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Participants

ICANN73 | Prep Week – Joint Session: ICANN Board, Fellows, and NextGen@ICANN Program Participants
Tuesday, February 22, 2022 - 11:00 to 12:00 AST

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:	Hello, everyone, and welcome to the joint session between ICANN Board chair, Board vice chair, ICANN president and CEO, and ICANN73 Fellowship and NextGen @ ICANN program participants.
	My name is Siranush Vardanyan, and I am ICANN Fellowship program manager. I am the remote participation manager for this session.
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With that, let's start the session. I would like to give the floor for welcoming to my colleague Deborah Escalera, who is helping me with the slides today, to welcome our Fellows and NextGeners. Deborah, please?

DEBORAH ESCALERA: Hello, everybody. Welcome to ICANN73 and with our first session of the prep week. We just wanted to say welcome, and we are thrilled to have you on board. Please feel free to ask plenty of questions during this session, and please feel free to reach out to us during this week and during the upcoming weeks and during our meeting week as well. Welcome aboard, and thank you for being here.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Deborah. Thank you. With that, let me give the floor for our first speaker. Next slide, please. Next slide. I would like to give the floor and introduce to our Fellows and NextGeners the ICANN president and CEO, Göran Marby. Göran, the floor is yours.

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GÖRAN MARBY:	Thank you. Thank you very much. This is one of my favorite sessions during any ICANN event because I often get a lot of very fun questions. As Siranush just said, please make sure that you ask questions. On this call you have the chair and the vice chair of the Board and with support from me you can't get it better.
	Let me take a step back and tell you why it's so important for us to have you here. And I want to do it from a little bit of a different angle, and it's to talk about the Internet itself. Every time you go online, you hit upon something that originates from ICANN. It doesn't matter which device – PC, mobile phone, wireless, non-wireless—they all hit upon something that actually starts with ICANN.
	You might ask yourself how can ICANN as an institution or an organization get that mandate? It's actually because of you. ICANN was formed to fulfill a very particular task and making also sure that it's not someone like me who makes the decisions about the development of the Internet. It has to be someone else. And what we're using is what we call the multistakeholder model where we invite people from all over the world.
	And I wonder if Maarten knows that we can hear him.
	Anyway, one of the things that you should also know about the Internet is it's not done. You might think because…and I'm just amazed, on this call we have 90 participants and I tried to calculate how many different countries we see there. It's quite fantastic. But it's not done yet, and it's not done yet for a couple of reasons.

One of them is still only half of the world's population have access to the Internet. And the ones who have access to it are, unfortunately, still people that you would call the elite of the world.

We still have—and we had a session earlier about something called IDNs—we still have built a system where it still doesn't support all users around the world using their own language, their own keyboard, their own narrative to actually come in to use the Internet. For instance, if you want to be a member of a social media platform today, you can't use your own script. It has to be a Latin script.

That is one of the things that we at ICANN are working on to make sure that everybody can access this fantastic technology but on their own terms, which is important.

The other thing is also when it comes to development of the systems themselves, the technology behind it, how we evolve it, how we make sure it is secure and stable also in the future. That is an ongoing work. I think it was in October/November 2020, we had the largest Internet day ever with about 8.5 trillion requests into the system. We still don't know why that was the biggest day so far, but it was a big day. And this says something about how many people are going online during COVID. That means that we have to continue to develop security and stability measurements to make sure that we do things that are right in a transparent way to make sure that it happens in the future.

Also, when you come into ICANN, you're going to see a lot of questions that no one has ever been able to answer before because they've never

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been raised. One of the fantastic things with ICANN and one of the fantastic things with Internet itself is that you actually come here and you talk about things that no one has solved before.

You will hear and be part of a lot of conversations that sometimes even can seem absurd. But they're not. It's just that we try to fix for the community under it's direction the fact that we are trying to deal with things that no one has ever changed before. And the absurdity of it is that when the ICANN community comes together and makes a decision, that happens to change for all Internet users of the world.

ICANN doesn't do all of this by itself, so that's also important to know. We have a lot of other parties in the ecosystem, so we need a lot of acronyms like the RIR in the numbers community. IETF that makes [inaudible] protocols. The country code operators who by themselves make sure there are top-level domain operators for your countries. But all work together, and you're going to meet all of them.

Because in ICANN or together with the [inaudible] system we do one thing—we provide the world with an interoperable Internet for everybody to use. Our challenge now is to make it interoperable not only for machines but also more for people.

So welcome and I look forward to your questions. And now over to Maarten, I think.

