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ICANN69 | Community Days Sessions – ccNSO: Internet Governance Liaison Committee  
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 – 12:00 to 13:30 CEST

CLAUDIA RUIZ: Hello, everyone. Hello and welcome to the Internet Governance Liaison Committee.

My name is Claudia Ruiz, and I am the remote participation manager for this session. Please note: this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN expected standards of behavior. During this session, questions or comments submitted in the chat will only be read aloud if put in the proper form, as I will note in the chat in a moment. I will read the questions and comments aloud during the time set by the chair or moderator of this session.

If you would like to ask your questions or make your comments verbally, please raise your hand. When called upon, kindly unmute your microphone to take the floor. Please state your name for the record and speak clearly and at a reasonable pace. Mute your microphones when done speaking to prevent any background noise.

With that, I will hand the floor over to you, Pierre Bonis. Thank you very much.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much, Claudia, and thank you all for participating in this IGLC meeting, which we usually call face-to-face IGLC meeting

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within the group. So, of course, it's not face-to-face, but I'm going to come back to that very quickly. And thank you to all IGLC. I see a lot of them in the room but not [inaudible]. Thank you, Claudia, Bart, and Joke for the work you're doing over here helping us to deliver what we can deliver to our colleagues from the ccNSO on this Internet governance topic. And hi, everyone. So I'm very happy to see that there are plenty members of IGLC and from other constituencies— from the ccNSO, of course, and from other constituencies also.

I would just like to, first of all, remind us, and maybe those of you who are attending this meeting for the first time, that the IGLC is a group that has been established by the ccNSO, composed by ccNSO members, whose objective is to give and share information and maybe sometimes elaborate on topics related to the Internet governance within the ccNSO. So it's definitely a cc point of view.

During the days, if you remember, where we had the opportunity to meet in person, we used to have an IGLC meeting during the ICANN meeting in the schedule of the ICANN meeting. That is an opportunity for us to exchange with a broader audience and not only within the IGLC or even within the ccNSO. So that's why we, as we did for ICANN68, by the way, maintained this meeting to make sure that we have some fresh air/opportunities to discuss with all of you on what we think within the group is an important topic. The IGLC otherwise is meeting every 15 days/every two weeks to share information about what's happening in the Internet governance planet.

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With this very strong, very short introduction, please, Claudia, can we move to the next slide? We tried to—thank you, Claudia—this time reshape a little bit, with the group, the agenda of this meeting. We thought that it would be nice to start with IGLC member news. A lot of members from the group are in the Zoom room. So it’s just a question of sharing information about Internet-governance related events or news that happens in their countries.

So it’s not compulsory, of course, for each member of the Internet Governance Liaison Committee to take the floor, but at this point in time, I would like to invite the members of IGLC who would like to share information about, for instance, what happened and/or what will happen in terms of the Internet Governance Forum in their country, if there’s any discussions at the legislative level that could impact the Internet governance in that country or their region, or any other news that they would like to share with the audience today. And I’m very sure it will fuel the discussion that we will have next, and especially maybe on the digital sovereignty topic. So for this first part of the discussion, we will have something like 15 minutes. I would like to invite any member of the IGLC that would like to take the floor and share some information with the audience.

Claudia, I don’t know if people are raising their hands or opening their mic, so I’ll let you deal with it. But please, for instance ...

CLAUDIA RUIZ:

Yes. We have Lianna with her hand up. Lianna, you may take the floor. You’re unmuted.

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PIERRE BONIS: Okay, great.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Thank you very much. Hello, everyone. My name is Lianna Galstyan. I am from the dot-am registry. I'd like to share some news that we had last month in Armenia, basically about the School on Internet Governance that we had for the fourth time. The fourth edition took place in September, from the 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>.

Claudia, may I share my screen? Because I prepared a couple of slides.

CLAUDIA RUIZ: One moment. I would have to ask the techs because you need to be a co-host to be able to share. One moment.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Okay. Thank you. But before that's going to happen, I'd like to just say that, for the fourth edition, which was interesting and encouraging for us, we opened up the call for application for everyone—for all stakeholder participants—and we received 1995 applications. Most of them—the majority—were teachers and students, which is a really interesting fact for me to analyze. I assume that is because of this online education that happened because of COVID. Two teachers were so much interested to learn the new things/what's happening in the IG world that they had no idea about, they applied to learn these things, and that is really interesting for me. And—

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BART BOSWINKEL: Lianna? This is Bart speaking. You can share you slides if you want to.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Yeah, but it says that, once you stop sharing your screen, then I will be able to share it.

BART BOSWINKEL: Okay. So, Claudia, please stop sharing the agenda.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Okay, thank you very much. Okay. I hope you can see my screen now.

BART BOSWINKEL: Yes, we do.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Okay—

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Lianna, before you can continue—yeah, this looks a lot better in full-screen mode. Thank you very much.

