

**Transcription ICANN London
Discussion with the CEO
Sunday 22 June 2014**

Note: The following is the output of transcribing from an audio. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases it is incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages or transcription errors. It is posted as an aid to understanding the proceedings at the meeting, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

On page: <http://gnso.icann.org/en/calendar/#jun>

The recordings and transcriptions of the calls are posted on the GNSO Master Calendar page

Jonathan Robinson: So the next session is our weekend session discussion with ICANN CEO Fadi Chehadé. Welcome, again, Fadi. Welcome to the GNSO. Welcome to our weekend sessions. It's great to have you here and it's very timely, as you've seen, that you follow on from the discussions with Theresa.

We prepared, to some extent, for this session. I sent you a little briefing note. I'm sorry the notes were a little course; I just had to bash something out on the back of our discussions yesterday. But I hope that gave you a feel for some areas we could discuss. It's not entirely prescriptive. If there's something you feel you'd like to cover and it's important to us but there you have it.

We've got half an hour with you so welcome and we look forward to talking with you. Okay I've just dropped you. It would be great to hear, I mean, I'm not sure if you have notes in front of you of those three...

Fadi Chehadé: I don't because...

Jonathan Robinson: Okay.

Fadi Chehadé: ...I did not catch up with emails...

((Crosstalk))

Jonathan Robinson: Okay let me give you a...

Fadi Chehadé: But please, by all means, let's make this a dialogue, I mean, if you have questions let's...

((Crosstalk))

Jonathan Robinson: Let me give you - I'll give you the three topics we put across to you. I don't think any of them will come as complete surprise to you. Clearly we've just talked with Theresa through the really - three key areas of responsibility for her which is the transition, the accountability track and in particular the interrelationship and codependency of those two and of course some sense that some of the work from the strategy panels might be left hanging and how that interrelates. We've been through that and I wanted you to know we've done that.

And then we picked up on another few threads yesterday which is really one which won't come as a surprise to you. And it's this pervasive workload and the pressure being put on the community by this constant series of apparent initiatives and the concern about what that ultimately means for the effective functioning of our sort of multistakeholder model. So that was one of the three points.

The second was one on organizational performance and operational excellence and just understanding some concerns that are bubbling under around that.

And then the third was, in a sense, a more - we may get to this but this is - and we could possibly pick this up offline as well about a letter that - I'm not 100% clear - it was raised about a letter that's been written to a dispute

resolution provider. And we - and if you haven't been briefed on that we can come back on that.

So those are really the - if you're picking up on Theresa's things which we've dealt with and you've heard and then going into these two key topics on community pressure and organizational performance, operational (excellence).

Fadi Chehadé: Okay well, let me start then with the community pressure and the work load. I think the leaders of the community have been communicating with me in the last few months on the rising level of workloads that we are all feeling and that we need to step back a little bit and look at that together.

I met with the SO AC and SG leaders or representatives at a dinner two nights ago and it was actually the - almost the entire subject of our dinner, the amount of work and workload we're all feeling.

We agreed that we will hold a full weekend workshop to just discuss that; to figure out how we're going to modulate the work. So I'm extremely committed to us stepping back and figuring out together how do we modulate the work.

I can tell you right now - and, again, we are going to get together and I think we were unanimously in agreement we should do that as soon as we can find a weekend away all of us. And I think it was Michele who invited us all to some part of Ireland to do that but we'll see where we end up.

I will share some thoughts with you about this matter ahead of our dialogue. The first is that we need to definitely treat this partly as a supply chain problem. In other words, we have a part of the supply chain that is producing a lot of work. And there's a part of the supply chain that is simply not synchronized to consume all that work and then vice versa as well.

And there are ways, having come from the supply chain background myself, there are ways to fix that that entail either adding capacity at different parts of the supply chain, so meaning looking at how our capacity is to consume work. It could be that we slow down and modulate certain things; it could be a prioritization effort. So there's a number of things we need to do to figure out what to do as more and more work gets piled.

Secondly, there may be a need for organizational activities on all sides to deal with what we call triage of issues. So when a new comment is being requested or a new issue is on the table how is it being triaged, let's say, within the GNSO. What is the process?