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, Göran. Thank you very much. Maarten, the ICANN chair of the Board. Maarten, please. The floor is yours.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: It's always interesting to be the second to speak after Göran or the other way around sometimes because, yes, we do speak one language and this is about everything Göran said. If anything to emphasize, it's really, really good to see so many new Fellows here on board, and NextGen, because it's, indeed, this diversity that we need to continue to foster and to grow. Because the world changes, and our community needs to get fresh blood, get the insight from different parts of the world and different disciplines as well.

Diversity is our strength, I dare say, but this also must—and that's for the reasons Göran mentioned—we need to serve the world and the world is diverse by definition. To better understand how to serve the world best, we need you. We need to have a solid understanding of it in all its diversity and its changing diversity.

And with that, I will dare also say that Internet governance in itself, and specifically that area that we focus on with ICANN as Göran explained, the unique identifier system, that requires a multidisciplinary approach as well. Whereas maybe in the beginning the Internet was mainly in the hands of technical people, right now it needs other disciplines as economists, legal, and all kinds of other disciplines to help understand how to do this best.

So I was very pleased to see the diversity that was actually reflected in the group that is online today. And, yes, I do look forward, and I hope that we get you so interested and ingrained in this that you find your way in the ICANN ecosystem to help us to fulfill our mission that we will meet one day live in a room as well which allows even more interaction and conversation.

I very much recognize the challenge of getting onboard in the time where we can't meet in one location and you have to do it virtually. The advantage is you don't have to travel. The advantage is there is a lot of information, a lot of interaction you can do online. Yet please hang in there because it's also very much people work, and one day we'll get together face-to-face as well.

So please do come with your questions. Please know we are in very interesting times, and the Internet is more important to the world than ever before. And we want to take our part in that, and we need you to help us.

So with that, I also would like to say that this first step of you may lead to many more steps as the vice chair of the Board Leon Sanchez is actually a Fellow. And as he will say, no doubt, once a Fellow, always a Fellow. So back to you, Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten. Thank you. Well said. Once a Fellow, always a Fellow. With that, I would like to give the floor with great pleasure, my proud thing in ICANN Fellowship program, our Board vice chair Leon

Sanchez who started his ICANN journey as a Fellow. Leon, the floor is yours.

LEON SANCHEZ: Thank you very much, Siranush. And welcome, everyone, to this session. As Göran and Maarten said, this is definitely one of my favorite if not my favorite of all ICANN meetings because it's an opportunity to come back to my roots and to where I began my journey within ICANN which is the Fellowship program.

I have some background light and you might see some shining with my head, so don't get distracted by that. I'm going to switch to speaking in Spanish so that we can take advantage of the interpretation services. So I will now switch to Spanish.

So as I was saying, my path in ICANN started as a Fellow. I was lucky enough to have a great Fellow administrator, Mama J as we Fellows know her. No one better than her to continue her efforts than Siranush who was also a Fellow. And once a Fellow, always a Fellow as we say. And I believe that Siranush is the incarnation of the Fellows spirit, and I'm so pleased to have her leading this program. Siranush, thank you so much for keeping on bringing new blood to the ICANN community and guiding us with your wisdom.

And also, to encourage you to make the best of these great mentors you have as Fellowship members, Alfredo and others who have devoted their lives to being able to bring new elements to this diverse and rich community.

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And to tell you a bit about my experience as to having started with Fellows and today being lucky enough to serve as vice chair of the Board with Maarten as chair and Göran as [president] and CEO, serving the community is a privilege and a commitment. You may lose sight that the leadership positions are not opportunities to have a better position in the community or more privileges or benefits, but they are opportunities to serve. And if you look at it that way, I guess you will have a favorable evolution in the ICANN environment.

These are opportunities of service to the extent that you serve the community, the ecosystem part of the domain name system and the open Internet ecosystem, Internet governance, and multistakeholders and you understand that precisely the prize for having these leadership positions is actually serving the community, I guess you will make the best of your trip.

I don't want to take more time than needed. I will be around with you for a while to answer any questions or doubts you may have. I see there's one here. As a Board member I will serve the interests of ICANN as a community or organization. How do I balance this with the fact that I come from the At-Large community? That's an excellent question. Sorry, Siranush, if I'm going too fast, but as I saw this in the chat.

When I'm lucky enough to have been appointed by At-Large in the Seat #15 in the Board, and what Mouloud Khelif says is correct. Once we are sitting at the Board, we take on the obligation of providing a service according to the best interests of ICANN as an organization not representing the body that has appointed us.