LIANNA GALSTYAN: Okay. About the organizers, it was organized this year by the Internet Society Armenian chapter and the registry of dot-am and also the IDN registry. So we were organizing staff for this year. Just a little bit of

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statistics here. You can see, as I said, we selected actually, from the initial [90] applicants, 60. Then, in fact, only [40] could be able to join. We made this a hybrid meeting. So those who were particularly in the capital city, those who preferred the initial application form ... We had the line saying, if you preferred to be online or on-site participant. Those who mentioned they preferred to be an on-site participant, we called them and we prepared a room with all precautions, etc., for this COVID thing. We had around 10 or 12 people coming up to our office, and all the others just joined online. That was [our] experience of having the hybrid meeting.

Because many of our participants for this year were from rural areas, this is an advantage of the online format; for the previous years, it was not possible for them to come for several days, etc. As I already mentioned, the teachers were there, participating. These people actually did not know English well, so that's why we decided that, for this time, we will rely rather on our local specialists. The only exception was the ICANN representative the GSE had for our region. He talked about the DNS and ICANN—the introductory part of the sessions—and he covered that not in English but in Russian, which is a common language in our country.

So you can see that the majority of participants were female. That is amazing—like 82%. Of the four days, the first day was the introductory part. Then we covered a lot of issues on different things: privacy, security, and digital literacy in general. I should say that [this part is] particularly interesting for all the participants because they wanted to know more about digital literacy and the cybersecurity issues/cyber-

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hygiene. This was the top-interest topic for our participants. We also used this tool of Zoom—the breakout group discussions. So we wanted to bring some live discussions and the multi-stakeholder model implications and how they can be done in the group.

Just a little bit for you to see now. Office. We kept the social distancing for people participating. They had their masks, etc. So that was really an interesting moment of our school.

We will later on submitted/provided the survey for the feedback. They all said that this was an interesting exercise. They learned things that they had no idea absolutely of what is Internet governance and all these things. And they're now interested in these topics, again, as I said, especially the cybersecurity and cyber-hygiene things. In these days where we are having a very hard time in Armenia, people are actually using this knowledge to not to be bullied or not to get into the fake news, etc., etc. So things/knowledge that they gained are being used at this moment.

Thank you very much. Probably this is all from Armenia. I'll stop here.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Lianna, for this sharing. And congratulations for the organization of this event. That is in line with the discussion we had at the last ICANN, when we talked about the importance of online training and the expectation of people regarding the rule of the national registry. I think it illustrates perfectly the rule of the Internet registry within the Internet governance at the national level.

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I've seen that that has been a hand raised by Leonid, so, Leonid, I'm going to give you the floor. I'll just remind you—it's not because it's you, Leonid, of course—that it's a 15- to 20-minute part of the agenda, and we are just at 15 minutes. So please share very factual information so that we will have other participants who will be able to share it.

LEONID TODOROV: Fair enough. Thank you, Pierre. Can you hear me well?

PIERRE BONIS: Perfectly. Thank you, Leonid.

LEONID TODOROV: Thank you. I'll be pretty short. I believe that there are two interesting trends/tendencies for now. One is what is mostly overlooked: Trump's clean net initiative, which can put an end, as Trump is really consistent in what he's doing—and if he's elected for a next term—which may put an end to all the efforts to keep the Internet as is.

Secondly, we have a visible crisis of certain fora. I've attended the Asia Pacific regional IGF remotely, and I'm also engaged in preparations for the World Internet Governance Conference, also known as the Wuzhen Summit. I can see that both lack that dynamic and that dynamism, if you will, because of this online environment, which is quite understandable.



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I believe that these two processes—the threat of Internet fragmentation, which, again, as I said, has drawn little attention so far, and the obvious weakness, whether institutional or communication-wise, of Internet fora—are clear signs of this new normal, which might be explored for the benefit of this community because we really need to know where we are heading to and what kind of challenges we should see down the road. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Leonid. So you saved me the time of introducing Point 3 of the agenda by doing that. So we will regain some time in a few minutes with this nice introduction to the digital sovereignty topic.

Is there anyone who wants to share things? I'm going to help, a little bit, the members. I participated last week in an online session of IGF Italy, and I was really impressed by the number of participants. So maybe, as we have in the group participants that are from Italy, of course, I would like to give the floor, if she accepts, of course, to Adriana Lazzaroni. If this is not possible, I see also that, even if he's not a member of the group itself, we have other participants of IGF Italy. So would someone like to comment on that? I think I've never seen an online meeting of Internet governance that was so much attended.

No?

ADRIANA LAZZARONI:

Hello? Pierre?

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PIERRE BONIS: Yes?

ADRIANA LAZZARONI: It's Adriana speaking. Yes, my registry, dot-IT, participated in the Italy IGF, particularly with a presentation of Italian DNS at the time of COVID-19. The conference was organized—very well-organized—by our colleagues. I see in particular that my friend, Andrea Beccalli, is online, so maybe he, being within the program committee/organizing committee of the event, better than me say a few words about the conference on the whole.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much. Yeah, if it's possible, I could give the floor to Andrea—by the way, thank you, for inviting me to participate last week—just to share some numbers. It was really impressive. And maybe explain to us why it is so successful in Italy.

