
ICANN73 | Virtual Community Forum – ccNSO: Governance Session
Tuesday, March 8, 2022 – 12:30 to 14:00 AST

CLAUDIA RUIZ:

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With that, I will now hand the floor over to Sean Copeland, chair of the Guideline Review Committee. Thank you.

SEAN COPELAND: So much. Good afternoon, morning, and evening to everyone on the call today. Ahead of today's session, I would like to yield the floor to the chair of the ccNSO, Alejandra.

ALEJANDRA REYNOSO: I thank you, Sean. I just want to make a small announcement regarding the recent ccNSO Council statement. We will have further discussions on this matter. And we will inform the ccTLD community on the time and the date of such discussions for everyone to participate and to give your feedback. So please stay tuned. Back to you, Sean, thank you.

SEAN COPELAND: Thank you, Alejandra. Welcome to the ccNSO Governance Session for ICANN73. My name is Sean Copeland. For those that do not know me, I am from Nic.vi and also the chair of the GRC. Today we will have an introductory session dealing with the conflict of interest.

And ahead of that, David McAuley is going to do a quick presentation on the ccNSO rules, which a subgroup of the GRC has developed. David is from the subgroup and has set a high bar for us and I hope that this becomes a mechanism that we use in the future to serve you of the community. Over to you, David.

DAVID MCAULEY:

Thank you very much, Sean and Alejandra. Hello, everybody. I'm here, as Sean said, to give a brief update on the status of the new rules that we're proposing for ccNSO membership. Can I have the next slide, please?

As Sean mentioned, I have been the chair of a subgroup of the Guidelines Review Committee that's been working on this. We have discussed with the members in the community a need to update the rules of the ccNSO. It's not a wholesale change, it's really an update.

The original rules were adopted in 2004, 18 years ago. They have not been updated since. But membership growth has been significant, as you can see from the slide. And the environment in which we operate has changed. There are now IDNs, ccTLDs. We have gone through the IANA transition. And as a consequence of that transition the ccNSO itself is now a decisional participant in the Empowered Community, bringing on new kinds of responsibilities. And the practical governance of the ccNSO has developed as well, as you can see with guidelines, etc.

So, next slide, please. The community started to address this issue at ICANN69 where issues were identified. Maybe it was misalignment between the references in the rules to the ICANN bylaws or something more significant. And it was discussed further with the community at the subsequent ICANN meetings—70, 71—after which there was a community survey.

There were also intersessional consultations along the way, as you can see. And at the last ICANN meeting this subgroup that I'm leading made a presentation about how the new suggested rules are developing. And

we had a final consultation with the community that ended near the end of December. Next slide, please.

The new rules, as I describe them, will not address members' role, Council's role, in the Empowered Community as a decisional participant. The Guidelines Review Committee itself is still grappling with developing procedures for doing that. As you know from consideration of the bylaws in Annex D, there are very brief timelines within which to operate. So there will be more later to address this. Next slide, please.

Is proposed in the rules, as you can see on the screen, are the following. The new rules will address setting the context in an introduction. You can see from the section number that this is not part of the rules itself. But it is an introduction to the rules, a restatement of the principles that the ccNSO operates under, and the rules then get into the new rules.

Section 1, the rules address ccNSO decision making. Decision making on the part of Council, decision making on the part of members, and then finally decision making by the Council that is subject to a veto by the members. Section 2 will address voting, quorum, those kinds of issues.

Section 3 will formally address a review schedule for looking at the rules rather than letting it be a long time between looking at the possible need for an update. This will be done more regularly. Section 4 will deal with change mechanisms for changing the rules. And there is now added a glossary. Next slide, please.

In order to get the new rules accepted as new rules, Council has to adopt it. That has taken place. And a members' vote is being launched. Obviously, in order to replace the old rules, the membership vote has to meet the bar set in the current 2004 rules. Next slide, please.

Here you can see the timeline. As I said the Council has approved it. The Secretariat will send ballots for the vote on the new rules around the 21st of March. The vote will start around the 23rd and end on April 6th. The results should be known very quickly, in one day as you can see.

There is the potential for a second vote under the current rules. And should that be needed you can see that the results would then stretch out till May. And you can see on the bottom of the screen the quorum and voting requirements. Next slide, please.

I want to thank the people that took part in the sub-team—Irina, Stephen, Chris, Atsushi, Ann-Cathrin, Alejandra—and two observers, Katrina and Sean, all of which were helpful. It was a good group that worked vigorously on list and in meetings.

And I want to underscore that this is an important moment for ccNSO governance. We in the subgroup believe, and I believe members of the Guidelines Review Committee which has also approved this also believe, that these are sensible updates to the rules. And we encourage people to please look at this. Please exercise your vote. Encourage those that you know in the community to exercise their vote to bring the ccNSO forward.

And then, assuming that does happen, as I said in the near future we will also be adding to rules for our role as a decisional participant as the Guidelines Review Committee would recommend. With that I would say thank you. Thank you to the team, thank you to the members for paying attention and helping us from ICANN69 up until today.

And I can hand it back to you, Sean. Thank you. Sean, I can't hear you.

SEAN COPELAND: There you go. Thanks, David. Does anyone have any questions that have not been addressed or need clarification at this time with regard to the new rules?

Okay, seeing none, thank you again, David. Your contributions to this community are greatly appreciated. And I hope that everyone takes the time to participate in the voting process and reach out to their colleagues to remind them to vote. It would be really nice if we were to repeat what happened during the PDP vote. All right—

DAVID MCAULEY: [inaudible], Sean.

SEAN COPELAND: Go ahead, David.

DAVID MCAULEY: I was just saying thank you. Thank you very much.

SEAN COPELAND:

All good. All good. Okay today's main subject for the community is for you to help guide the recently struck conflict-of-interest subgroup to develop a position for us to adopt. As the ccNSO is both the body that gives the international legitimacy to ICANN and as we are maturing, this is a natural progress for us to put in place.

So, for today's session, Joel Karubiu from .ke will moderate the next part. And thank you, Joel, for stepping up. We will have two presentations—one by Chris Disspain who, having been a board member of ICANN, will have an interesting insight and thoughts on Col. And as well we are also going to have a presentation from Marika Konings with her observations from the GNSO and how they approach conflict of interest.