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There is a balance, of course, with a service vision to serve the community in an integrated manner. And even when Göran doesn't like the word holistic, but giving value and knowing the standpoints and interests of all the community that is why you will see me literally jumping from one place to another getting in touch with the At-Large community which I am a part of and this is my origin. But you will hear me talking to people from GAC, ccNSO, GNSO, ASO. I am part of the ASO right now.

And actually so as to balance this origin where we come from and the obligation to serve the community in an integrated manner and to benefit the interests of ICANN as an organization, we want to get in touch and be in contact with all the community, with the different standpoints. And even when my nature will make me take into account the interests of the end user because that's where I come from, it also forces me to value and weigh the standpoints and interests of other members of the community and other areas/parts of the community and the ICANN organization.

I hope that with that I have answered your question.

And let me thank you again for the opportunity of being with you, and I hope I have conveyed the message that serving the community is a privilege and it is what we're here for. Thank you so much, Siranush.

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:	Thank you, Leon. Thank you very much. And thank you for joining us, though I know you have another session to go. But thanks for joining, and thanks for your wonderful introduction.
	Before we move to the questions, Deborah, if we can do Leon's requests. We can take out the slides because Fellows will have the slide that's in the agenda. And we can just have…we'll see each other's faces.
	We already have the questions coming up. The first question—and I know already that Göran will take this question—is from Nabeel Yasin. Do you think the Internet will remain governed by the multistakeholder model or the intergovernmental will take control? Göran?
GÖRAN MARBY:	Thank you. It's a very good question which you might think is a very simple answer to. So let me complicate it a little bit. The first question is actually, what is Internet? How do you define what Internet is? Because many people have different opinions about the Internet.
	So the reason I'm saying this is if you think about that one, for instance, the social media platforms, all the different platforms, when you walk into them you actually leave the Internet. It's like walking into someone else's computer. You're now under…normal reality under Internet doesn't exist within the platform. And on that side if you define Internet like that, it seems like what I'm seeing is a lot of legislative proposals around the world to do something with that.

Then you have the next layer which content on websites, on blogs, and all of that. Or fake, you sell something that is fake on the Internet or you do something really, really bad on the Internet. There are local laws. What is illegal in real life is also illegal on the Internet as well. So to that extent when you define it like that, it is already regulated and taken over by countries around the world, and rightfully so. It should be elected politicians who are the people who make decisions about that.

So what then remains? It's the technical part of the Internet which is what we do together with our partners to provide the technical identifiers and setting up policies for some of the domain names. And I would say that there are countries in the world who don't believe in this model, but there are the majority of the countries that actually believe in this model. Because it has worked flawlessly for 35 years or something, and it has provided an opportunity to create this fantastic environment we're all sitting in now.

But also making sure that we stay within our remit. We stay within our technical capabilities. There are always people who will come to ICANN and say we should regulate content, we should go after this or we should go after this. And we often say it's not in our mission, but it's not only not in our mission. It's not in our technical capabilities because that's not how the Internet works.

I think that multistakeholder model represented by ICANN, which is a gigantic experiment to some extent, is one of the largest peace projects ever done in practice. We collect thousands of people from hundreds of countries coming together to discuss things that of joint interest to all

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of us. Does everybody like that methodology? No. Do we always perceive to be really effective? No. But it's a little bit like Winston Churchill said is that democracy might be the worst way to run a country—I'm paraphrasing—but the alternatives are even worse.

So I hope, and I'm fighting for it and you can fight for it as well, that this model where people can walk into a room and participate in something so important as preserving the Internet is something that will continue. And we have a lot of support. When we did the so-called transition, more than 160 countries around the world signed on to the ICANN model which is a mandate given by governments to you as the multistakeholder model to make sure that we can continue this work.

I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. And we have the second question which I already know that Maarten will take this question. It's from Mouloud Khelif. How do you ensure diversity at the Board membership level beyond geographic and community diversity? How about gender?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Yeah, well, first, important to understand that the ICANN Board is appointed by the community. And as Leon explained, his appointment is done by ALAC, there are two chairs for GNSO, there are two chairs for ccNSO, and two chairs for the ASO. On top of that there's also a nomination committee which is formed from bodies from the

community that determines and proposes so-called independent Board members, and I'm one of them. So in that way, the Board doesn't ensure it as such.

But what we do at ICANN is we have the bylaws, and the bylaws are very clear on some specific requirements for diversity, particularly geographic diversity. And also the NomCom accepts guidance from the Board in which we emphasize the need for diversity to be able to do our job well as we do.

And basically, I dare say that at ICANN together we foster also a culture of diversity and inclusion putting emphasis on how important it is that what we do together is truly able to serve the world by at least ensuring some understanding of the diversity of the world we are serving and inclusion of those that help us address these issues best.