ANDREA BECCALLI: Hello. Thank you, Pierre, and good morning, everybody. Just a few words since I didn't prepare that much on that one, but I would be happy to share. I did participate as ICANN but mostly as myself in a personal capacity in the program committee for the Italian IGF, which was planned to be a physical event. So we started the planning before the COVID crisis in a small—not that small—in a town in the south of Italy—[Calabria Cosenza]—with the participation for the first time of

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the network of the chamber of [commerce.] When the whole crisis of COVID exploded and there was no clear possibility to have a physical meeting, we started discussing the possibility of having an online virtual event, which proved to be way more successful than anybody would have thought. Final numbers for participation is staggering. Actually, it's way more than what we saw. Some session had 13,000 participants, counting the Zoom room, the YouTube stream, and the Facebook stream. Some sessions were actually streamed at universities. So, in one link, you had entire classes of participants and] numbers ... [inaudible] how much you can count those. And there were 150 sessions and something around 300 speakers across all the sessions. So numbers were way more than what we usually see in a national IGF.

I can share some of my views of why we got those numbers. Clearly, having a virtual event allowed way more people to participate. Everybody sitting at home basically was a facilitator in that without having to travel to a single location.

But that's not the only thing. I think the program that was designed was very compelling. Having the participation of the business sector and the small and medium enterprises represented by the chamber of commerce I think was key for bringing these topics to an audience that's usually a bit remote from the Internet governance discussion.

Plus, there is this general sense and awareness of the importance of the crucial role that the Internet plays in a moment where everything is happening online. So I think this is also a clear component that

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suddenly made evident to a large audience the importance of the Internet and which are the actors behind it to make it run smooth and which are the different roles and responsibilities. So that also helped a lot.

Of the sessions that I actually had the honor to moderate about the role of the ccTLD registries during the COVID crisis, I had the honor of hosting two as a representative from AFNIC. Plus we had a representative. We just heard from Adriana. [Marco Conte], the director from dot-it, and the Portuguese registry, dot-pt, and then SIDNL, the Dutch registry. The discussion, also, was, I think, the first time we brought the role and the discussion about what's the role and the function of a national registry to allow the audience. So we framed it in an informative format, presenting who's behind the national Internet as a critical infrastructure manager. That's the role of the registry but also its responsibility—we just heard also from Lianna—on making sure that the whole community is aware and has the opportunity to participate being trained in understanding how the Internet works.

So there is this role of the registry which, of course, is a critical Internet infrastructure. It represents the whole community online. It ensures that every website under the ccTLD is reachable and is safe. But it's also playing a role that goes a little bit more that that in a moment where the Internet is a critical infrastructure for everything else in life, to ensure that the participation in its infrastructure is for everybody, and in doing so, in fulfilling the role of training and of participating in the policy discussion. We heard examples from all the registries on

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how they reinvest part of the funds into all sorts of bringing of access to the remote areas, participating in trainings for policymakers, helping students in getting online connected and providing computers. All that was clear in the session. I think it's important also to recognize the role [in] the governance view. I'll stop here. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Andrea. And congratulations. Please don't—I speak to all the members of this session—advertise too much the numbers shared by Andrea because all of us trying to organize IGF at the national level are going to feel very bad and useless compared to the 13,000 people attending one session. So congratulations once again. This is very interesting.

Ellen, who is representing dot-nz, who's a member of the IGLC? Can I give you the floor very shortly? Then, after, if I don't see any other hand raised, even if I know that they could have been more sharing of information, we will go to the next point of the agenda. Ellen, you have the floor.

ELLEN STRICKLAND:

Thank you, Pierre. I appreciate it. NetHui, our annual national New Zealand initiative, which dot-nz and InternetNZ are hosts of and help bring together for the New Zealand Internet community, was held yesterday and today, actually. We did an all-online version. We didn't

know what restrictions or the world would be like when we came to it, so we went for the all-online version.

I can certainly say that one of our learnings was that, as the ccTLD, organizing NetHui and ICANN in the same week should be avoided at all possible, making for long days. I've been very tired after the last two days. I think [I'll] be back up in a couple hours to attend ccNSO. We had very similar numbers to what we've had in the in-person events—so hundreds, not thousands. As you say, that's quite a high bar that Italy has set. Congratulations to them. But it was a really excellent engagement. It came at a good time where people are becoming more comfortable with using Zoom and really engaging with each other in discussions. So we felt that there were really deep discussions.

I guess I would offer, in terms of the content, two things that were of interest and international were misinformation was a very hot topic, and what to do about it at a global level. The other issue that came out strongly for us, which was very timely, was the Five Eyes Plus statement on end to end encryption, which came out over the weekend, earlier this week, that a special breakout stream got set up on at NetHui to discuss the challenges of encryption and the governments and some governments' stances on it.

So, yeah, just to share those topics that are international Internet-governance-related. Thank you.

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PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much, Ellen. I know that, in the room, most of the people are very well aware, but to make sure that everyone is following the discussion, can you remind us who the Five Eyes are?