After the presentations, Frederico Neves and Atsushi Endo will critique the presentations. Joel will then open up the floor for questions that you may have. We encourage you to raise points, especially as conflict of interest applies in your own country. I will say, during the prep call for this, we did have a little bit of dialogue back and forth and it was very, very interesting. So I hope that it gets replicated here.

Next slide. If you look on the slide on your screen you'll the timeline that we're hoping to achieve. Obviously we are here at ICANN73 to explore the topic. The subgroup will be working between 73 and 74 to take the information that hopefully we glean from here. And then hopefully we will present to you the results of where we are at at ICANN74. And hopefully that is a good thing.

On to slide 14. Next slide, Kimberly. We are going to do real-time polling, both at the start and the end of the session. If you're a ccNSO participant, you will have received an email with a link or QR code. It either came to you yesterday from Kimberly. Claudia sent one out about two hours ago. And I believe that [Yokai] sent out another one just before the start of this meeting.

And if you were in the DNS Abuse session you will have already gotten used to this. The polls are live. You can vote only once. Remember that it's the virtual equivalent of taking the temperature during a face-to-face session and these polls are neither authoritative or binding. It is to help guide us, the committee.

So to kick this off with the first polling question, and hopefully I get more than 42 votes, which is I believe accessible to you now. You'll have about a minute to cast the vote. And the first question is does the governance structure of your ccTLD have a procedure in place to deal with conflicts of interest or similar procedures regarding ethical behavior. So please take the time to vote. And I guess I should. Okay, 25, that's not too bad. And about a minute.

We go on to the next polling question then, which is should the ccNSO have a procedure in place for dealing with conflict of interest or similar procedures regarding ethical behavior. Please go ahead and vote. I'm curious for the two no votes, if anyone would like to address those. Not at this time. Okay. Oh, no, Pierre, go ahead.

PIERRE BONIS: Very quickly, I think that ccNSO doesn't take decision that we have to abide and the only policies that are made are PDP. And PDP, frankly, it's something that by nature and by construction is done by people who have conflict of interest because we are a multistakeholder model. So I'm not very sure that an anti-conflict-of-interest policy applies to the ccNSO, because the ccNSO doesn't make rules that would impact us. That's why I said no.

SEAN COPELAND: Okay, thank you, Pierre. And I see Nick has made the comment as well. "Arguably, since the ccNSO does not really make policy, so in that case is there a conflict?" So that is a good question.

And hopefully we are going to flesh this out over the next little while. Pierre, is that a new hand? No. All right, thank you everyone for participating in the first polling questions. There's going to be more, not to worry.

I would like to now offer Chris Disspain a warm welcome back to the ccNSO community. So Chris, over to you.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Yeah, thank you, Sean. Hello, everyone. It's Chris Disspain here. I am absolutely delighted to find myself back in the ccNSO amongst some very familiar faces, some familiar faces, and some less familiar faces but soon to become more familiar.

I get the job of talking about conflict of interest. Pierre raises an exceptionally good point which I think we'll get to as part of what I'm going to say. Marika is going to talk to you about the statement of interest process which is used by the GNSO. And why conflict-of-interest policy is more challenging for an organization such as the GNSO or the ccNSO, much in the way that Pierre has mentioned.

But at a high level, let's have a look at ICANN's conflict-of-interest policy and see why it could apply to the ccNSO. So this slide is a takeout from ICANN's conflict-of-interest of policy with effectively the ICANN replaced by the ccNSO. So why would you have a policy?

Well, to prevent any conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest from affecting any decision making at the ccNSO. To ensure that deliberations and decisions are made for the benefit of the ccTLD community as a whole. And to protect the ccTLDs' interests when the ccNSO is approving a policy, a program, or other matter that might benefit the personal interests of a ccNSO member. I'm not saying those are the reasons. I'm saying those could be the reasons.

That, as I said, comes straight out of ICANN with ccNSO replaced. So you can see that the general purpose of the conflict-of-interest policy is to deal with making sure that decisions are made independently and that there is also a thing about appearance. The appearance of conflict can be just as bad as conflict itself.

Now, let's go on to the next slide and let's talk specifically about the ccNSO or some high-level principles that might be of relevance to the ccNSO. The first one is the duty to disclose. You can't rely on assumed

knowledge about each individual. Many issues are solved simply by transparency and the disclosure of interests.

So what the ccNSO tends to do as a community is to assume it knows where each person has an interest. So it knows that Jordan is .nz. It knows that Paolo is .pr. So we tend not to have to worry about saying, well, of course, my statement of interest is that I am ccTLD manager or work for the ccTLD manager of this particular country.

But if you take me as an example, I don't work with or for a ccTLD at the moment. The company that I own consults to Donuts, so it clearly would be sensible for everyone in a discussion, everyone in any time I'm contributing, to be aware that I have that interest. It's not necessarily a conflict but it is an interest. And I may—and know David won't mind—David McAuley is another example. Because David can stand up and say he was representing a ccTLD and he can also say that he works for Verisign.

So it's important to be clear about one's interest. That is not necessarily the same thing as a conflict, so the second bullet point on this slide is interest versus conflict. And the principle that disclosure is often enough. And I know that Marika is going to talk a bit about how the GNSO does that. I won't go into too much detail.

When you're dealing with conflict, if we're going to look at conflict as opposed to a statement of interest—so let's assume for a moment that everyone thinks a statement of interest is a sensible idea. We're going to move on and then look at conflict of interest. It's important to be very clear about when conflict matters.

And this to some extent is Pierre's point. ccNSO policy and membership discussions are, by definition, governed by the interest of each party. It's clear that I am representing the people that I represent when I'm having a discussion about policy. And it's only right that ccTLD members should be able to have discussions about policy without there being a conflict of interest because they operate for a ccTLD.

The other side of that coin is where you're dealing with administrative decisions of the Council. And that is perhaps where the ccNSO might want to think about the concept of having some sort of conflict-of-interest policy in place, to deal with situations where the Council is making decisions and that there is an individual conflict for an individual Councilor. And so they should maybe declare that they possibly have a conflict.

And, to be clear, the fact that you have a conflict doesn't necessarily mean that you have to recuse yourself, remove yourself from the discussion. Sometimes you can still be there but it's important to declare it. And then you make a decision and often it's self-determining. On the Board these decisions are often made, at least in the first instance, in a self-determining way.