So in that way, I would say we ensure it together. But again, it's not, in the ICANN model, the Board who chooses its own members. That is the community. I hope that helps.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten.

GÖRAN MARBY: Can I add something, Maarten? Can I add something?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, Göran.

GÖRAN MARBY:	A couple times a year we do something called the ICANN CEO report, which is public. It's my report, official report to the Board. And one of the things you can see there is actually how we're doing within ICANN Org, what I'm in charge for. I can say that we have people—and we haven't checked it for a while—but when we checked last time we had people who speak 55 different languages, live in I think it's 35 countries plus 17 states in the U.S., and we are slightly more women than men in the general staff, and in the executive team if you don't calculate me in, we are 50-50 on the executive team as well. And on the executive team we also have many people from different backgrounds from [different] around the world.
	Diversity is very important to us. It's not always easy to achieve, but it's something that we work hard to maintain both in the community but also in the organization itself. Thank you.
SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:	Thank you, Göran. We have a question from Samik Kharel who is asking, ICANN is a [sea] of technical, professional, and specialized affairs. I feel it is very easy to get lost here. What do you suggest is the best way to navigate around? Your experiences and advice would be valuable. So probably Göran and Maarten, and if Leon is still here, can take briefly and respond.

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GÖRAN MARBY: I might be the wrong person to ask because I happen to be a nerd. And the funny thing is I'm not even a trained nerd. It's just I worked in the IT industry for 30 years now. Yes, I'm very old. And I agree. It's probably not only that it is IT related but remember our mission. It is technical, but it's also the acronyms we're using. I mean, I'm lost in the acronym space so many times. I try to change it sometimes to come up with better project names. I'm well-known for projects like Blueberry, Strawberry, Calzone. You get it. Most of them you can eat. And I have no real—and I see some of you are laughing at me—but I have no….

So the way I do it is to find something that you're quite interested in, because you're going to find it in ICANN. Let's say that you're interested in—I mean, one of my pet projects is now what we call IDNs and universal acceptance, and I can speak at length on this. It's like pushing a button. Less than 20% of all email servers in the world [read Arabic] script. And I think less than 70% [read] Chinese script. We have many languages that we still have to connect to make sure that it works for everybody.

Find one of those things, and that's where you engage instead of going into the [all broad]. If it's privacy, the WHOIS question, that's a very good way of finding your way into ICANN. And I can promise you, you're going to find something that's interesting. That's the only advice I can give. That's what I did, but I'm lucky enough to be informed in many things. But go there where your passion is. Go where your interest is in your other life.

But it will take a while for me to be able to replace all the acronyms and, yes, you're get meet a lot of nerds. But not all of our nerds are actually that boring. We can be quite fun as well. Sort of. In our own way. Sometimes.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: [inaudible] joke. Beautiful.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. Maarten?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Well, no, just very short because there are a lot of interesting questions. But for this week just practical advice, it's indeed drink it in and then zoom in on what pulls you most. And a good way of getting a good feel may be the sessions actually that the Board is having with different parts of the constituencies. Because there actually the most important issues as seen by those constituencies are raised and discussed. And this will really help you if you have no specific clue yet where you want to go to get a feel where do you feel the pull most.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten. I see also one our alumni shared her experience that she found focusing on one thing at a time very helpful and something you're more interested in. So it's a good advice not to try to

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learn everything at the same time but focus step-by-step on one thing and then move forward. Thank you.

We have the next question from Ahmad. As I understood from Mr. Fadi Chehadé in a recording of a lecture in [USC] the due to the ICANN multistakeholder model the ICANN Board [do or] cannot make any changes that did not go through the full cycle defined by that model. This makes ICANN Board a very untraditional Board, same as ICANN. What is the extent of power and reach of the ICANN Board?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Okay, well, that's simple. It's a good catch. Ideally, the ICANN Board is actually rubber stamping because everything that comes out of the community and is done by the organization is such that we only have to say, "This is right." Because the initiatives for policy and the setting of priorities are actually coming from the community, and the organization makes sure that the execution is taking place properly, that implementation of new policies is done well, and it facilitates the whole community to come to those proposals and insights.

So the Board's role is truly to take in a away the fiduciary responsibility to see to it that anything that goes forward, that is decided to be new for ICANN is fulfilling the bylaws, is legal from a legal perspective, and is reasonable. The global public interest is another element we look at to see whether things go on. And, yeah, in that way the role of the ICANN Board is limited yet important because this ensures in a way the overlay of legitimacy of everything we do.