And once it's triaged how it is being managed within the community. How do we have a growing network of experts to deal with various issues? Do we have that? Is it visible? I don't know. So these are questions we just need to get into.

And the third area is support. What do we need to do to support you better? More? So that you can consume these things in a different way. I am certain there are many, many ways we can improve on that as ICANN staff and we need to invest in that. We need to put time in that and effort in that.

So these are - I'm just throwing some ideas but there are other things I'm sure during the weekend that we will figure out and then come back and share with the whole community, say, what do you think these ways we can improve this.

But I am very keenly aware that we have an issue. And the issue has to do also with the - it has some external factors cause this issue. I mean, I did not have the USD transition on my plan. We have the USD transition now on our plan. So we have to figure out what that means.

Sometimes it's internal things within the ICANN community that we can do better (unintelligible). So this is work to be done. And if we don't do it well I think the multistakeholder model will not hold, you know, we need to make sure that as a result of this pressure to get things done we don't end up overloading a part of the model so much so that things start becoming too centralized and we don't want that to happen.

So the short answer is I don't have an answer but that I'm fully aware this is an issue. And I invite us together to work so that we can find solutions not in the next years but frankly in the next weeks because this is starting to become problematic.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, Fadi. I wonder if we should take some discussion or comment so you hear it first hand from a couple people in and around this subject and then we can - because I know you've heard, as you said, many things on Friday. But I'm sure there's others in the room who would like to offer something.

So, Avri.

Avri Doria: Thank you, Fadi. Thanks, Jonathan. I actually am concerned about the overworked issue. I guess I find myself sometimes in a minority on that issue. and I think we're talking about a symptom. I don't think - I personally don't think when I look around at the number of people that are involved with ICANN and the number of work that it is necessarily the community's being overworked because it's very few people that decide that doing the work is worth their time, is worth their while.

You hear very often discussions of discouragement of well what difference does it make if we work? You know, we do all this work and we're not sure that it bears fruit.

We had a meeting with civil society earlier this week, I don't know if you heard about it, where people were asking, why should we get involved? What can we achieve here? Tell us what you've achieved. Show us two or three things where civil society or business or whomever has had a victory, has actually changed the course.

And we go, well, it would be worse if we weren't here or well there was this little thing that we managed to change. So in the overwork I think you can throw a lot of solutions and things but if you are just treating a symptom the overwork - staff has been added; we have more and more great staff helping.

What's happening is that they're doing more of the work because - and so I would just caution in looking at this that you don't just work on the symptom but you actually look at the causes. And realize how many people are involved and how little - how few of them are actually doing the work. Thanks.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, Avri. Would you like to comment at all, Fadi? Would anyone else like to add anything to this? I think that's a unique perspective so it adds real value to the comments. So thanks, Avri. And go ahead, Marilyn.

Marilyn Cade: Thanks. I made a comment - my name is Marilyn Cade. I made a comment yesterday in a different - in this room but in a different meeting that I'm not actually sure myself that it is burnout; it may be fatigue. But I think we also have to accept the fact that our role has significantly expanded beyond where many of us envisioned it would be 15 years ago.

At the same time I think we are all struggling with too many moving pieces at the same time. And so I welcome the idea that we figure out what we can prioritize and what we can - what we have to do triage on.

But I think there are some things that could have been done differently, that would not have led to the community feeling that they were asking constantly for readjustment of activities that had already been launched.

And that I think will also be very helpful to all of us as we kind of get back on the same page of what we absolutely have to do, what we can postpone slightly, what we can extend slightly.

And I do think there are some things that we can extend. But we haven't come to agreement about what that is. So we're actually spending a lot of time debating what we can extend, what we can propose, what is imperative. And I think that's also contributing to the frustration and the fatigue.

But I want to make a comment about the assumption that just having a lot of new people automatically means a lot of new informed workers. It takes a while to understand the deep dive that you have to engage in to do informed responsible policymaking.