The key is as an individual to ask yourself the conflict question. Do I have a conflict? And in deciding your answer to that, err on the side of caution but don't be ridiculous. I'll give you a real-life example. When the ICANN Board was dealing with new gTLD matters, the Board itself didn't actually make any decisions really about whether or not a gTLD

should be given to A or B or C. But it did occasionally look at individual matters to do with those decisions that org had made.

Obviously, any application that was made for any matter dealing with a new gTLD application that the Australian registry was involved in, I would have said, “I’m conflicted. I will not involve myself in this discussion. And I will not involve myself in any decision.” I also took the personal decision that actually any Australian applications—were I to be involved in decisions about those applications—that would probably be a conflict and there would certainly possibly be an appearance of a conflict. But that didn’t mean that I couldn’t involve myself in the discussions were there any. As it turned out there weren’t.

And to give you one final example, the reason why there was a subcommittee of the Board called New gTLD Committee that dealt with all of the new gTLD matters was because some Board members were employed by or had consultancy contracts with gTLD applicants. And so therefore it would be inappropriate for them to have been involved. That’s the sort of level we’re talking about at the Board.

It certainly doesn’t apply in respect to policy. It might apply in respect to ccNSO Council administration and decisions. There would be more work to do to figure out how to deal with that if we decided to do so.

And the final point on my slide is if the ccNSO wants a process for questioning if there is a conflict as opposed to self-determination. It decides that there should be a back-up process for questioning if there is a conflict and having a third-party decision about it. Then it is critical

to be clear about the circumstances in which there would be deemed to be a conflict.

So I can see Pierre’s point in the chat. And I agree with you, Pierre, that it was merely intended to be an example about how conflicts can sometimes operate. Those of you that know me well will know that my goal in most of these sessions when I get involved is not to speak for too long but to have debate, questions, and discussion. So I’m going to stop there and very happily involve myself in any discussion or debate as we continue. And so I’ll leave it at that point.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Chris. I’ll be moderating the conversation going forward. Thank you for that presentation. As you said, you’re a man of few words. So we will accept it as it is. Just interesting, something I picked up as you were speaking. You’re saying that you can actually declare a conflict of interest but not recuse yourself from that conversation. Isn’t that sort of like a Catch-22 situation there?

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

That’s a really good question, Joel. There are three levels really. One is I’m conflicted so I will not involve myself in any decision making but I can express an opinion. And it’s okay for me to express that opinion because everybody knows that I have a conflict. And therefore it’s okay.

Second level is to say that I will not involve myself in any discussion and I will not involve myself in the decision making. But there’s no reason

why I can't observe what's going on. In other words, I can stay in the room.

And the third level is actually, no, you can't stay in the room because even having knowledge about what goes on in the discussion is difficult. And I think that that's highly unlikely to be anything that would happen at the ccNSO but it is nonetheless one of the three levels of dealing with conflict.

JOEL KARUBIU: Right, okay. Thank you. I'm cautious that we also need to listen to Marika first then we'll open up the floor for more questions. So members—

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Super.

JOEL KARUBIU: As you listen to Chris, please post your questions on the chat. And for those of you who'll be ready to [inaudible] to Marika then we can pick them up. So Marika, I'll invite you to just give us your presentation.

MARIKA KONINGS: Thank you very much, Joel, and hi everyone. So thanks for inviting over to the ccNSO. For those of you who may not know me, I'm basically counterpart of Bart and [Yokai] on the GNSO side. And I support the GNSO and its activities, policy development as well otherwise.

So I've been asked to share a bit with you about how the GNSO has approached this topic. Chris has already, I think, hinted to some of the aspects that the GNSO applies in this respect. And although of course the GNSO and ccNSO are not the same, there may still be aspects of the GNSO approach to this issue that you may want to further explore or where you can definitely say that is not something that you need to further explore because it's very different from how the ccNSO operates.

If we could go to the next slide, please. So the approach that the GNSO has taken to this topic is the concept of a GNSO Statement of Interest or also known as SOI was actually developed in the concept of the 2008 GNSO review. And how it was dealt with before that time I am actually not sure because I joined ICANN in 2008. Maybe some of you that have been around for a longer time may know how it was dealt with before that time. But it was really formalized as a result of that review.

The Board Governance Committee Report which formed the basis for that review and the subsequent improvements that were implemented, it observed that basically in the context of the GNSO it might be difficult to apply the traditional conflict-of-interest approach. Because it was understood that people participating in GNSO processes would only do so because they stood to gain something the outcome. So by excluding those with a potential conflict or those that would potentially benefit from a certain outcome, you may actually end up with an empty room and no one left to participate in any discussions or decisions.

So this resulted in the introduction of the GNSO Statement of Interest. It's basically okay to have an interest as long as you're open and transparent about it so that others know as they go into discussions or into decisions. So basically completing an SOI has now become a standing requirement for participation in basically any part of the GNSO whether it's as part of a GNSO working group or joining the Council.

Even outside of GNSO, the SOI is being used as a way to collect relevant information about participants in ICANN processes. There are actually currently 1158 SOIs on file that live on a Wiki page that anyone interested can access and review. Next slide, please, Kim.

And as noted that there's also no conflict of interest policy for Council members, as spelled out here in the GNSO operating procedures. And it's also understood that those that are voted on to the Council by their respective stakeholder groups or constituencies are there because they have specific interest financially or economically in the outcome of the decisions that are being made or deliberated.

It may be important to note though that when it comes to the Council, it serves in the role as manager of PDPs. So Council members are expected to consider whether appropriate processes have been followed by the PDP working group and not necessarily vote on the merits of the recommendations as that is understood to be the role of the consensus building process that takes place in a PDP working group.

However, as part of an election or selection process, community members are expected to provide an SOI so that again, there's transparency around who they are representing and where their interest lies. Next slide, please.

As I noted at the outset, there are, of course, some important differences between the GNSO and the ccNSO that you may want to factor in should you decide to consider the SOI approach or parts thereof further. Importantly, most Council members apart from nominating committee appointees, they serve in a representative function and not representing themselves or their company. They are elected by their respective stakeholder group or constituency to represent them on the Council.

This also means that most Council members are directed by their appointing groups on how to vote on Council matters. And I think the only group at the moment that doesn't have binding directions that provides guidance is a Noncommercial Stakeholder Group.

