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ICANN72 | Virtual Annual General Meeting - GAC Meeting with the UASG  
Thursday, October 28, 2021 - 00:00 to 00:00 PDT

GULTEN TEPE: This session will now begin. May I ask tech team to start the recording?

**[ Recording in progress ]**

GULTAN TEPE: Welcome to the ICANN72 GAC meeting with the followed by the GAC communique drafting session and Thursday 28 of October at 17:30UTC. We will not be doing a roll call today for the sake of time, but GAC members attendance will be available in the annex of the GAC communique and minutes. May I remind GAC members in the attendance to indicate their participation by updating their name to reflect their full name and affiliation. If would you like to ask a question or make a comment type by starting and ending your sentence with question or comment to allow all participants to see your request. Interpretation for those GAC sessions include all 6 U.N. language and Portuguese.

Participants can select the languages they wish to speak or listen to by clicking on the interpretation ICANN located on the Zoom

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tool bar. Your microphone will be muted unless you get into the queue to speak. If you wish to speak please raise your hand in the Zoom room. When speaking please state your name for the record, and the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English. Please speak clearly, and at a reasonable pace to allow for accurate interpretation. And make sure to mute all your other devices.

Finally this session like all other ICANN activities is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behaviour. You may find the link in the chat for your reference. With that, I would like to leave the floor to GAC Chair, Manal Ismail. Over to you, Manal.

MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you very much, Gulden, and good morning good afternoon good evening everyone. Welcome to the GAC meeting with the universal acceptance steering group. I would like to start by welcoming Dr. Ajay Data chair of Universal Acceptance steering Group and ... and appreciate you always reaching out to the GAC and provide us with informative updates on the IDN and universal acceptance and on the good work being done by the steering group to spread and encourage wide adoption of universal acceptance and also trying to identify areas where GAC members

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can help you so without any further ado I will hand you over the floor Dr. Ajay.

DR. AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Manal. Thank you GAC leadership, and Manal Roderick -- George Brumark and ... this is actually fantastic thing which I can appreciate as part of the leadership to give us an opportunity to talk to you, and we seek advice. We come here not to give you something. We come here to gain something, and we gain something for the interest of the entire world. That is to bring billions of people on-line.

We all own that responsibility, and that's why we are here. So thank you very much, Manal, for giving us this opportunity to talk to you, and share what we can do, all of us together to make a difference in this world.

Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Universal Acceptance is just a refresher for those people who are new, Universal Acceptance is all about accepting all domain names and all ... in all applications. It sounds simple but there is a problem. To solve that problem Universal Acceptance chairing group ... and that is why we are talking to you today to let you know the problem and see how we can solve to bring in billions of people on-line and solve that bug

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which each and all applications and private applications and the software around us.

So there is in front of you a screen in that there are examples, domain names and there are some examples of e-mail address. This is the scope of Universal Acceptance. And in the screen bottom there are 5 pillars. Accept, validate, process, store and display.

Let me explain. If you see the domain names there is a new your top-level domain names. There is says example .sky .sky is in written in red which means it is not .com. It is not .net or .org it could be something .sky or .ink or .anything else. It could be any new domain which we have never come across. The longer top-level domain names means the domain name would mean it could consist of a name longer than 3 letters. You could have .accountant. .professional or you could have .Manal Ismail. You could have that, and it would be a longer top-level domain name and I emphasize you can have an example of a domain name which do not have any as key character. These are the type of domain names in question right now which has an issue in acceptability in the applications and the Internet world.

Now, obviously when we have a top-level domain name which are in question the e-mail addresses around them becomes also a

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part of the problem, and you have examples of many, many kinds where you can see that we have these kind of e-mail addresses which has an acceptability problem, which means an ASCII at ASCII over a long top-level domain names. ASCII at IDN. The e-mail addresses with non-characters being a more bigger problem. So how do we say that you are solving the problem, or you have solved the problem, or do you have a problem or not?