And I think we may be confusing awareness about ICANN and understanding about what ICANN is with the capability to really engage deeply in informed responsible policymaking standard-setting, which is our role.

And maybe that's the other part of the frustration that you're hearing that we as the community are seeing a lot of resources being deployed in certain ways but we're not necessarily seeing always how those resources are actually making our job a lot easier, to help us do a lot more, to help us bring those new players in and help them feel like the deep sea divers they need to become.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks. We've got a queue forming. I'll just make a note that in many ways Marilyn's point touches not only on what we've been talking about here which is this - the fatigue, workload, direction of work, it also touches on the sort of operational excellence question. In other words, if ICANN's readiness or ability or capacity to support so it's both ways. It's a community and a ICANN performance issue.

And that's not to in any way - it isn't a backhanded attempt to undermine some of the excellent support we do get from staff but it's just recognizing that as any organization, as you well know, Fadi, expands its capacity to do good work everywhere can be challenged. And so that's just a comment that Marilyn's point links to the second of our two points. So that's fine that we go through both of them.

We've got James who's patiently waited and then we'll come back to Anne.

James Bladel: Thanks, Jonathan. Hi, Fadi. So I'll just echo several of the statements that have already been made including Avri's. You know, it's not just non commercial participants; I know a lot of registrars that we try to coax and recruit to get involved and other contracted parties as well. We have to continuously reinforce the benefit of participation and show them a straight line between their efforts in this space and show it leading to results.

I'm encouraged to hear that you're looking at this as a capacity problem. I've often believed that our ability to create work far outstrips our ability to actually produce the results and it's just - it's not scaling, I think is the answer.

I read somewhere that - is it official now? Is London the largest ICANN meeting with almost 3000 - yeah, 3000 attendees. It's not showing - it's not translating into increased participation in the volunteer effort. So maybe the first step is to look at not just the capacity but the uneven distribution of attention and interest where we can continuously see larger and larger attendance numbers but they're not being integrated into the volunteer structures.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, James. And that's a sort of salient that one of your - well that Mikey, who was a recently departed colleague in all of this area, had very strong views on - well it depends on your understanding of the meaning - who's no longer working with us in the...

((Crosstalk))

Jonathan Robinson: ...is in the prairie. Yes, Anne, go ahead.

Anne Aikman-Scalese: Yes, Anne Aikman-Scalese with Lewis Roca Rothgerber and I'm a member of the Intellectual Property Constituency. I wanted to ask Fadi about a comment that you made with respect to capacity to produce work. And I thought I heard the word "exploring alternatives with respect to privatization." I heard the word "privatization." Oh prioritization, okay, sorry, my mistake entirely.

Fadi Chehadé: That would have been a word that should worry you. I'm sorry, my - I may have misspoke as well but, no, I did not use the word "privatization" no. Sorry, please, Keith.

Jonathan Robinson: Keith, go ahead.

Keith Drasek: Okay, thank you Jonathan. Keith Drasek, VeriSign and Registry Stakeholder Group Chair. Fadi, again, I said this the other night but thank you for your recommendation for a sort of a working session of the community leaders with ICANN senior staff to try to work through this issue to identify opportunities for whether it's prioritization or, you know, better structures or various changes. I think that's a very positive recommendation and I look forward to participating.

On the topic of supply chain management or supply chain, sort of the analogy, I just want to caution that the, you know, if you look at a supply chain you're looking at producers and consumers. And I think as we think about this process it's really important to understand and to recognize, frankly, that ICANN is not the producer; that staff is not the producer and the community is not the consumer.

That we the community are really ought to be and maybe we need to take a stronger role in doing this, but the community really needs to be the producers of the work - of prioritizing the work, identifying what the workload ought to be and how we approach it. And that ICANN's role, in my view, is coordinator and facilitator of that work.

So as we - if we were to use the analogy of the supply chain I think we need to be very cautious about the direction or the flow of that supply chain.
Thanks.

Fadi Chehadé: So first I would like to thank Avri and James for the comments they made because they're spot on. This is the kind of thoughtful analysis we need to go through when we get together with the leaders to figure out how we can improve things and that we should not just go for the symptom; we should get a little deeper than that. So I thank you for the good input on that.