ELLEN STRICKLAND: That's very good after a long day. I think it was also Five Eyes Plus, so it was around international security. If I get this right—it feels like a pop quiz—it's U.S., U.K., New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. Is that right? Also, India had signed it, and a couple of others had signed this particular one around encryption. Really—I don't know who's read it—it's a very interest read, [almost magical] thinking. It affirms the importance of encryption and that it must not be broken and then lists reasons it needs to be broken when necessary, which is causing a lot of confusion and concern.

PIERRE BONIS: Well, thank you very much, Ellen. I'm very sorry to have dumped this quiz so late in the night for you or early in the night. Thank you very much for attending this meeting with this huge difference of time zones.

With that, even if we could continue for a lot of time with sharing this information that I think gives a view of the dynamics under the Internet governance talks ... is not low. That is that the online meetings seems to allow different kinds of people and different kinds of discussions to happen in this landscape of Internet governance.

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With that, I will, if you allow me, close this part. I see that Alex is speaking in the chat. We don't have any news from Africa on this first part, so please, Alex, feel free to maybe intervene on the next point. That will be a way also to give us news of what is happening, for instance, in Senegal but maybe in other countries of the continent.

Now, if you allow me, I would like to introduce the digital sovereignty talk that will take us to the end of this meeting, except that we will have some minutes for Any Other Business. The purpose of this short presentation I'm going to give you is not to give you another view of all the talks about digital sovereignty today but to open some discussions and to try and explain to people who are assisting this session why within the IGLC group we thought it was a topic of interest to discuss with all of you today.

Claudia, could you please go to the next slide? Okay. So this is the title. Is it a new trend—digital sovereignty?

Next slide. We discussed within the IGLC this topic. It came in a way as a new topic, but we will see later that it's not so new. But some of us—and I'm sure a lot of you—have witnessed that, since the first lockdowns, I would say, since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been rising concerns about the sovereignty in general, not especially on the digital level. First it started, of course, with the sovereignty on masks, then on a cure/medication. Rapidly, this question of sovereignty were asked by a lot of people from a lot of stakeholders. And it touches also the digital economy with people asking pretty loudly if we were not in a kind of dependency in some



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countries towards the digital economy and the digital services as we are in some countries towards mask manufacturing, for instance, or medication building.

And we had also some strong positions, which I give there as an example, which are different kinds of positions, of course. We're going to elaborate on if I agree or not on these positions. Of course, the Trump TikTok thing has put the digital sovereignty topic on the headlines, especially because it was a U.S./China thing. So a glimpse of geopolitical approach on a digital sovereignty thing and an economic battle is always the best thing to popularize the topic. In a less, let's say, flamboyant way, France and Germany launched an initiative with the EU that is called GAIA-X. I don't know if you heard about it, but that is really about building industry leadership on data and on Cloud, which has been founded with a lot of money and gathering huge European companies. And, of course, in each and every country in the world, almost, you can find some digital sovereignty strategies that are on the table and discussed.

Next slide. Is it new? Is this digital sovereignty a new topic? The answer could be no and yes. You will see that then after we will say yes. It's not a new topic. In the Internet governance talks, the digital sovereignty topic has always been there. The best example is the World Summit of the Information Society. It was a summit that was organized by the United Nations. In itself, this momentum of talk that was organized through nations—even the WSIS was open to Civil Society and the private sector ... But, by the end of the day, the text was voted on and adopted by the nations themselves. That was an

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approach of the Internet that was led by a thought about digital sovereignty. Any ITU-related works seen from outside of the ITU—once again, I’m not judging there; I’m just trying to open the discussion—brings some thought about, is it a national approach or is it a global approach? Is it a sovereignty against globalization? We all have witnessed this kind of discussion. By the way, the new IP thing that we discussed a little bit last time is in the middle of that. We still have this kind of discussion between, is it a Chinese approach or is it an ITU approach? So it’s not new.

Of course, some people talk about the Russian Internet or the Chinese Internet, which is a way to say that these two countries, for instance—I’m sure there are others—are building their own national Internet, which is not the global Internet. So it’s on the papers. I don’t know if it’s true, but this is discussed. And, with my country, I would say that the concept of digital colonialism is something that is high on the agenda since a lot of years. There has been a [inaudible] report that was called “Europe is Becoming the Colony of the United States”—the digital economy of the United States, for instance—and I think this report is more than six years old. Of course, it has been discussed extensively with [tryings] by the government to have an industry policy to build competitors to Google or competitors to other giants. Until now, it has failed all the time, but the topic was on the table. It was discussed publicly.

Next slide, please. In another way, it’s new. I said this concept of digital sovereignty is an old one, and the discussions are on the table since numerous years. But we feel there is something new about that.

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First of all, it seems that it's not a loud minority which is talking about digital sovereignty and that it's becoming more popular, which makes the Internet balkanization arguments a little bit weaker as it was several years ago, where everyone who was stepping out and talking about the digital sovereignty was, in a way, silenced by the people who were answering that speaking about sovereignty on the Internet was almost not understanding how the Internet was working.