It may also be worth noting when it comes to elections, as well as, for example, the selection of Board members, that this is directed by the respective groups. And in the case of Board members, the decision actually lies with the respective houses that form the GNSO Council.

It's also well understood that GNSO participants have an interest in the outcome, why would they otherwise choose to participate as a volunteer, because there are a lot of hours that goes into spending time in either working groups or on the Council. So what interest would people otherwise have to do that?

And what is considered key is that such interests are declared and known. And this is also why every meeting that the GNSO has typically starts with the question of whether anyone has any updates to their statement of interest. And if they do, they're expected to state that on the record and publicly and make it known to everyone in the group.

So taking a closer look at the actual statement of interest, and these are the definitions that are included in the GNSO operating procedures. A statement of interest is a written statement made by a relevant party that provides a declaration of interest that may affect relevant party's judgments.

Material interests in this context is expected to be most of the time financial nature, but not always. However, the interest needs to be substantial or of consequence. Next slide, please.

I just want to leave this here for your information. This is basically the specific information that GNSO participants are expected to provide with questions five and six going to the heart of any specific interest that may influence someone's participation. And I see that Javier has already shared his SOI. So you can see as well in practice what that looks like and the type of answers that people provide. And say hi to Tatiana as well, good to see you.

So again, this gives you an idea of the information that's being requested. Next slide, please. Of course, nothing is perfect. And neither is the GNSO SOI. So I don't want to claim either that this works perfectly and everyone has all the information they need. There's actually a review that has recently commenced to consider whether the GNSO SoI

requirements are still useful and ineffective and whether these are still relevant in the current environment as the GNSO has moved to a more representative model in some of its policy development activities.

For example, one of the challenges of the SOI is that the info is only as good as what has been provided. There's no policing or fact checking that happens. There is a process in place if someone suspects that information is not accurate or not up to date that they can flag as such, but we're completely dependent on the individual to provide an up-to-date information.

Similarly, some have pointed out that your confidentiality requirements at times may prevent providing certain information, for example, when it comes to clients that may be paying for certain services and where there are confidentiality agreements in place, or whether it's for example, lawyer client privilege that may prevent disclosure of certain information.

This review process has only just started so it remains to be seen what changes are going to be recommended. But having said that, I do believe that there is broad agreement that when it comes to GNSO activities and policy development activities, there is a need for transparency and openness about the interests that people represent when they are participating so that's known and can be factored in, in those conversations. Next slide, please.

I was asked as well to provide some do's and don'ts that you may want to think about as you further consider this issue. First suggestion here is don't overcomplicate, I think Chris already hinted that as well. if you

create very stringent measures you may end up with no one in the room or not having anyone with relevant expertise or knowledge talking about a certain subject.

Again, I think Chris also mentioned this, you may want to consider focusing on stating interest and being transparent about those and not always viewing those immediately as a conflict as some deeper digging may be needed to really understand what circumstances something can be considered or should be considered a conflict and appropriate measures need to be taken. But it shouldn't be the default position.

You may also want to consider how other similar organizations outside of ICANN deal with this. You may have already done this, I know that there are a number of ccTLD focused organizations, CENTR probably being one of them, that may have already looked at this issue and may also have some useful best practices or do's and don'ts that they might be willing to share. Next slide, please.

And I think that's my last one. I think already mentioned this as well, make sure that you don't create procedures that exclude those that have relevant expertise and knowledge from contributing, because it's really important to hear from them. Of course, if there's a reason that there is a conflict that may prevent them from taking decisions, or I think Chris outlined quite well the kind of different escalations, levels that could exist, that should of course be considered. But don't use it as a as a default just because someone may have an interest in outcome that it shouldn't be heard and shouldn't be present as part of the conversations.

So I think that's all I had to share. I'm happy to take any questions or share any further information that you may be interested in from the GNSO side of things. I think I'm handing it back to Joel.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Marika. Thank you for that explanation. I see you have many friends in the ccNSO side. So feel welcome. The question or just for my own clarity, as you went through your slides, there was the GNSO statement of interest where you say [inaudible] statement made by the relevant party that provides a declaration of interest that may affect the relevant party's judgment on the matters to be considered by the GNSO group. So are we saying that it has to be a written statement, one, and two, at what time do you declare this statement?

MARIKA KONINGS:

Thanks, Joel. So basically, the statement itself is contained in the SOI template that's housed on the GNSO website, which I think some consider complex, but there's actually a dedicated page where, of course are currently a lot of SOIs that can be found. So people are expected to enter into that document or that template the interests that they have or the financial benefits that they may get out of participating in that effort. It's basically a requirement for participating in I think all of the GNSO efforts. So if you join a GNSO working group, the first question will be you'll need to fill out this SOI before we add you to the mailing list and you become a member of this effort.

I think in practice, the idea is that people also go back to that document on a regular basis to update their information. I think that is probably one of the things that the review may need to look in—because I think that in practice doesn't happen because there's not like for example, what you get with your registration that you have an annual reminder that tells you “Hey, have you recently looked at your Statement of Interest? Is it still up to date? Is there anything that needs to be changed?” I think current practice is that people go back when they sign up to a new effort, and they're asked again, “Do you have a statement of interest and is it still up to date?” I think that is the moment where some may actually go in and provide their updates, or when there are really obvious changes while they're part of either a Council or a working group that needs to be reflected, like a change of employer or change of a client or something like that. I think that that's one of the moments where people will look at the SOI, and it needs to be provided in order to be able to participate basically.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Okay, so that means that maybe if a certain agenda came up, and everyone would need to go and look at the SOI and see if they're in compliance with that, right?

MARIKA KONINGS:

Well, it's an honor system. So basically, indeed, at the start of the meeting, the Chair will ask, “Are there any updates?” So people are expected to self-declare if there are changes. There is the ability as well for someone to kind of raise their hand and say, “Hey, I know that you

changed jobs but it's not reflected in your statement of interest. What's going on?" But that doesn't happen very often.

But there's no kind of policing, it's not that staff is checking, for example, LinkedIn and seeing who's changing jobs and checking whether or not they've actually updated their SOI at the same time. So that doesn't happen, because it's also kind of a bandwidth issue. It really works on the honor system, you're expected to declare your interest and people are able to kind of flag if they think information is not up to date or not accurate, and the person that is concerned is expected at that point to take action.