So there's simple test. You have a website, or a mobile app or an application in a government or on your phone or on a computer. If it you can accept so notice these 5 pillars. Accept. Which means I can type my e-mail address with non-Latin character. So for example let us take an Arabic e-mail address or any one of them in this example and type in in your application. Would you subscribe to a newsletter. Would I become a member in GAC mailing list with this. The assistance, no. So could I type in the e-mail address if I could I pass test one. Could I validate is it as a valid e-mail address. If I could I pass test 2, and so as the process. So as the storage and display. So 5 tests required in ours with that e-mail address to pass through.

If I could subscribe to an e-mail mail list with that e-mail address that means your platform is UA ready. If not, then you will miss me as a member if with this e-mail address and I cannot

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subscribe. Now imagine the similar scenario. That's the UA understanding about the problems. Next slide please.

Why it is important, and it's very, very important to understand that. Why it is push for government and how it affects so if do you not do this. Imagine example in UAE people who are referred -- preferred their language in Arabic, and they would like to have their e-mail address in Arabic and government and cannot serve them because they do not have e-mail address which can be reaching to the government, and they have -- they do not know English.

So how do you communicate? That becomes a huge digital divide. Government has to provide a more inclusive Internet to the citizens with the domain names and e-mail addresses of their choices. And... citizens have to be... and end user can access the Internet and the domain name of local languages as I was giving example of Asia, big part of the word or in India we have many languages. The same situation is there. So if I have -- I am a Hindi user and I don't know English how do I access Internet as good as my other friends who know English does? That is the whole issue which we are trying to solve here.

If the government pushes this UA opportunity in the systems in the software then you bring in a new opportunity for users to

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come on-line and enjoy the power of Internet. Businesses registrants will have obviously a new set of customers. New set of opportunities because now you have a customer whom you can serve who was out of your radar because you never hear an e-mail address or could never have a domain name and same way the entire domain name industry who is going to serve and associated industries will get hugely benefited because now there's large section of the customer base or industry base will come on-line. Next slide. And that's a very important issue.

Next slide please. So strategy for addressing UA. What do we follow? We prior or advertise technology to evaluate. And how do we prioritize? By talking to the community. By talking to the members in each working group. And prioritize what is required, where it is a problem, and that is how we prioritize, so, for example, we have to solve an e-mail problem. There are hundreds of softwares, which one to pick? So prioritization of one of the software which is used by masses by large numbers we will try to address. Then ... how we evaluate the technology. We have to evaluate the technology whether it is UA ready or not. Once we ... technology is selected by community and a member whether it is a UA ready or not which remind us with our processes and then finalize that we have passed the technology for UA readiness.

And once we have done the evaluation we find the bugs, and we support it by submitting it to the community back or to the vendor and say that this is the bug. It needs resolution. If it doesn't get solved we follow up again and we follow up again. If it is an open source or a technology available us to as a community we offer it, to the experts and US group pays to the expert to find a solution to the public domain and make that application UA ready. That is the process by developing the solution and taking the community back. So we try that softwares become UA ready as much as possible.

In this we have 4 working groups. UA measurement working group. UA technology working group. UA e-mail address internalization working group and we do outreach through communications local initiatives and ambassadors. I would encourage every GAC member here to please see the readiness report. That will actually open lots of... in your system with your team that how badly we need a UA support for all field.

My colleague has shared a bit of UA readiness support on the chat. Please click on that link and see that report at your convenience. You will be shocked to see very small percentage of e-mail servers are being done or are being UA ready, so we are missing a huge, huge application which is derived from accessing Internet in the

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same fashion as you guys are, or we are all able to access it. Next slide, please.

We have a stakeholders, and there are some additions and at FY22 the stakeholders so technology enablers and developers. Who are technology enablers? Technology enablers are the platform providers for large like for example gentleman have a. EHP they are enablers. And developers are the people who develop softwares on the platforms, so they are stakeholders. E-mail some of -- service providers and administers. So these are the 2 kind of people we cover in our stakeholders. Top-level domain registrars are and registries so these are the people who are added this year as our stakeholder because we would like to talk to them and see that they also do the outreach and so make their softwares UA ready. Academia is a new one so we can have students and teachers talking about UA and ensuring that next vision developers make software UA ready. And, of course, the government policy makers because we have the largest I am -- we believe through government policy makers, and I would request all of you again to see our action plan.