By the way, Danko, thank you very much for your comment. I didn't have any space on my slide to say that this balkanization term is a very bad one. The thing is that I'm just quoting the people. I'm not taking that one for me. We could talk about fragmentation also, but if you look at the newspapers, this balkanization word, as bad as it is, and [untrue as it is, is very much used.] So I'm very sorry about that, Danko. Be sure that I'm not on that side, and I don't take it for me.

Yeah, [Desiree], also. I'm very sorry about that. If the Internet was as beautiful as the Balkans, that would be great.

But there is also another reason why we think it's a new thing. That's because it has shifted from a political argument to an economical and social control argument. Most of the talk ... If you remember, for instance, the talk about the ITU initiatives, once it was all the people from Iran that wanted to kill the Internet. Then it was the people from China that wanted to kill the Internet. Then it was the people from ... I don't know. Which country was the bad country in the eyes of the American administration? They wanted to kill the Internet. So it was a political argument. It was mostly about censorship. Trying to break

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the universality of the Internet was a way to break the free flow of free speech, for instance. Now, when we see that people are talking about digital sovereignty in the mass media also, most of the time it's not about politics and freedoms and basic human rights. It's more about economic sovereignty or cultural diversity. So there is a shift on that.

Next slide. So why do we introduce this topic in the IGLC, which is, I'll remind us all, a liaison group from the ccNSO? Because maybe the majority of the ccTLDs are seen at home as assets for a national digital sovereignty. The very fact that they are country-code top-level domains gives evidence that the national approach is something that we have in our DNA [for the case] and that we know is not bad in itself. At the same time, I think the fact that we are discussing here in the ccNSO, which means here in ICANN, and that we talked about the Internet Governance Forum just before, shows that you can have a national approach at the beginning and not be closed at all to a global dialogue or even a global interaction, technically. I think the cc's have given this very strong example since more than 20 years. And there is not too much examples of this wedding between a national approach and a really global—not even international but global—functioning and service that is offered to the entire world without being bigger, of course. We can be a small enough service to the entire world. This is exactly what the small ccTLDs are doing.

Next slide, please. I think it will be the last one. This is to open the discussion. But of course you can have other questions or you cannot answer to any of these questions. Assuming that there is a voice from the cc's, there is a single [want]—that is what I just tried to say just

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before with this mix of national approach and openness to the world—in this debate that we have today that can be hot—sometimes furious—debates that may harm the vision that we have the technical function of the Internet, can we use this voice? And what for? Is it at the national level? International level? What do we want to say about that? How can we be useful in this debate? Maybe to warm it a little bit. And how can we be of help explaining that this national or regional approach has not to be against the universality of the Internet and that the local and the global, as we know in our industry, are perfectly matching and should not be opposed?

With that, I thank you all. I hope that this intervention was not too long. Now the rule of the game is that everyone can raise their hand and talk.

Alex?

ALEX CORENTHIN:

Thank you, Pierre. I enjoy being on this meeting and hearing about the national IGF initiative and also talking about the national sovereignty and all the things dealing with the Internet governance issues.

I want just to share with the community maybe some findings that we have in our country and maybe in the whole of Africa, depending on the problem [inaudible] around these digital issues.

First of all, what I want to say about this digital sovereignty is that it's a new [inaudible] of our governance for the government, is very, very new issues because they start to talk about that only in the last two

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years, in 2019/2018, because, at this moment, the government says that we need to really increase our revenue to build a national digital strategy. Senegal has set up a national digital strategy for the years 2020 to 2025. One of the main issues is to build digital sovereignty. The digital sovereignty aims, in this strategy, to keep the local contents local. This means that we have a national infrastructure to build our own [resiliency] under digital issues. The way that we found to tackle this issue is also to set up a national digital council of 30 people. I was elected to this, so I am a member of this national digital council of the country. This national digital council had the government to raise the issues and also to follow up on all the action plans that [may be made by the] country.

At the beginning, didn't start [inaudible] because the government had some other priorities. But what is very interesting is, when the pandemic started at the beginning of this year, all this strategy remained on the table very quickly because we looked at how digital can expand and if we could also give some—how do you say?—response to the digital for the pandemic? As you know, many of the countries face the problem of [inaudible]—this means working at a distance—and also of connectivity, the problem of bandwidth, the problem of local content.

This remains on the table—a lot of issues that we are trying to solve. There's some specific—what do we say?—fora that we set up in Senegal to discuss these issues and also to find a way to go quickly and to expand our digital sovereignty. This means that the government now says the digital is really a strategy issue and impacts

also our national ccTLD because the government says the ccTLD is now a critical resource. So we need to find the way to be resilient on this side and also to give a better service to the communities and to take into account the citizens' specific needs, which is very specific in the developing countries, because the needs of the registrant is not the same that we can have in the developing countries. We tried to solve then [inaudible] that we notice is the development of the digital commerce—the e-commerce. We have a lot of way to increase the digital [inaudible]. The other point is the money transfer, what you say is the e-money, which also gives us a lot of problematic issues about security, about all things relating with the sovereignty of the country.

I think this is what I want to share with the community. I think there is other examples in other countries that face the same problem and maybe the same policies set up by the government. It's very, very interesting for us, and they give us another approach to [marketize] national domain names. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Alex, for that, and for concluding with this link between the country-code domain names and the digital sovereignty approach and the opportunity it gives us sometime to remind our stakeholders at the national level that talking about digital sovereignty could start with using the national TLD, of course.