There's also an escalation that is foreseen. So if someone does not update it or keep on providing incorrect information, even though it is already publicly known that certain interest maybe would need to be represented there, there is ultimately the ability I think for the chair to remove someone for not providing up to date and accurate information. But at least to my knowledge, I don't think that has ever happened to date.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Okay, no, that's well understood, I think for the ccNSO, these are good learning points, because then as we build through this, it will be good to be clear on some of those things.

So I had the privilege of some of my colleagues actually reviewing this conversation, and I'd like to invite Frederico to just give us a few views

about what he has had on this particular conversation, probably either from Chris's presentation or Marika's presentation.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Sorry to interrupt you. Just before you do, could I just add something?

JOEL KARUBIU: Please.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Just before we hear from Frederico, it strikes me that at this point, having listened to Marika and having everyone now being clear about statements of interest that an example of why it might matter, a real example of why it might matter might be helpful to everybody, including our discussions.

And I can think of one off the top of my head, which is imagine a circumstance where geographic names in the gTLD world were a subject of discussion, and a circumstance where the ccNSO was either being asked or had decided to make a comment in a public comment, or was being asked to participate in a joint working group between the GNSO and the ccNSO on geographic names.

It would be relevant to the makeup of this—either to the group making the comments or to those ccNSO representatives in a joint working group if their ccTLD registry also happens to operate gTLDs that are geographic names. It would not be representative of the ccNSO to send three people to a joint working group with GNSO, all of whom operate

geographic names in their ccTLD registry, either on behalf of ccTLD which is operating gTLDs or as a backend operator.

That's why the at the very least a statement of interest is incredibly important, so that everybody knows that the people involved in the discussion are a fair representation. It doesn't mean that you're necessarily conflicted or you shouldn't involve yourself, but it can affect the makeup of groups so that you make sure that the ccTLDs are fairly represented across the makeup of groups. I hope that makes sense. I'll shut up now.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you. Thank you, Chris, for just highlighting that a bit more. I think we'll unpack it as we go along. Federico.

FREDERICO NEVES:

Hi Joel. Thank you, everyone. My name is Federico Neves. As a SOI, I worked for the .br registry, and I have interest in a few brand TLDs as well that we operate here in Brazil. But anyway, let me start with a few reflections.

I agree with mostly what Chris presented in his slides. But a comment that I have to make is that SOIs as Chris stated in in his presentation are mostly related to managing—especially managing budgets in organizations like ours, that you have direct interests with financial interests.

So in our organization like the ccNSO, I think even for the ccNSO Council, I think this doesn't apply. Another comment that I have is that from Chris's presentation, it's clear that for a SOI, you have a previous requirement that is a quite steep one. That is, you have to have a code of conduct or defining ethics standard, and this is very difficult. So that's the reflections that I put regarding Chris's presentation.

Regarding Marika's, first of all, SOIs are basically a standard for ICANN participation in committees. So this is something that is mostly day by day is participating in ICANN. But the definitely this is a very important transparency principle, but it only applies to publicly recorded votes. So we have to have, like the limitations of SOIs in situations that we would have, like a not recorded voting, that would be a problem.

I definitely agree with Marika's comments that especially in open discussion and transparent organization like the ccNSO and ICANN, exclusion of discussion of any participant independent of his SOIs or possible conflicts, it's unacceptable. So with that, I close my comments and my reflections.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Frederico. I'll invite Atsushi to give his so that we just lump them into one. Atsushi, welcome.

ATSHUSHI ENDO:

Thank you, Joel. Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening, wherever you are. My name is Atsuhsi Endo from .JP registry. So JRPS

runs .jp. but not only that, we are ICANN accredited registrar and also gTLD registry or M root server operator.

So thank you very much, Chris and Marika, for your insights and suggestions from your experiences as ICANN Board and ICANN staff who is engaged in GNSO policy development.

I'd like to share my [inaudible] briefly. First, I'd like to say that I don't have any particular comments from the regional perspective, Asia Pacific, East Asia or Japan in my case. This is one of the reason those from Latin America and Caribbean and APAC joined the session [as a reviewer,] Frederico and myself, is to reflect the geographic diversity of the ccTLD community.

This is my opinion, that I think conflict of interest is very much a universal issue among all ages and cultures. My basic understanding for conflict of interest issue for ccNSO is the way to ensure trust in the ccNSO, including its decision making process and the relation between people who joined I ccNSO activities.

I fully echo what Marika shares, that what is important is that those interests are declared and known to others. Chris says the very same thing in other words, that duty to disclose cannot rely on assumed knowledge about each individual.

I think in many cases, it's based on very personal relations. So do not rely too much on that, I perceive from this. And what Chris mentioned was many issues are solved simply by transparency and disclosure of interest.

ccNSO is not only just the supporting organization of ICANN organization structure, but also community for ccTLD managers. So from this viewpoint, I like to agree that what Marika mentioned in don'ts do not exclude those who have relevant expertise and knowledge from contributing.

This is very important, I think, point to be the constructive community. To conclude, I support a suggestion to introduce a statement of interest procedure. I would say in that case, it needs to apply to those who are candidates for Board seat 11, 12 ccNSO councilor, and also those ones would participate in activities of ccNSO committees or working group as well. Thanks. Back to you, Joel, thank you.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Atshushi, for that. Maybe I'll invite Marika. Any quick thoughts on the two reviews?

MARIKA KONINGS:

No, just to say I think all good observations. indeed it's, of course, really up to you to kind of apply this to the specific circumstances of the ccNSO. So I just pointed out in the chat, as Federico mentioned, that there may be votes that could take place and that are not recorded. I just pointed out that in the GNSO, that is not an issue or a concern. The only vote that I'm aware of that that's not public or votes are publicly declared is the one for the GNSO chair. All other votes are publicly recorded.

So indeed, that may be an important difference to consider and whether or not different rules would apply in those specific circumstances. So I think that's something important for you all to consider, because of course, it doesn't also need to be a one size fits all. Maybe in certain cases, a statement of interest is sufficient. Maybe in other cases, you do need a conflict of interest policy or requirements. So again, I think it's very important to look at the specific circumstances of the decision so and see what fits best in which situation.