So those are ... UASG leadership along with the community makes an action plan for the year and decides the focus area much it's \$400,000 plan. We invest that much. We plan to invest that much. This is the kind of work ha happens in this group and we need all

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of your support and guidance in this area so that we can have more focus activities and make this world much more better for those people who do not understand English. Next slide, please.

So this is the most important slide in my presentation. I would request Manal and the GAC members represent here to look at this slide. And here when we talk about it today. It is not just going to be one representation. I would seek your vice, guidance, and see how we can work together to make it a little better world than what it is today.

Government advisory committee is a very important one. 179 members governments and 38 observers makes it the most impactful organization in the world period. And we are here to help with that. To make an impact in the world. Billions are waiting. And we can make a difference in we all decide to do that. The represent a greater portion. It is very system testimony promote UA does not mean anything else but to bring new people on-line and I think that's the most important task we he have in our hand.

And GAC already understood that and created a working group on IDN and UA and probably we need little more focus to work together. More closely to make more larger impact than what we have done before. Collaboration is on many folds. So GAC advises

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UASG which means I am here to seek advice. Not to give any advice. To seek advice on effective messaging and engagement strategies for government. We want to understand from you. So could we after this slide could we discuss and get a guidance what we could do, what kind of communication is required for each government in the world that could be more effective. Better understandable and there are actionable done by government? GAC how does the GAC, and members raise awareness in human rights region, in their own government and especially take an action?

And I have actually gave a -- a slide ... in the state where the population is 70 million ... India is the population. Government decided to provide 1 free e-mail address in Hindi language. And 8 million is done already e-mail addresses. And there is a case study which ... shared on chat. I encourage everybody to look at that case study and see if you like to replicate. The UASG group would be keen and happy to work with you and ensure that this world. This is a fantastic thing to bring new people on-line and create supply of those e-mail addresses in the hands of citizens.

We would also request GAC and government UA practice for their own governments' services. And this is particularly about all the services so for example if you are giving a birth card, a passport, a membership service, could I use that e-mail address in your

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service? So making those service UA ready is something which we are looking for, so could we have GAC request, all the members to follow that kind of path and see at least one top priority service which impacts every citizen in the country makes it happen? Give you an example. In India we are talking about JADHAR. It is given to every Indian region and it's a unique identity. And in that identity there is a profile of a civilian. So if I want as Jadar I could update with the e-mail address. So could I update the profile with my Hindi address? That is what I am looking for and if I could then the soft -- then has ... makes becomes UA ready and they are able to communicate with me on my preferred language e-mail address. And the last point. Is about procurement policies. So if you have a tender document. An RFP for software could we request that we procure softwares only that are UA ready?

So UASG group has formed a procurement guideline. They are ready right now. And there is a link and Sarmad will share in the chat. These will form part of your tendering document so the softwares ... the vendors are making the software UA ready will make the system better. This description I would like to hold myself. Move to the next slide. And talk to you all of you. And, Manal, this is where my question is to you.

How can we convert this request into -- that can be implemented? So I have some request in the previous slide, and Manal you, and

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the working group, you or anyone would like to respond how do we make them convertible? Is it a reasonable ask? It is too much? It is too less or just say, go away this is not possible in GAC. What is that we can do together? That's what I was looking for, and I would like to go to the -- with some actionable together where we can make a difference in people's lives. Manal, I would like to listen something, anyone who would like to take up this and we can discuss this.

MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you very much, Dr. Ajay, and we are opening the floor for discussion, and meanwhile I would also like to bring to your kind attention a comment in the chat on the stakeholders, and I already see UNESCO as hand up so maybe I'll give them a chance to say their comments themselves so please, UNESCO.