I'm deep into the supply chain so I just want to make a comment. All supply chains have producers and consumers but new supply chains, dynamic supply chains, there is no such thing; we all work together. In fact the genius of Cisco in how they reinvented their supply chain is in making sure that they and the people who make their routers, for example, were interchangeably consumers and producers of ideas. This is the invention of John Chambers of out-tasking versus outsourcing.

So what we need to do here is to get ahead of ourselves and start thinking what should the staff be doing and what should the community be doing? I think we often confuse the staff with the congressional staff. Do you think ICANN management and staff should be more like the congressional staff in a US governor's model? Or should they be more like the executive staff that Mr. Obama manages? Which is it? What do you think? Which is it? Sorry?

Man: (Unintelligible).

Fadi Chehadé: So in the US we have three house or three different parts of the government that enable the government; we have the executive run by Obama; we have the judiciary and you have obviously the legislative which is the congress. In congress there are congressional staffers.

In a way you make policy. You are the legislative part of the ICANN. Is ICANN staff like the congressional staff or you think ICANN staff is more like the executive? What do you think, Avri? You are making a face at me.

Avri Doria: I was thinking at different parts of the staff you would have different roles.

Fadi Chehadé: Exactly, thank you. So the answer to this is both. Now if it is both do we recognize who's which? Because if we don't then every time the executives do something we say, "That's not bottom up." But it's their job to perform the policy. This is the back to the what is implementation, what is policy.

But I want to point out that not everything staff does needs to be bottom up. If it is we won't get far. How many of you participate in picking the coffee I have in our cafeteria? Nobody. How many of you decide which airline I get into when I go from Point A to Point B? You don't.

So we can start ferreting through what decisions we need to make versus what decisions the community should make. But I would like us to at least recognize, which we haven't before, that there are two different types of decisions that need to be made. And that with the staff of 250 people there are some implementation calls that need to be made so that we can get the work done.

Now, we have not talked about this nor have we clarified that line. Part of this weekend discussion has to be a little bit on that. And I don't know the answer. I'm - we need to come up with the answer together. But we can't continue fighting over what is bottom up, what needs to be executed on every decision; rather we should be clear what things can staff execute because

they're executing on policy that came from the community, and what things need to be done to support the policymaking process that the community needs to make. That distinction is not clear today.

And then the second point I wanted to make is one you made, Jonathan, at dinner, which I'm going to also put on the table. It is time we reevaluate the trust between you and the staff. There are major issues with that. Someone at dinner called it the original sin because I was saying, "When did this start?" When did we start really mistrusting each other?

And they said this is the original sin of ICANN. It's the time way before anybody and it's still there that there is just this mistrust. This mistrust is not going to get us far. And I've seen it over the last two years here at ICANN. We continue - everything is mistrusted.

So for example, on the third issue you brought up, which I presume is related to the dotAfrica thing. When you - and, Brett, others who are lawyers here should tell me, I'm not a lawyer, but when you find something with any process like this you always - we always at ICANN, I'm sure many lawyers do the same - ask the court to expedite things that we don't want to sit on this for the next five years.

Immediately it's construed as potentially oh my God, ICANN is doing some special favors for dotAfrica. And this is lack of trust. This is absolutely a product of the lack of trust.

So we need to talk about this. And we can keep hiding it under the table and dealing with it and having it appear in all kinds of different ways but we have to deal with it. And I'm not asking for all of us to stand up and sing Kumbaya and agree that we're all friends and everything. No, but let's establish mechanisms so we ensure that we rebuild the trust and it's incumbent upon us leaders to do that together. We have to. We cannot continue this way.

So I invite us during this weekend to make that a key part of our discussion. How do we build measures of rebuilding trust between us so that we don't continue with every move being scrutinized frankly like this one in the wrong way? Right?

We didn't send any special letters to the court or call anybody and say expedite anything. Of course we wouldn't do that. Why would we do that for anyone? We filed a normal filing that simply says please expedite this matter like we do on every matter before that. Please.