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GÖRAN MARBY:
One of the most important things, and Leon talked about it, is to add on the public interest into it. And one thing, often—and I understand where my predecessor [came from] about this—it's sort of the Board has an unusual role and this is the structure. But remember that ICANN as an institution is a consensus model where we actually want to agree. So what might look very formalistic and strange on paper, actually it's all made up to drive the conversation.

We have one right now with the Board. We have something called—one of those fantastic acronyms—the SSAD ODP, lovely name, where the Board have questions and the Board now engages with the GNSO Council that's responsible for policy for new [inaudible] programs.

So it's set up really to force this conversation because in the end one of the real good things with ICANN is that we attempt to in the end agree. And if we don't agree, it's usually because it shouldn't be done. That doesn't mean that everybody…there are people who always we should be doing something differently, but that's the matter of the—you know, the whole model is built around the fact of let's find a way to agree.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:
Thank you. Thank you, Maarten and Göran. We'll move to the next question from Romulo. Does it exist any legal department regarding cooperation against cybercrime? And if yes, how does it work with different countries?

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GÖRAN MARBY: So yes and no. I mean, first of all, how do you define cybercrime? I sometimes say…I actually had a meeting. I happened to be in Brussels this week, and I had a meeting yesterday when I said it. I wish that people would stop calling it "cyber" because they call it "cloud" and they call it "cyber." In reality, the cloud could be a computer in your neighbor's garage. There is no cyber. It's always in someone's computer somewhere. And the word cyber sort of means it's in space, but it's not.

We have in our contracts, which is the way ICANN through the policymaking process makes sure things are enforced, there are things that you have to do if you're a top-level domain operator. Provide DNSSEC, take action against certain things that we have decided through policymaking shouldn't happen. And that's actually the foundation, the policymaking work.

After that we have tools that we do provide for fighting certain things that happen on the Internet. We have something called the DAAR report that comes out every month that we go through what is called DNS abuse. When COVID came around we built a special system DNSTICR where we tracked all registration with domain names containing something like COVID or, and we did that in many, many different languages. I think there…I can't remember how many hundred…we went through 150 million domain names [to check that] and then to get registrars [to take them down].

But on top of that we also have a place we call OCTO. And that's another thing I didn't mention. OCTO is a thinktank to look at problems that might exist and provide papers about it. They're researchers and scientists, all of them. And with them they also have abilities and knowledge about how the DNS works. Remember, that's where we go. We don't go into anything else but the protection of the DNS itself.

And then we have relationships and work with law enforcement [inaudible] and other ones around the world, but always in an advisory capacity because we can't go in and tell anyone how to do it.

The security space is a space where there's a lot of cooperation and also built on a lot of trust, so ICANN is active. But also to say we always stay within our own remit, we always stay within our own capabilities, and we try to stay out of politics. Because the interesting thing is that some think is a bad thing could be a positive voice for someone else, and we don't want to be even close to that kind of discussion. I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. We have a question from Nojus. As he mentioned, it is a very important question. What is the role of ICANN in the DNS regulation of the dark web, and do they have a role in preventing crime and human rights violations occurring there?

GÖRAN MARBY: Do you want to start, Maarten, or should I?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Of course, either way, but most importantly the dark web is not a part of what we [inaudible] as ICANN. This is about the DNS root and unique addressing system of the Internet we know. Obviously, the dark web also uses IP to communicate, but it's not something we have any influence on. It's just like other questions. And as Göran said, we are not a regulator. We are not a police force. We are the body that oversees this unique addressing system that makes it possible to have the end-to-end ability happen. And as Göran said before as well, we are [used to] work with law enforcement and etc. to help. But I think we don't do the dark web, right, Göran?

GÖRAN MARBY: So, oh, do you know what? I could go nerdy now.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: You have two minutes.

GÖRAN MARBY: I have sometimes a problem with describing as a dark or white or anything else. But they use they call it Tor encryption and Tor routing, and there are domain names if you would like to call them that that exist outside what we do. And there is always someone who wants to come up with an alternative model to the ICANN. We call them alternative namespaces, even if you discuss what you call the dark web

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is an alternative namespace. And there's always been pressure from some ones to do that, and we see it from time to time.

But we are trying to have a functional, interoperable Internet that is open for everybody. So that kind of system contradicts the philosophy of ICANN which is that everybody should be able to go online using ordinary browsers, using ordinary PCs or mobile phones to be able to access it. If you can't do that, it's not really in what ICANN is all about which is connecting people. I hope that answers your question.