Something that is very interesting, I think, in what you shared is that this question of the acceleration of the question of sovereignty comes also of the real experiment of a shortage of data, a shortage of

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services, that could have happened in some countries during the lockdown and the distance-working obligation. So it makes it much more concrete in a way than it was before when we were all saying, “Okay, this is important to have IXPs and to keep the local content local.” So it was theoretical. If I well understood what you said, it’s now very much concrete because of what happened during the pandemic. So thank you very much for this, Alex.

Leonid, you have the floor.

LEONID TODOROV: Sorry. That was for me?

PIERRE BONIS: Yes.

LEONID TODOROV: Oh. Thank you. I’ll be short. Thank you very much, Pierre. I’m sorry for raising this issue prematurely at the beginning of the meeting. Still, I believe that ... Well, I by and large agree with your presentation and what Alex has said. I would only add that digital sovereignty is a very contagious issue. So it’s spreading like a real pandemic across the globe.

Meanwhile, speaking of the last slide, which we can see now on the screen, I fully agree that ccTLDs have enough capacity to stand for good things, against bad things, but I’m just curious. It’s not for the first time that I raised this issue: what kind of messages we should use



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our voice for? You remember that we had all those nice messages, like, “One World, One Internet. Everyone is connected,” and it looks like they failed, at least in the eyes of some global actors and national actors.

Secondly, I’m wondering what kind of channels we can use for voicing out our concerns. Once again, I would reckon—I know that many would not agree with me—that mostly all the fora we’ve used so far have been either helpless—pathetically helpless—or compromised to basically deliver such messages or whatever messages.

Thirdly, I wonder what kind of means can we use to make to amplify our voice. If we talk about Internet governance schools, let’s be fair: there are, like, 50 people at best, annually, at each school. If we talk about awareness-raising campaigns, I guess we shouldn’t forget that, for example, across Asia-Pacific, 70 or even more percent of ccTLDs are government organizations and, as such, they should align with what their executives at the ministry would or should say. So I would refrain from commending on whether it’s right or wrong.

So these are very important issues. I guess that, as ccTLDs, we should ask ourselves whether we are out of the bubble of our own, in which we have been for quite a while, and we got to get adjusted to the new reality, and we are ready to face new challenges and develop innovative challenges. Or we just stay on as we are and continue our nice discussions without any practical outcomes.

So I’m really thankful for your last slide because, again—which is on the screen—because it gives much food for thought. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Leonid, for this very clear and straight position that you shared.

Does anyone want to maybe try to answer the concerns of Leonid and share his views on that very topic and say, are we all then weak, useless, and in a talking shop forever? I'm just making a strong caricature of what you said, Leonid, but this is maybe to wake up the audience if some people are in a difficult time zone. Or do you see it another way? Is there anyone who would like to take the floor? I'm a little bit confused because I don't see any hand raised at this time.

So let's try it another way, maybe. The assumptions I tried to make in the previous slide was to say very simply and very basically that most of us are advertising the use of the Internet and how it works to our local community and, at the same time, our advertising of the fact that the respect of the local diversity is of paramount importance. This part of our job we do internationally, which means that there is work consisting of trying to have a sound and functional Internet locally that is compliant with all the international, let's say, rules of the Internet and especially technically. At the same time, we are not comfortable with the fact that the digital life should or could be resumed to two or three major platforms and that the diversity of language—the IDNs, the national TLDs, the local hosting—is something that is not old-fashioned and is very important. Saying that, I don't feel that I'm an old crocodile, even if I am. I feel that this position today is more modern, more actual, than any position that

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could be a national list on one side or a global list on the other side. That's why we want to talk about that: there seems that there is a moment for the ccTLDs at this very time. What do we want to share? But maybe I'm overly optimistic.

Okay. I'm trying to have a dynamic of discussion, and Zoom is not always very easy. Anyway, this is a kind of open talking. If no one wants to share anything about that, that may be an indication for us that the topic was not very—okay, thank you—at the heart of the expectation of the participant. I totally apologize for that. But that's not a problem, by the way. This is an IGCL committee, and we can stop a little bit earlier if this topic is not a producing debate. So—

CLAUDIA RUIZ: Pierre? Sorry for interrupting you. Peter has his hand up. Peter, you are unmuted. You can speak.

PIERRE BONIS: Yeah, Peter. You have the floor.

[PETER KOCH:] Hi. Can you hear me?

PIERRE BONIS: Yes.

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[PETER KOCH:]

Okay. First of all, I don't think the silence of the group is a sign that this is a topic of no interest. I think it probably reflects a complexity of the interest and some of the good points that were already made.

As to Leonid's point, I fully agree with his observation on the lack of efficiency and the platforms that we've been using so far. I was very happy to hear the Italian example earlier today, which shows that there is a glimmer of hope/there is a way in which we can reach thousands of people. The students that Andrea mentioned that were listening in to these discussions will be the leaders in five to ten years from now. So I think we should definitely not give up on that. Andrea, anything, I think, you can share in addition to what you already did on the concrete details of how you set it up and how you work these local partners I think would be a great playbook for anybody would want to be inspired by that example.