JOEL KARUBIU: Thank you, Marika. Chris, any views from the reviews?

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Nothing to add at the moment.

JOEL KARUBIU: Okay, thank you very much, Frederico and Atshushi. At this point, I'll just go into Q&A. If there any hands up with specific questions, I will be able to just pick them out and invite you to speak and you can unmute yourself. As we're doing that, maybe just one question. As I was doing my research on this and to Marika, so it looks like the GNSO Statement of Interest procedures seem to be directed towards individuals as opposed to organizations. Would that be the case?

MARIKA KONINGS: Yes and no. Individuals are the ones filling out the statements, but they are expected to declare which organization they work for or which

clients they represent. So I don't know if that answers your question, but that's basically the approach.

JOEL KARUBIU: So the aspect of the individual filling it out, but they're filling it out also on behalf of an organization. Right?

MARIKA KONINGS: Right, especially those participants that participate in ICANN processes or in GNSO processes as part of their employers, part of their role with their employer. So they will need to state that if that is indeed the case, either if it's part of their day-to-day job, or whether someone is specifically paying them as a consultant or a lawyer to represent certain interests in the conversations.

JOEL KARUBIU: Thank you. Thank you for that clarification. Javier, I see your hand is up. Welcome.

JAVIER RÚA-JOVET: Hi. Hi, Marika. Hi, Chris. Hi all. Question. Has there ever been an example or a case of a nonvoluntary recusal in ICANN's history of someone that has some conflict that then became unacceptable?

CHRIS DISSPAIN: The answer to your question is yes. But if you ask me anything else, I won't tell you.

JAVIER RÚA-JOVET: We'll take it off record.

JOEL KARUBIU: Chris, that's well understood, your answer is well understood. Maybe we'll take that offline. Any other hand up at the moment? As we wait for that, maybe, Chris, just a question for you. When it comes to the ICANN Board that you [inaudible] where there is a perceived conflict of interest for a Board member, the rest of the Board will have to make a decision. So is that a peer review or there has to be a third party who is included in this conversation?

CHRIS DISSPAIN: That's, again, a really good question. The answer is it's a little bit more complicated than that. The first step would be for the individual to say that they don't believe that—if a conflict is identified, let's say it's you and me. We're both on the Board. You haven't said anything, I think you might have a conflict. So I might talk to you. I might say to you—or general counsel might talk to you or the chair might talk to you and say maybe you should think about whether you have a conflict or not.

You go away, you think about whether you have conflict, and you come back and say, “I don't think I have got a conflict, I think I'm fine. No problem at all.” It would then be for counsel—probably the chair would talk to you, and counsel would probably advise you. But at the end of the day, if you refuse to remove yourself or to acknowledge that it was

a conflict, or you refuse to heed the advice, then there would be a vote. The Board would vote to recuse you from the discussion.

Or if you said “I won't vote, but I don't think there's any reason why I can't be in the room” and there was a feeling that actually, that was a problem, then that will also be a vote. But understand that it's much more nuanced and complicated at the Board level, because we're talking about financial interests, really financial interests. So you're saying the company you work for is bidding for the contracts to run ICANN security systems or stuff like that. Because ICANN is actually a company, it's a business. I know it's not for profit, but it's still a corporation, still a business.

All of those conflict issues are significant and monetary, and very important. It's a different set of principles in an organization like ccNSO because there's no money changing hands. You might benefit financially from a decision or a piece of advice. But there's no money changing hands in ccNSO. Does that make sense?

JOEL KARUBIU:

Yeah, I think I understand in terms of the level that this has been discussed, and what the impact and how that looks like going forward would then determine how someone would make that decision. I can see on the chart where [inaudible]

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

Yeah, Abdullah's point about it only being money-related isn't strictly correct. It is often money-related. But it can be merely

influence-related. In other words, this decision increases my power, increases my influence, increases whatever. It doesn't necessarily have to increase my financial interest. But it often is about money in corporate terms.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Okay. Maybe that leads me to, if I looked at what the poll said earlier, a lot of you, I think, say that there was some sort of governance structure in terms of conflict of interest in the [inaudible]. So maybe if I bring in the members here, when you have a conflict of interest, how do you deal with it at your various organizations? Maybe one or two suggestions on how they've dealt with a conflict of interest. Do people recuse themselves, do people [sit in and sit out?] How does it look like within your organizations? Can we get a view? Any of the ccNSO members or guests, in your personal capacities in the organization, how do you deal with this?

SEAN COPELAND:

Leonid, do you want to take the floor?

LEONID TODOROV:

Yes. Hello, everyone. Just a very quick comment. While I find this discussion, to be honest, a little bit abstract for ccNSO, and here I would echo some of the comments, let me just stress that at APTLD, at which I am general manager, each and every board session, which is held online on a monthly basis, starts with a declaration of conflict of

interest. It was introduced two years ago, and it has been followed without any—Well, it's remained unchanged ever since.

So, although there hasn't been, to the best of my memory, there hasn't been any single case—Oh, yeah, it was one. But still, I mean, it's just an absolute must for the board members, they got used to this. I think that it works very efficiently. it's also reflected in the minutes which we make available to the ordinary members and also in the Board's communique, which are publicly available. Thank you.

JOEL KARUBIU: I see Roelof's hand is up.

ROELOF MEIJER: That's right, Roleof Meijer from SIDN. It's in our statutes. So if I am conflicted as CEO or I think that I am conflicted, then I announce this to the supervisory board. If they are of the same opinion, it means that on that matter, they will take a decision. If the supervisory board or a member of the supervisory board is conflicted on a certain issue, he or she has to declare it and it means that he or she will abstain from both the discussion and eventually from taking part in the decision making process, which can be voting.

JOEL KARUBIU: Right. Thank you, Roelof. Marika, you want to weigh in on that?

MARIKA KONINGS:

Yes, I just wanted to—the reference to the declaration of interest, it triggered my memory because actually, for a while, the GNSO had also in addition to a statement of interest, they also had a declaration of intent whereby at the start of every meeting, participants were expected to declare their intent, what was their intent for that specific meeting and the topics that were being discussed.

But it turned out pretty quickly that that became very cumbersome, kind of going through that at the start of every meeting and often was like, “Well, it’s exactly the same thing as I said last week,” because of course, it's different at least in GNSO working groups from kind of board meetings where every meeting, they have very different topics where you have something new to say.