Really good questions this time. You picked a really good bunch of people.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. The next question is again to you. It's from Megan Kathure. Does ICANN have a strategic plan to expand the reach of its engagement centers, especially in underrepresented communities? And a follow-up, could there be a transmission process to facilitate further engagement between engagement centers and the Fellows upon completion of their Fellowship?

GÖRAN MARBY: It's a very simple question. No. So one of the things is the ICANN Org staff is currently about 400 people, and there is no way we can place people all over in all countries around the world. And it's not the intention. Our intention is to have [inaudible] places we can support

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you and the community in your work. Because at the end of the day, I'm the facilitator of the work; you actually do the work.

We have a lot of cooperation with organizations like ISOC, for instance, to make sure that we have the ability to reach as many as possible. Currently, we don't have any plan to have more engagement centers, but we are in a process, which we've been for a while, to engage more in what we call underserved countries. So we are hiring people in Africa, we're hiring people in Asia, etc. Especially Africa is the place that is very much on our radar because so many positive things are happening now there. I would like to say stay tuned for some things that we're doing in Africa very soon.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. There is a question from Mouloud, and I think the first part is for Göran and the second for Maarten. The bottom-up process and multistakeholder has many advantages and also seems to be quite slow. What about the implementation phase of the policy once approved by the Board? And the question to Maarten—I lost it. Göran, can you take that question, and I will put the follow-up?

GÖRAN MARBY: I always say slow compared to what? My perfect example because it's such a good example is that it took 25 years for governments to negotiate the international sea law. Yeah, that's what we do. The work we do is actually do that, but we do it in a much shorter timeframe.

ICANN should never be fast. It's not the intent of being fast because when we do actually change something it changes for a lot of people at the same time. There are always things in this—because no one has done the multistakeholder model as ICANN has done before—there are always things we can do to be better. And it's now six years after the transition, five years after the transition.

There are things that we are, together with the community, looking into how to make it better. But I hear this sometimes that the multistakeholder model is slow, and I always say why don't you go to a UN meeting and see how fast it goes there. The ICANN community has been able to reach really hard decisions over the years, and I would say that most of them—I come from that system. Compared to that, ICANN is extremely fast. It doesn't mean that we don't have to do better, but the ones that make it better are we together. I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. And the question to Maarten: Maarten, can you please elaborate on the role of the GAC liaison, its influence, and why it cannot be removed by a vote like other liaisons?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Who wants to remove the governance from the ICANN system? Anyway, just a very short follow-up to what Göran said, I think the question was really good. And you will see that in many discussions about this you are this week exploring or next week when ICANN73 actually officially

takes place we are exploring how do we bridge that gap from the policy recommendation, the review recommendation toward effectual implementation as well? Because once a decision is taken, then to really get it going is also a matter of interpretation and action. And we see improvement opportunities, and it is very clearly on the agenda of ICANN73 as well.

As for the GAC and its special place, we are blessed—and I'm saying this but I know I'm no the only one who feels like this—we are blessed with having more than 70 governments being committed to participate in the ICANN system and lending their voice and their advice on what they think is in the public interest from their individual perspective.

The GAC is a unique body that consists of different countries with limited ability to negotiate with each other or to come up with a conclusion. It's really about coming with good and solid advice. If the GAC thinks something is important, it probably is because the GAC does represent the diversity of governments around the world as well.

So I think when going through the IANA transition more than five years ago now, one of the conditions was that we wouldn't be subject to one government. We're not. Nevertheless, governments lending their voice and giving their advice helps us to steer in a way that is truly making sure that we fulfill our mission [with] taking that into account.

Now the fact that they have, if there is a GAC consensus advice as they say—which is an advice that is carried by the full GAC overall—in that case we need to have more than half of the Board, truly a supermajority

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of the Board, to disagree with such an advice. And we would not do that lightly. And if you consider that we do our work in the landscape in which governments are really stakeholders too, I think you may appreciate that that has merits. So I hope that helps.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten. There is a question from Pavel Farhan. What is the most significant challenge to ICANN's multistakeholder model in the post-pandemic era? Göran, would you like to…?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Let me take that first and let Göran. The most challenging thing is now what we've done all the time, what we've done for the earlier years, what we've done since we couldn't meet anymore and have done so virtually is to optimize our way of interacting.

I think what we will find is going back toward more face-to-face initially we have to do that in a way where we call the so-called hybrid meetings where we have people sitting in the room and people online. And how to get the best out of that with people all over the world in different time zones as well as in the same room where they can benefit from the richer communications interactions of [presence] will be a challenge and a challenge we shouldn't take lightly.