UNESCO: Thank you very much. Can you hear me? Okay, great. Thank you. This is so exciting. You have no idea how pleased I am you know to see this fantastic effort because from our perspective we are just finishing a complete global mapping of all languages that exist, that are in use. We have compiled an atlas of world languages, you know an at last of languages that we will soon be launching in mid-November, you know and opening for the public in easterly next year in, you know, probably on the 21st of

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February which is MADATON day international day for MADATON and we would like to really feature this kind of work in there.

The point of the Atlas which is currently has 8,224 languages approximately 7,500 that are in use, and some that have been already extinct it includes also approximately 300 languages that are signed instead of just spoken and written, and, of course, you know in cyberspace as you well know it is probably approximately 300 or so that are actually in use in cyberspace so we -- this is something also that we are trying to compile and map.

Next year we start the international decade of indigenous languages. That goes from the '22 to 2032, so ten years for us to you know bring in as many languages in cyberspace as we can possibly ensure that everybody has access to information and can benefit from the you know amazing resource that the Internet is, so we absolutely on Board with this. You know Ajay, so fantastic presentation. And this group's objective.

As I mentioned part of the work that we're going to be doing with the Atlas and with the -- with the decade will certainly be providing guidance to policy makers on how they can ensure that languages are in use in the domains that are the most important ones, you know, for education, for access to justice, for you know and for Internet, of course. And incorporation of the guidance or

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materials or even development of materials and guidance to governments, to different stakeholders, you know, including private sector in the types of innovation they can bring on Board you know that make you know this happen, are you know, we can absolutely incorporate that into the communications on the decade itself. So I'm inviting you know the group already, to be part of the launch, you know of the Atlas and to be part of the decade, so that we can feature this fantastic work that ICANN is doing and reach as many stakeholders as possible. You know, and, of course, when the Atlas is launched then when the decade starts we will be in front of 193 member states of UNESCO and can advocate for the conclusion of languages in this domain. And including providing guidance on how to do it which is the first question that they're going to ask so I'm super excited with that.

It's part of our work on multilingualism, and access to information and I wish to congratulate ICANN for doing this excellent, excellent initiative. So thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you very much, and thanks to UNESCO as well for sharing with us all the relevant activities that are currently taking place, and as Dr. Ajay mentioned, I see the government as a key stakeholders in that respect, and a key beneficiary as well as it only makes sense that governments communicate with their

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citizens in their the official language of the country, and not anything else so appreciate the update and thank you also Dr. Ajay for the refresher at the beginning.

We continue to have new members every time, so it's -- it was an excellent presentation starting by the refresher, and then reaching where we would like to reach. So, I think -- and I see great messages in the chat. I believe you have already read from U.K., Niue and congratulating you for the great effort an excellent presentation.

And I saw also UNESCO suggesting to add the intergovernmental organizations as a stakeholder on the -- I think it was a slide 6 maybe, but I see your hand is up already Dr. Ajay, so please go ahead.

DR. AJAY DATA:

Yeah, thank you, Manal. Actually, I wanted to really thank everyone for thanking me for giving a presentation. But honestly. I want to talk to you today. And I want to talk to you today about how do we make it happen together? What steps to be taken? Right, and we can -- we have come to get many times. And we have done -- and I always get appreciation for a great presentation, and important topic, very important one, leading one, but when I look back last 2 years we have not really

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progressed in making an effect. And I'm requesting, and I'm really interested that what baby steps? What steps should be taken together that it will have an impact? That this is what we will achieve in this year. This is too much to ask for. So we know that this is how at the speed we will work.

I'm not asking too much. And sorry to be putting you on the spot Manal, but this is, this is what I think we need your help, and it's extremely important, and as said, I also put on chat, I would also request everyone to join our community. To join our discuss list. It will be another e-mail for you, but we will have a ready update for the UA development.

Also, if you are interested any one of you to going ambassador in your region, as a GAC member, in your region we would be very, very happy to appoint you one there, and take UA initiatives further. This is extremely important one. You can read the Charter of ambassadorship. It's a very, very important and we would behave he very happy to work on that too. So Manal over to you again, and the -- every member to listen to me and the leadership. What step you think we all can -- and please guide us. This is the request to get guided from you, what we should do for GAC, and the government agencies to start taking action? Thank you.