So that was actually that, the GNSO relatively quickly got rid of. So I thought it was just worth sharing if you go down that path, it may be worth looking at at least the experience that the GNSO had and maybe not implementing it in a similar way because it wasn't very helpful. It's turned out to be pretty burdensome for working groups and meetings without any visible impact or effect.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Marika. So if we just give you a crystal ball and we said we want you as a consultant for the ccNSO on this project, how would you perceive us dealing with conflict of interest? What would be your two suggestions on how to deal with conflict of interest?

MARIKA KONINGS:

That's a very tough one. Because I have to admit, I probably don't know the ccNSO well enough to really know kind of the decisions that are taken at the Council level and where potential real conflicts lie. But I think a real starting point would be indeed sharing your interests and declaring those publicly through a statement of interest or some other kind of process.

So again, people in the room can look each other in the eye and kind of say as well, "Do you really think it's a good idea that you're still in the room or that you're voting on this issue or that you're participating in this conversation?"

Because I think that's the general principle within ICANN, it's all about transparency and accountability, so being open and transparent about why you're there and it doesn't mean that you cannot participate in that conversation. But it does make it clear for others why you may have certain opinions or why you may vote in a certain way. You can factor that into how conversations take place.

And I think actually about a consultant, probably Chris, I did really like his kind of graded level approach where you really look at what is the topic you're dealing with? Is it something where there is no real conflict, you can be in the room and you can vote? Is it at a higher level, there is a conflict, but your opinion is important and it does contribute to the conversation to make sure that others can make an informed decision? Or just really rise to that level where everyone agrees that there is a clear conflict and you shouldn't vote, you shouldn't take part in discussions and you shouldn't even be in the room. Again, I probably

would need to do a bit more research to really understand where those three levels may apply within the ccNSO to become your consultant and advise you on that.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Chris.

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

Yeah, okay. So a couple of things. I mean, straight straightforwardly, my view is ccNSO probably should have statement of interest. It certainly doesn't do any harm. In the old days when there were like 40 of us, and we all knew each other really well, it probably didn't matter too much. But it matters now more because there are a wider range of people and a much larger group. It does no harm to do it. It doesn't cost anybody anything. It's just the thing you have to fill out. It doesn't do anyone any harm, and is useful.

You could argue if you're not gonna do anything with them, what's the point? Well, the point is an understanding. The point is I can listen to your opinion and I can know that your opinion is colored, governed to a degree by the fact that you happen to have this interest. Doesn't mean you have a conflict, it just means I know what your interest is.

So that works from that point of view. In respect to conflict of interest, I personally don't see how it's viable at the ccNSO level. Frankly, with large groups like this, one person having a conflict is probably unimportant. At the policy level, it quite clearly is the case that everyone is operating in their own interests. Why wouldn't they? That's

why they're here. So it makes perfect sense. And as long as we know what your interests are, it shouldn't be a problem.

A statement of interest does enable the Council to say, actually, out of the volunteers that we've got for this particular job, we don't have enough diversity across a range of interests because we know what their statements of interests are, and there's nothing wrong with that.

My final point is that I think perhaps the ccNSO could consider looking at some conflict matters in respects to the Council. But it is difficult. It matters more because there are fewer people. So you've got X number of Councilors, 15, however many it is. Obviously, if one or two or three or four people in that group have possibly a conflict, it matters. But it's challenging to think of what a conflict could possibly be about.

If it's simply you happen to be friends with me and therefore you think I'm a great guy you want me to be the chair of this subcommittee, that's not a conflict, and it's a different thing. So I think we're going to be challenged on the conflict issue, but it's something I think we should think about at the Council level. But certainly at the membership level, I can't see why anything past the statement of interest would be necessary. Thanks.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Chris. I take some points and I can see a lot of people agreeing with you on the chat around that, that maybe what we need is a statement of interest. Jordan, I see your hand is up.

JORDAN CARTER: Yeah. Thanks. Just a couple of comments if that's all right. I think that the angle this is going down around transparency is probably the right one for us. The statement of interest thing helps people understand where people are coming from. It has another advantage as well, which is it sort of slightly reduces that insider advantage that people often get in ICANN when they've been around for a long time because we find out things about each other by chatting over years, right? So it can help provide a little bit more of a level playing field when newcomers are coming in and just starting to get a sense of the lay of the land.

I don't think it would be good to have a rigorous kind of conflict of interest policy around the Council table because it just doesn't—we're not making the sorts of decisions where that's an issue. So I think transparency at the Council level and possibly in the PDP process should give us enough if we want to try it as an experiment and see where it goes.

JOEL KARUBIU: Thank you. Thank you, Jordan. I hear the word transparency, which is as Marika said, it's ownership from the word go in terms of everything you want to do and you're able to explain yourself.

I want to move into the polling session. But before that, Javier, if I can give you a minute or so as the team is preparing—

JAVIER RÚA-JOVET: No, no, that's fine. It was Jordan's point on SOI and conflict are different things because SOI can just make it easier for people to know each

other. And it could be good just to have conversations and know where people come from.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Alright, thank you very much. So I think there's sort of like a direction we're pulling out of this conversation today that SOI is important and how does that look like, how do we want to just work around it? Conflict of Interest may actually be dealt with on certain matters, especially the weighty matters, then how does that look like? So I'll ask the poll as we go along. Can we just have the next poll?

So we used this earlier today. So please, I think you have the links with you, if you can just look at the statements and then go in and just give your views on the same.

The first one is introduce a statement of interest procedure. I have 78 members on the call, so expect at least 74 to respond, so just give a minute for that. Currently on about 21. The link was sent for ccNSO members. So if you are not a ccNSO member, I don't think you received a link. Is that correct?

SEAN COPELAND:

That is correct.

JOEL KARUBIU:

In the interest of time, I'd like to close this poll, if that's okay, Sean. The first one is closed. I think the second one is up. The second one is about make statements of interest mandatory.

Okay, we're moving along, third question. I see Jordan has double voted. Is it possible to double vote, Jordan?

JORDAN CARTEN: Sorry, I don't understand what this question is asking me in question three.