I believe we will get there if we understand and respect this challenge and actually are willing to show the same flexibility and adaptability that we've shown when we went into the virtual space to do our

meetings. But it's not trivial, and I think we will need to learn step-by-step. Göran, as you're facilitating and preparing with the organization on the first hybrid meetings, I'm sure you have a lot to add.

GÖRAN MARBY: I think that the major challenge after COVID, I think that first of all many times people expect that there will be less interest in ICANN. I have seen that the interest has increased over the years and new people are coming in. And I think that with the current discussions about the Internet and the content of Internet, etc., people seem to come in. And I think that one of the biggest challenges for us is always diversity. To have people with different backgrounds, different opinions, different everything to come in so they can sit at the table. And for us to make sure that not only the ones who shout the hardest and have been there the longest are the ones who speak and to create this environment for it. This is something we spend an enormous amount of time on in ICANN Org and also together with the Board. And every year when they have new goals, there's something about engagement with he community. So ask me the same question next year again, and then you can tell me if I'm succeeding or not because your input is valid.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. We have 10 minutes to go and there are a couple of questions left. So the question from Nojus to CEO and the Board chair: Would you have any mechanisms to have youth Board member at ICANN Board to ensure representation and engagement of youth voices

and expertise in DNS ecosystem, especially that youth are the most prominent group online? Would you like to start, Göran?

GÖRAN MARBY: Can I start? I think that the Board is actually the wrong place for you for old or young because, as Maarten has told you about before, that's not where the decision-making happens. That is in the working groups, the study groups, the PDPs, the review work. That's where the decisions are made. And so you have to think about ICANN a little bit like a reverse pyramid in that sense. It's the bottom-up process. If you want to be participating in the decision-making in ICANN, that's where you go. You don't go to the Board.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Yes, I agree in that with one perspective. And of course, what you see is that [age] and how the Internet will be used in the future is key, and that needs to come bottom-up. The good news is that the people on the Board do understand that this aspect is really relevant, but all we can do is make sure that we have the best possible unique addressing system that facilitates this Internet to function and for anybody to do its work on it and benefit from that.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you. The next question is Allan Magezi. How has ICANN extended efforts to bring onboard the few countries that don't believe in the ICANN model?

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GÖRAN MARBY: There's always a fundamental question: Do you go to try to make a change, or do you stay to make a point? And we actually do have meetings with countries around the world that don't always appreciate how the multistakeholder model works or sometimes not even the Internet itself. And we're often [helped by] the citizens in those countries because citizens like to be online to share information. [inaudible] the country to a very large extent if it decides so could set the parameters for the uses of Internet within their country. ICANN can do nothing about it. We have nothing to do with content. We have no opinions about it because we're a nonpolitical organization.

But we do spend time with countries who don't appreciate the model. And there have been occasions, to be honest, where we have gone in and talked about how this model works and we worked out of there, and those countries have then stopped criticizing us. So we think it has helped. But as I often say, the countries who are criticizing the Internet, the ICANN model are often countries that are criticizing in many other things. The Internet is just a small portion of their general views about things. I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. Maarten, would you like to add?

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MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: A very little bit. What we see is that the number of countries that engage is growing. And at least we see also a reflection of the efforts of the organization there and of the community in reaching out and getting more people buying into working with us. At the same time, yes, we have no rights to tell any government what to do, nor do we pretend that, nor do we want that. We just want to provide the best possible Internet for the world.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you. And we will take the last question and sum up this session. The question is Mouloud Khelif. How do ICANN Board and ICANN Org anticipate the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies, such as quantum computing, advanced [AI], or the so-called Metaverse?

GÖRAN MARBY: Beautiful. Shall I start and you can?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Please, please.

GÖRAN MARBY: This is a very good question. I've been doing Internet stuff for 30 years, and there have always been someone who told me that they've come up with something that is going to be not based on the parameters with the IP addresses, the IP numbers, and the domain names that we provide but it's going to do something else. And I think I said this in the

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beginning, the whole system with ICANN and I also mentioned ISOC and everybody else is about to have one interoperable system for you to decide upon what to do with it. And anyone who wants to provide something outside of that, I don't think they produce a value, to be honest.

Because when you go online, if you sell something, you want to buy a domain name and you put your name in there. You want to reach the whole world, not a million or two. Because it's actually not beneficial for you. If you have a voice, you want to share it with everybody. So despite what many say, despite what many say to you, I don't always believe in hypes.