As to the message that ccTLDs could be sharing in fora that hopefully are a bit more successful or more open than what we've seen today---so not just preaching to the choir, or, even worse, preaching to ourselves; I think we've all been in IGF sessions where you know everybody in the room—if we had that brought and diverse audience, what do we tell them?

I really liked your slide there, Pierre, where you talk about the wedding that ccTLDs concluded between being a national symbol and a global corporation. I think there is a really good example of what we do on a technical level but also on a policy level.

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As to the appropriateness of the level of detail, I think that depends on the level where you're having that discussion. On a national level, there can be great examples of very practical cooperation with local Internet communities. On a more global or regional example, there's things that were successfully included in ICANN. The IDN Expedited PDP process is still a really nice one, and the IANA transition is probably one for the global level that can speak to everybody who has an interest in Internet governance. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Peter, for stepping in and for your comments.

I would like to maybe take it one step further. As members of the industry, when we are asked for and encouraged to participate initiatives, such as GAIA-X, for instance, that I mentioned, in Europe, or such as the digital sovereignty strategy that Alex mentioned in Senegal, of course we are very happy that people are talking to us and wanting to do things with us, but do you think, or do people think in the room, that we have a particular message to convey about these two sides of the coin, which is, yes, digital sovereignty is important and we are players in it but it's not about talking only to the nationals and it's about having some openness to the world? It's about trying to cooperate with other players? It's not about having 100% of the value-added chain in your own country so it's almost possible? So it's about maybe identifying the points where you are better or stronger and that you can build something nationally? I don't know, but just raising the

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flag is something that is interesting. But, at the end of the day, we know it's going to be difficult to achieve.

So anyone have thoughts on that, maybe?

Okay. Peter, you talked about the international fora. By the way, Leonid talked about it also. But, at the national level or the regional one, the [CENTR] work with the commission is a very important an excellent work. I feel that this is very much more concrete than the international talks. Is there any experience that you would like to share, the members that are in this room, of talks with your government, for instance, about digital sovereignty? What do they ask you? Are they expecting something that is special from you? Do you see that topics are much more important for them today than there were before? Has anyone something to share about that?

I'll just give an example, maybe. In Europe and, I think, in Australia, too, there has been a rise in the expectations from authorities on security of the national ccTLD, and it has something to do with the digital sovereignty. It was, in a way, a new burden on our shoulder because, one day, the government said, "This is very important. This is vital, and you have to do much more and to give much more evidence that you're a very, very high security organization than before." This is an example of the [concrete translation] for the government of the concept of digital sovereignty for national players, for instance. Is there anything that anyone would like to share about this experience?

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CLAUDIA RUIZ: Pierre, Leonid has his hand up again.

PIERRE BONIS: Leonid, you have the floor.

LEONID TODOROV: Thank you. I'm sorry for usurping this room. I believe that I'm in a far better position because, as GM APTLD, I have a chance to follow up on many developments in smaller and probably less mature ccTLD registries.

So, indeed, Pierre, your assumption is absolutely correct. More than that, I would say that, as many of such registries combine several functions, such as LIR and also a local cert, they are just bound, being government agencies mostly, to think of or just to follow certain cybersecurity guidelines or directives on the local level.

Meanwhile, I must say that governments are not particularly or creative or innovative in tackling the issue of national security or cybersecurity. We know, I would say, several models which they tried to choose from, not necessarily best-practice based—I would say “best-practice” in the way we interpret this. So that means quite restrictive policies in many ways and even a greater emphasis on national security and cyber security concerns and developments.

Yet, an interesting thing is that, in so doing, they—both governments and the city of the registries—are also limited by yet another factor, and that is hardware and software requirements. Very few countries

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can produce hardware of their own. More countries can adopt whatever open source code, which they hate because it's open source. So that leaves some room for hope because, after all, as their choice is limited, then, of course, on a technical level, ccTLDs can first of all serve as the most reliable consultants to their governments and can advise on certain practices, which at least will not be uncondusive to their existence and operation.

Secondly, ccTLDs have some flexibility and some room to choose better applications and better solutions which might enable them to sustain the status quo in terms of connectivity and interoperability.

So what I mean is that not necessarily at the conceptual level are ccTLDs engaged in very meaningful dialogue with their governments, but also by their technical expertise and their functioning, per se, they can promote certain values, even indirectly. That could be a good message for certain governments. Thank you.

PIERRE BONIS:

Thank you very much, Leonid. I think we are definitely on the same page on that topic.

So, as we are reaching the end of the time that we had, I would like to ask one more question. Is there anyone—you can of course answer by writing if you prefer—that is uncomfortable with this concept of digital sovereignty? This is a very important question because I'm very sure that, three years ago, if I had asked this question, there would have been some hands raised, saying, "Yeah, this is fragmentation." So I



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would like to know if this is still on the table and if people believe this is not the good way to approach the digital problems—to work on digital sovereignty—or not. Is there anyone that wants to elaborate a little bit about the danger, maybe, of this approach.