JOEL KARUBIU: I think what was envisioned here is if we should compare other entities that have conflicts of interest or statements of interest, and see how they deal with them. So outside ICANN. Are we a special group that we don't want to look at anyone else in terms of how they do their stuff?

I think Marika alluded to this, that something that would be good for people to look at what other organizations do. Okay, that's question three. Question four, never exclude those with relevant expertise. Okay, question five, be clear about when conflicts matter. We can move to the next statement, I think keep the processes and procedures as simple as possible.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Will be fascinating if somebody doesn't support that principle.

JOEL KARUBIU: I would expect 80 votes on this one.

BART BOSWINKEL: I would.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Bart, you can complicate making a cup of tea.

JOEL KARUBIU: Okay, I think we should be good with the statements. So I'll just quickly just refer to two statements if I'm allowed. Okay, let's go into the poll. We'll come back to the statements. So there's a poll. Should the ccNSO have a procedure in place for dealing with a conflict of interests or a similar procedure regarding ethical behavior?

CHRIS DISSPAIN: So this is Chris, and I'm not voting because I don't represent a ccTLD. But I have a question, which is, do we mean conflict of interest as opposed to statement of interest? Because I think that there are two distinct questions. I think everybody thinks the statement of interest is a good idea. So I am assuming what we mean by this is specifically conflict of interest policy, as opposed to statement of interest.

SEAN COPELAND: Chris, I might take the similar procedures regarding ethics being the fossil crossover to the SOI.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: I agree with you, Sean, but given that the two things are so polarized, I think, I suspect that given that the two things are so polarized in the

sense that I think everybody thinks you should make a statement of interest, but having a conflict of interest policy is a different thing entirely, I'm just wondering if we should split it. I don't want to cause a problem with the questions, though. I'll shut up.

SEAN COPELAND: Kimberly, how difficult is that to do?

BART BOSWINKEL: May I make another suggestion? What is interesting—and Chris, I think your comment is very illustrating, this is the same question as when we started. And I think as a result of this discussion, you already see a shift in approach. This was just to capture if there is a trend or anything when we started this session. And after having the presentations and the discussions of the panel and of the audience. So it's not to be precise. I think you nailed it. You could see it already in the preceding questions, there is a clear distinction between conflict of interest and the Statement of Interest. Thanks.

JOEL KARUBIU: Yeah, I agree. I agree with Bart there. I think during the conversation, it's clear that we need to distinguish between conflict of interest and segment of interest. I think the majority of the team were leaning towards a statement of interest as a starting point, and seeing how that looks like going forward. So if I look at the results at the very beginning, I think the numbers have not changed, except for “not sure” which is growing. So, I think maybe that means that we need to clarify this

conversation a bit more to be able just to give a better understanding. So if we then decide that we are going with statement of interest, the question definitely will change in the near future, and that is what then if we choose to adopt the community and that will be the way forward.

But I think for now, because of the conversation that we had, we came in talking about conflict of interest and we also got some views around statement of interest from Marika, which has, I would say, thrown us a curveball, but has given us food for thought. It just need to be clarified better so that by the time we're going to the next ICANN meeting, then we are clear which is the direction of the community, the ccNSO wants to go on that. So I think that that's a good takeout from this conversation, that the conversation actually brought up some new pointers that we have to consider and bring out in the near future.

So I don't know if there's another question.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Nick's hand is up.

SEAN COPELAND: Nick's hand is up.

JOEL KARUBIU: Oh, Nick. Go ahead.

NICK WENBAN-SMITH:

Hi, there. So I just thought really. Even if we don't necessarily have a what a sort of a rule which says that if you're interested in a topic, you have to abstain from voting on it or being part of the decision or discussion, I think it could be helpful to have some sort of policy we can point to to explain our processes, i.e. that, say, we have statements of interest to make it clear, to the contrary, just because you are interested in something like IDN policy, doesn't preclude you by virtue of having an interest in the outcome of the IDN policy or the retirement policy or anything else from participating it, and to make that position clear and on the records so that external observers understand that we've put some thought into this and that that's the process.

So that I think in addition with declaration of people's statements of interest, that gives you the full transparency that we don't exclude people from conversations or votes because they happen to have an interest in the outcome. That's not our objective here. Our objective here is to, in the absence of any sort of policy or clarity on the area, to introduce some clarity, which could be that we explicitly permit people to be involved in those sorts of discussions, because we believe it's in the best interests of the whole community, that people with expertise and an interest therefore in the outcome are fully part of it. But that should all be on the record.

The second thing I wanted to say is that the reason why some of this stuff originally came about was in the context of nominations and seconding to the Council positions. So then perhaps if I—I'm trying to think of a good example, but obviously, I'm very good friends with my French colleagues. But I don't think that the historic issues or anything

between Britain and France gives me any sort of conflict or anything. I vote for and support, nominate whoever I want. Just because I nominate someone doesn't mean that I'm going to vote for them. That sort of stuff could be made a little bit clearer for the record, because I think we've had allegations of conflicts which have actually been totally groundless. I think we could avoid that by just having a slightly clearer statement of what our policies [inaudible]. That is my final two pence. I apologize for boring everybody with that.

JOEL KARUBIU:

Thank you, Nick for that. Just sort of wrapping it up as well. I'd like to thank everyone for just joining us today. I want to hand over back to Sean. But before I hand over, happy International Women's Day to all the ladies on the forum. We appreciate you. Back to you, Sean.

SEAN COPELAND:

Thanks, Joel, very much. Thank you, everyone, for participating today. We're going to take what we heard back to the subgroup and anticipate having an update for you by ICANN 74.

The conversation polling of course has been very interesting to see how the community feels and how we have progressed from conflict of interest to SOI. I will say on the record that if we are going to go down the route of SOI, I hope it doesn't delay are getting a new website. I'll put that out there.

On behalf of the subgroup, I'd like to thank each of you participating in the questions. I want to thank Chris, Marika, Frederico, Atsushi and Joel.

I also want to thank David for presenting the rule changes earlier on, remind all of you to vote when that comes out. Vote often there too, taking Chris's advice.

And of course, I want to thank the hardest working ICANN support team that we have, Bart, Kimberly, Joke, Claudia, and everyone else from ICANN who make this volunteer community look really good. We're very fortunate.

We look forward to seeing you guys at ICANN 74 and I will hand back to you the last 30 seconds of this session. Thank you so very much.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]