think of your recommendations or your solutions, please also consider to know that this was to be facilitated a Policy Forum. Next meeting is to facilitate an AGM, which we have structured differently over time. So we need to take that into account, too.

So thank you, everybody. And whatever the appropriate time of day is, please take your coffee, tea, or maybe even a beer or a wine, whatever fits best in your schedule right now.

Back to you, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you.

Goran, to you, please.

GORAN MARBY: Thank you. I'm going to do something a little bit unusual. On the side here, I received questions about the moment that goes around the world when it comes to the Black Lives Matter.

And for your information, I would like to read something that I have sent to my -- sent to my staff this week.

And I do this because I want to be transparent about what we do. And I'm sorry that we're so late. So maybe I can ask you, if you are interested, to just stay on for a minute.

This is the message I sent to my team: We all have a responsibility to combat systemic racial injustice. We all witness the protests taking place around the world calling for equal justice and the end to systemic racism.

There are core principles and global issues that ICANN strongly supports and are part of our very ethos. We have zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind and are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for Black people and people of color.

ICANN is entrusted with ensuring the stability, resilience, and interoperability of the Internet's unique identifier systems. And we believe in an open Internet where everybody can connect.

The events of these past weeks reminds us all that all the Internet and access to the information is a powerful tool to shed light on racial bias and injustice and to facilitate initiatives that bring people together to work for change, both locally and globally.

But in the ICANN organization, we are taking actions to hold the organization accountable. We are committed to better understanding the many dimensions, diversity, and inclusions so that we may establish a set of guiding principles.

We'll open and facility a dialogue to support our employees to ensure that racial bias and discrimination or bias of any kind have no place in our workplace.

We need to be comfortable having uncomfortable conversations so that we can address the unconscious and conscious ways in which systematic racism is perpetrated. We need to listen more to Black people and people of color, to learn more about these issues that impact them each and every day, and we need to continue to take meaningful actions to address inequality.

ICANN Org stands with our global community as we continue to enable inclusive and diverse participation in ICANN processes so we can improve global representation in how ICANN policies are formed. There are efforts such as diversity recommendation out of Work Stream 2, enhancing ICANN's accountability. They are awaiting implementation. However, implementation of those recommendations is just a starting point.

Lasting change doesn't happen overnight. It requires work and attitudinal transformation from all of us to truly embrace diversity and inclusion in our global community. The expected standards of behavior and the ICANN anti-harassment policy are the guideposts which we need to conduct ourselves, and they also reveal how we want to be as a community and organization in the spirit of mutual respect.

Thank you very much.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN: Thank you, Goran. There's nothing else to say after that. I think that was an important message. Thank you for sharing that.

I will ask you, we're going to close. Thank you all. Thank you, panelists, for your comments and your insights, and, Maarten and Goran, thank you. And thank you everyone for joining and contributing where you could.

If you would, I would like you to please complete the survey because this is a pilot, it's the first time we tried it this, and we would really like to have your feedback so we can improve the session even more in the future.

Thank you all, and good morning, good afternoon, or good day wherever you are.

Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]