When it comes to—and you know Metaverse is one company, but there are other ones [that there will be]. One thing that I am learning a lot is about privacy. A lot of [inaudible] around the world is more and more concerned about the privacy, especially when you go into platforms. The Internet itself, the way we do things is different from when you walk into someone else's computer, which is like a Metaverse or something.

And I don't want to say that nothing is bad because one of the fantastic things [inaudible] is that the Internet and the platforms and everything else, one thing that is so amazing with it is it wasn't done by a committee. The Internet is the fastest growing type of [inaudible] in world history, and it was all by you guys because you decided what you wanted on the Internet. You decided you wanted to go on the Internet. I lived happily for 30 years of my life before Internet was even around. I

don't know how I survived, but apparently Internet was something we needed.

And as long as [each user] has a choice through the DNS, through what we do, you can choose to go into one of those metaverses or universes or whatever it's called or choose to use that, I'm going to be happy. If that choice disappeared for you guys, then I think we failed. So that answer is actually it's up to you because you are the ones who decide how your Internet will look like in the future.

But then again, I'm old enough to know that a lot of hypes have been around and not everything has happened. And maybe because I'm Swedish and slow, it takes a while for me to get around to new technologies.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Yeah and changing insights as well over time. The realization that this one route that we are serving is just the very biggest one. And because it's so big it attracts more and it becomes so important. But new technologies will continue to disrupt. The impact of AI, I have ideas and you may have others. And we both may be right or wrong, so it's important to keep track of that as well.

I just wanted to point out that on quantum computing, actually Göran's office has produce a think piece that thinks ahead indeed on the impact it may have over decades. And that is one of the ways we follow it. But also other people in the Internet domain continue to write their [full] pieces on where it goes in the future. I recently saw a piece by one of

the tech researchers from APNIC on the role of the DNS being so crucial, becoming so crucial and even more central in the world of mobile. So all these things are crucial to pick.

For us to make sure that we at least keep abreast of it and look at those risks there are two things. One is that we have created over the years a very, I would say, mature risk culture. Risk awareness, [picking] new signals, seeing what it means and how it may affect our ability to deliver on our mission. That's one thing.

The other thing on the longer term is that ICANN has become increasingly strategic and the strategic plan is truly guiding us as a Board but also the community and the organization in its orientation and what we need to be aware of and which areas. If there are areas that come up new and are not mentioned in the strategic plan yet, then each year there's a new opportunity to integrate that. So we stay ahead of the curve and continue to do the best we can in a world that is by definition uncertain and changing faster and faster.

So thank you very much for the very interesting questions overall and for your excellent facilitation, Siranush. I see it's the top of the hour.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Maarten. Indeed, it's the top of the hour. I just would like to conclude and welcome again our Fellows and NextGen participants. ICANN really values and appreciates you participation and engagement, and we all are here to support you in your journey.

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Just to make a note that we have about 26 complete newcomers to ICANN, and they are taking their first Fellowship for this virtual meeting. So this is hard, but this is important engagement. So we are looking forward for your further engagement.

In just 30 seconds, Göran and Maarten, your last probably call to action and your word to Fellows and NextGeners.

GÖRAN MARBY: Maarten first.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Well, again, as I said, thank you for being here. We need you. And we need to continue to bring in new people. And it's really great to see the diversity this year. It's not only about diversity but also about inclusion. But to include you, you need to speak up, and we are truly inviting you to do so.

You see some of the older gentlemen here as well like Alberto and Alfredo. It's many people within the ICANN system that are also willing to take your hand and work with you. And Siranush and her team are an excellent place to bring you forward in all this and show you a feasible way that may help you to actually find your passion as Göran mentioned and actually know how to best engage. You are truly invited to do so, and I do hope to at a future opportunity shake your hand and recognize you and it was good to see you there and thank you for your excellent questions.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you. Göran, please?

GÖRAN MARBY: Yeah, what do I say above that? Thank you, Maarten. I agree with everything you say. Maybe just this. What we do is serious business, but we don't have to be serious all the time. This is about communication and talking to people. And you will meet people from many different cultures and different backgrounds and they behave differently. Some are very strong, some are softspoken. So I usually recommend listen a lot and speak to people. Because one of the amazing things with ICANN is that you actually have an ability to meet people that you've never met in your life. So don't take everything so seriously.

Also, think about the person who talks to me right now might not have the English language or the French language or whatever language as a first, but you learn so much not only about ICANN but about the world by talking to people. Take that opportunity in ICANN, and that will give you a little bit more than just the acronyms. So don't forget to have fun.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. And with that, I also would like to thank our tech support team and our interpreters for the amazing work. Wish us good luck for ICANN73. And with that, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much.

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