Anne Aikman-Scalese: Anne Aikman-Scalese again, for the transcript. I think you asked an excellent question when you asked whether staff is like congressional staff or staff of the executive branch. And I think it's a question that - at least on our meeting with the two members of the Board of Director that occurred - Board of Directors that occurred just before this meeting, is it's a pivotal type question especially now with transition and accountability being so important.

Because so many of the comments in our meeting that occurred before the GNSO meeting started related to a frustration with decisions being made top down. Okay that's what happens in the executive branch of the US government by way of analogy. And you have more like a CEO type of function.

And everyone - every comment I ever hear is that you're a fantastic CEO; that's what I hear. Okay? So then we look at representative governments as an analogy, we look at electoral processes, we look at bottom up and that is more analogous to an elected representative.

And I keep hearing the community way, we want Fadi to be our elected representative, even though you're not, and we want our staff to be representative of what the SOs and ACs are developing in their work and what they want to input to that. So there has to be more of a balancing of the type of role so that it is more representative than CEO. Thank you.

Marilyn Cade: My name is Marilyn Cade. And I'm going to open my comments by saying I'm very unable to accept or support the idea that ICANN in any way has an organizational or management structure that is akin to any executive, legislative or judicial branch of any government including the one in the country where I hold a passport.

I think ICANN is actually much more of an NGO and that is actually the gap that we're experiencing. Because if you perceive ICANN in any way as being a corporation then I think we're missing the whole point of why we created ICANN and what it is supposed to do.

So it isn't easy to use an analogy that comes from a government or comes from a business even if it's a not for profit business because the product we create is this, and this is product enables other decisions and buy-in and support for the policies or the standards or the activities.

So perhaps that's more of the gap that we have between some of us in the community who come with a vision of a not for profit organization that happens to be called a not for profit corporation. But we don't see it as a business in any way. And we think it comes with a responsibility to act in the public interest in the decision that it makes and takes.

Having said that, I'm going to say that I in fact would object very sharply to the idea that that kind of discussion, closing that gap, could take place in a weekend session with a few people who should be talking about prioritization of work. Because this gap, closing this gap, is the discussion we need to have in a much larger room.

We used to open every ICANN meeting with a town hall and the Board and the staff set in the room. The community chaired the meeting and we went to different microphones and talked about the concerns and priorities that we

had. And that was a kind of a - it wasn't - we had a public forum, but this was a town hall.

And I'm not proposing we go back to that but I am thinking that we at least need to have an understanding among the community of what kind of animal this is or what kind of spaceship this is because I think in fact it is that gap.

And if we think it's an executive, you know, the - the executives make decisions, legislative branches make policy and then there's a bunch of organizations and agencies that implement the policy. I don't think we're - I don't think we're all on the same page about the vision of the organization.

Fadi Chehadé: If I may, Jonathan? This is precisely the point; we're not on the same page. So what we need to do is get on the same page. And whatever process we agree to, by all means. But we can't continue like this. For example, you make the statement you can't accept it; how involved are you in deciding how we're deploying our support structure for the new registries? You're not. But you expect the service.

You expect us to pick up the phone, respond to people, have a CRM system, have processes for support and servicing, have 24/5 available, all these decisions who's making them? But you expect the service. So somebody's got to do it.

So you say we're not like a corporation, we're not like a government, we're some new different animal. Great, let's figure it out because ICANN operations has changed. We have a lot to deliver.

And I will remind all of us when I arrived all of you asked me to be CEO. Digital (unintelligible) does anybody remember that when I arrived? We couldn't even pick how we were going to start the process. Here around this table you sat and told me take hold of this, it's a mess. And we have. And we didn't - we agreed that this is the executive charge.

So I think, Marilyn, what is not clear is that ICANN has grown as a community, not just as a staff. And we need to sit down and have this discussion. And you are right, this discussion cannot happen just in the weekend; you are absolutely right. We should debate it and bring it up because it helps a little bit the process.

But this discussion should happen in the ICANN accountability track because part of the accountability track, in my opinion, has to deal with the constitution of ICANN and the roles and responsibilities we all play. And we need to figure this out together.