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MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you very much, Dr. Ajay, and I see UK's hand up so Nigel, please go ahead.

UNITED KINGDOM: Yes, thank you very much, Manal, and thank you Ajay, for this excellent presentation. I mean, as you rightly say, you've talked to the GAC on this before, and you've been tireless, and indeed tireless in speaking to many, many different community groups, many different governments, and many different stakeholders on this, and it is really important what you do, and I think we should congratulate you in all the volunteers that would, in the different -- in your different working groups.

I mean, I have the privilege to work alongside you a little bit when I was on the staff of ICANN, and I think it really was, and it really is important that people understand the implications of universe acceptance. We all went through this phase at the end of the last round of new gTLDs where clearly some of the applicants perhaps hadn't quite understood the implications of adopting longer names, etcetera.

But the question I had for you, and I apologize if this has already been covered elsewhere -- is whether in taking forward the not just the understanding but the action that's needed whether you

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would consider whether perhaps the ITU. Perhaps -- you know pass a resolution, or an opinion on the importance of this, at their various conferences. I know UNESCO is really involved and perhaps UNESCO in their forward plan or something like this, I know you're an adopting a new progressive plan -- could -- and actually this is indeed in that plan, but I do feel we need to bring this to a different audience, as you said yourself. I mean, there is an understanding but the, but we need some action. But anyway I'll stop there because others are more knowledgeable. Thank you.

MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you very much, Nigel, and I cannot agree more with yourself, and Dr. Ajay, we need to go beyond the listening, and try to do some action in that respect.

I'll give the floor first to the Caribbean telecommunications, U.N. and Nigel, please go ahead.

CTU: Thank you, Manal, and thank you, doctor, for the presentation. I would like to follow up on my namesake's comments the other Nigel and in terms of getting action going which I think is what you would like to see. I am from the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, and our area is very ASCII centric. We are not necessarily

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seeing a lot of these non-Latin scripts but at the same time we have a large Indian population, and so I'm trying to ask are there maybe some use ... you could highlight for us in this environment that can help us to better represent the urgency of the need for the Universal Acceptance in our environment, how can we convince our governments who are very Latin centric to be, to be concerned about this.

DR. AJAY DATA:

Thank you, Nigel, for a very important and wonderful question. That's an excellent one I must say. And Internet -- to answer your question, and to answer everybody I will take ten seconds of space for this. Internet is global, in the regional. Internet access is world-wide. Any user can access, can come to your country and come to your place from anywhere in the world. Imagine, I come to your island with a Hindi e-mail address, and I cannot subscribe to the visa application or a government service or medical service, or a card wherever the e-mail address is required because I don't have any ... letters. It is not just your citizens.

It is about the world. When we talk about Internet, this is the global Internet, one world one Internet. That is what we talk about, and this is not just your own regions. It is about the whole world. It's about to communicate to you in the same fashion your

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citizens can communicate to the government. That's one use case which is very near to the real problem.

Second use cases are, you never know that it is just a language problem. Every share -- if you look back my slides there are 2 more examples. The ASCII domain names which are the longer top-level domain names, I'm sure if you will start looking at applications you will know these applications will fail and let me give you an example. When the domain name application whereas getting designed and a domain name was getting saved the developers thought that the after the dot they could be only 3 characters and the data were designed accordingly. The soft cares were designed accordingly. But this is that the case -more. So you might have a problem if you look back closely to your applications that the e-mail address with more than 3 characters top-level domain name gets rejected or a domain name does not get saved properly or the population says it is invalid domain name. That will make your change your application. When you change your application for that part what I would request you is to also change your application for the non-ASCII. Part. It will not cost you anymore, but you will become the global Internet part and that is the use case for everyone. Not just for you.