So I saw, Leonid, what you said. I don't know at all how to organize a quick poll on Zoom. I'm very sorry. But maybe that could end very nicely—the meeting—if Claudia or Joke knows how to do that. Maybe the better way—

BART BOSWINKEL: Pierre, this Bart. Maybe you just ask people, if you have a binary question, to click the Yes or the No button, which is—

PIERRE BONIS: Yeah, [inaudible].

BART BOSWINKEL: So that's fairly easy.

PIERRE BONIS: Yeah, that's a very good idea. Thank you, Bart. So let's end with that. Those who think that this digital sovereignty topic rising can be dangerous for the universality of the Internet, could you click on the green button? In other words, those who think it is more dangerous than helpful, can you click on the green button?

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Thank you, Joke. Is digital sovereignty dangerous for the Internet?  
Let's click yes or no.

CLAUDIA RUIZ: Hi, Pierre. So far we have five who clicked saying yes, and four saying no.

PIERRE BONIS: This is interesting. You have a—

CLAUDIA RUIZ: Okay, now that's six saying yes and three saying no.

PIERRE BONIS: So there is a majority in the people who are attending this meeting and who expressed themselves thinking that the digital sovereignty is dangerous. It's just a way to play with the buttons, but it's very surprising.

Yeah, of course it depends, Peter. This is exactly the thing that is a problem when you have a yes or no question. This is why the British should have never done a referendum on Brexit, for instance, because it's always more complex.

Yes and no. Okay. But the purpose of this meeting was not exactly to have an official survey, Leonid, but this is interesting: when we look at the answers, it's not so clear that everyone agrees with the fact that digital sovereignty is a good approach or is an interesting approach.

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Some of us still think it's something that can bring some danger to the Internet, so it makes it a good topic for Internet governance talks.

No, Leonid, no one is ignorant or indifferent.

I read the conversation on Zoom and I think it's nice because it's much more dynamic than the one on the mic, so maybe we will let the conversation flow a little bit.

I think, looking at the very short exchange we had on the chat, it is interesting, somehow contentious, and needed to be a more defined problem for us to try to find a path or a point of view on that. So it's definitely a topic that is worth digging within the IGLC. It was a little bit the purpose of this meeting also: to see if it was a topic that was interesting to deal with. I really think that's the case.

So, while you are still discussing in the chat—that's very interesting—if anyone wants to raise his or her own hand to deal with any other business, it's the time. I don't have any on my part.

No? No one wants to deal with any other business? So, with that, as we still have six minutes, for those of you who want to continue deliberating online, I think this is perfectly okay. Anyway, this IGLC is not decisive. It's a way to take the temperature and to work and dig a little bit later. So it's really helpful that discuss together.

Anyway, I hope that this presentation and this opening was helpful in a way. The members of the IGLC discussed the interest of bringing this topic. I think this is the role of the Internet Government Liaison Committee: to raise topics and to open the floor. It's not our role to

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find a common position, but on the basis of the talks that we have today, we will certainly continue to try the different positions and to share with the ccNSO members what we see rising in this digital sovereignty issue.

I think we should stop at half-past-one, Paris time. Am I wrong?

BART BOSWINKEL: That's correct. You don't have to finish at the bottom of the hour.

PIERRE BONIS: Yeah, but as long as people are chatting in the chat and we have not reached half-past-one, I think this is very fair that people continue to chat.

BART BOSWINKEL: And maybe I'll use the opportunity: if there are ccTLDs in this webinar and in this session who are interested, they can always apply to become members of the IGLC or as a liaison or an observer. So membership is not closed. So, if you think you can contribute to this, please don't hesitate to contact Joke or me to become a member. I wanted to use the opportunity, Pierre.

PIERRE BONIS: Thank you very much, Bart. I would add that it's not very expensive to become a member. So just e-mail me and I'll give you the price.

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Okay. For those who wonder if there is a need to think about this digital sovereignty issue, I may say that, tomorrow also—tomorrow morning—EURALO—Sebastien, I don't know if you're still on the call—is organizing where I've been invited as the IGLC Chair to participate and where this question of digital sovereignty will be discussed also. So, Sebastien, are you here?

I thought that Sebastien was there, but I don't see him anymore—yeah, I see him. Sebastien, do you hear me? It's time to advertise your meeting tomorrow.

No? Okay.

Anyway, look at the schedule tomorrow. There will be a meeting organized by EURALO tomorrow morning. I think it starts at 8:30 GMT. Thank you very much, Joke.

So thank you all for your participation. Congratulations to all of you who have organized successful events nationally on Internet governance, trying to share concrete ideals with [a lot of] the community. Thank you very much for participating in the debate. We'll try to make it a little bit more interactive if we have the opportunity to organize another a little bit later. I think we are exactly reaching half-past-one in some seconds, so I think we will be able to close exactly on time. Thank you very much, all of you, and have a nice week and a nice ICANN meeting.

CLAUDIA RUIZ:

Thank you, all. This meeting is adjourned.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**