Because you have to solve the ASCII problem also. Not just the language problem. And that's there for everybody. So it's a

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global problem for that matter. So let us not just be focused only on ID, and ID is a good part because there's large population there. That's we will talk more about it how to 40% of the population... on the local language. But we have to be really focused on ASCII part also and that ASCII part top-level domain names. Newer one no longer once requires acceptance. Cannot be rejected. Databases need to be redesigned. Softwares need to be redesigned and what I'm simply saying, and advocating is when you change your application also change for planning domain names also. So that you cover the whole part in one world. I hope it answers your question Nigel.

CTU: Yes, yes, it did. It gives me an answer. So much appreciated.

DR. AJAY DATA: Thank you very much. Thank you very much and actually, we are always there to talk more. Talk further and I have given my e-mail ID, and otherwise info@UASG. GAC is the e-mail address you can use to talk us to. My e-mail address is in the chat. Write to us. We will be very happy to collaboration. Talk further and talk one to one and solve each individual issue what is required. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Nigel, for your question.

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MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Thank you, Nigel, for the question, and Dr. Ajay for the answer, and also thank you for the tools and documents and material that have been shared in the chat. I would specifically note the quick guide to tender and contractual documents. I think this could be of specific benefit to government colleagues, GAC colleagues, and I would encourage everyone to join the mailing list. It's very informative, and if you have any questions you don't need to wait for a following session but have direct contact with the community also reiterating that this is not only an IDN issue, but also for new gTLDs, so if it's of concern to a broader community, and it only makes sense with governments talking about digital inclusion this should and integral part of making sure that no one is left behind. So I hope this provides the necessary information for everyone to get started and to bear the fruits of this we need to have it deployed really on a wide scale, so it only makes sense that we have a wide deployment of this, and it also reminds me of... 6 and how we started only with tenders and procurements and so on, so I think there is an analogy there as well.

So I hope GAC colleagues will get motivated to volunteer also to lead the GAC on this important topic. We have GAC working group on IDN and Universal Acceptance that is currently lacking a chair because of the turnover we had among our members, so please be encouraged to volunteer to chair the GAC working group.

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I see no further requests for the floor Dr. Ajay. Any final words before we conclude?

DR. AJAY DATA:

I would like to go with some commitment the, some actionable from GAC, and see what we can do together, and if we can at least have some description around you, Manal, and your leadership or you can put somebody on your leadership. Take somebody to ensure we keep discussing the UA and you invite us, or we come to you. We are happy to touch your door whenever you ask us and we will knock on your door and see, can I come in, can we come in and talk about it again? We have he happy to touch base again in the next ICANN and before that if there's any -- please let us know. We would like some action to be done together with the UASG group and GAC group, and under the leadership and we create some moment.

This is a very important one we all understand. We just need some actions.

MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR): Indeed, and I hope next time we meet, there will be some feedback from GAC colleagues on any baby steps they may have taken at the national level, so I hope next time you may get some

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further feedback from those who may have benefit from the information and the material you kindly shared.

**DR. AJAY DATA:** And before we go, Manal, would it be okay for you to share those documents which are shared with the GAC mailing list, and let everybody know even somebody -- some of your people who may not have joined today so that at least they know did about it? Would it be fine for you.

**MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR):** Sure. Sure we can take the information from the chat -- I think I already copied all the links. So we will make sure to circulate the links to the GAC membership mailing list indeed. Thank you Dr. Ajay.

**DR. AJAY DATA:** Thank you very much. Thank you very much. That would be very helpful. Thank you, Manal.

**MANAL ISMAIL (GAC CHAIR):** Okay. With this I thank you very much Dr. Ajay and said in the chat also for sharing all the valuable information, and GAC colleagues for interest and interactive discussion. I hope that would trigger further interest within the GAC. This concludes our meeting with

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the Universal Acceptance steering group. But to my GAC colleagues please remain in the room as we will proceed with the communique drafting session. Thank you very much, Dr. Ajay.

DR. AJAY DATA: Thank you I will leave the room now.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

**[ END OF TRANSCRIPT ]**