But the world is watching us to figure this out and I hope, as much as I'm determined that you're determined, that we put our hands together and figure this out for the future. It's the time to do it.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, Fadi. Very helpful to highlight the significant change in operational responsibility as well as organizational and other changes. Thomas, you're next.

Thomas Rickert: Yeah, this is Thomas Rickert for the record. Fadi, you mentioned that there is a fundamental trust issue between staff and the community. And I think this has a history. Your predecessor was very outspoken about policymaking being bottom up and staff being managed top down. And I think that something that many of us well remember.

I think things have improved significantly and I think there's nobody in this room that would disagree with this. But I think that the issue that we're still struggling with is what is something that a CEO needs to manage top down? And there are certainly areas where that needs to happen. And I'm sure that nobody wants to book your flight as a community effort. I think you wouldn't be getting anywhere on time. Nor do we want to manage payroll and stuff like that.

But there is a separation between the function that you perform and the relationship to the community. And this, I think starts with you, the GNSO Council has requested a couple months back that we would like to be part of the review that is being performed for your role. And I think we haven't received an affirmative response for that.

((Crosstalk))

Fadi Chehadé: Well I said last time that I'm very happy about that. But from my perspective if I don't hear from you formally and informally through these reviews I can't be better for you. I'm here to serve you so by all means I said last time, and I - on the record again, I'm very happy with the proposal from the GNSO which I think Avri and others had proposed initially. I'm very happy with it. And it heartens me actually because it means we have a relationship and I need to hear from you.

I do 360 reviews with my own kids around dinner table and it's not easy, believe me. We call it the moment of truth. We do it once a year. And it's healthy; it's healthy for your kids to tell you also. But I'm not - I mention my family example. Here we're all in this together; we're in this vote together. We have to be a team so by all means.

On your earlier point about Rod, let me be very clear; Rod had a different style from mine. When I arrived my staff was not allowed to talk to the Board - was not allowed to talk to many of them - they were not allowed. If they were found to be talking to somebody on the Board they were in deep trouble. I changed that on the first hour I was at ICANN because I knew there was a huge trust issue between the Board, between the staff, between the community. This is - it's not a way for us to advance.

So please, I know there may be history. I don't know it. I'm sure people here can tell me all the original sin and that caused all of this over the years. But when I arrived there was not a very healthy situation.

And it - there's still some remnants of that. But with the leadership you have now all of you, and with my commitment to fix this trust thing. Let's put our hands together and - I'm not saying, again, I'm not being silly here or naïve. There's going to have to be checks and balances; it's our job to do that as leaders. But let's at least start by putting the mechanisms in place to do that.

Thomas Rickert: I'd like to conclude by saying that I think at the working group level, at the support level for the GNSO, there is an excellent working relationship between staff and the community. But there are certain points where I think there is a serious disconnect and where the perception on our side is that there must be something in the background that we don't understand.

You know, we heard a couple of example earlier made by Chuck and made by Milton where public comment has not been adequately reflected in the response that we got from ICANN. And the question is where does that come from?

And I think that can hopefully be mended by more transparency. And I'm not one of those that - one of those that say immediately that this is being managed top down. But I also want to send the clear message that I think the community perceives that the staff is not acting in the best interest of the community or at the - at the service of the community in certain instances. So I think there is a lack of accountability and maybe transparency at that point.

Fadi Chehadé: I must answer this because if you ask yourself if this staff is not to quote you working in the best interest of the community, whose best interest are they then really working for? That's the question. Because if there isn't an answer to this question then we should go back to the assumption that we're not doing that. Who could we be working for?

Thomas Rickert: I was talking about the perception. You know, I guess Chuck, who has made his comments I think before you entered the room as well as Milton, gave some examples of where this disconnect is. And the question that I'm posing is, "where does that come from?" and that gives raise...

Fadi Chehadé: So where do you think that comes from? Does it come from some nefarious person hiding in the forest telling us what to do? I mean, where would it come from? Who would we be working for that would allow us to do this? Snowden? Somebody? No...

Chuck Gomes: The bylaws...

Fadi Chehadé: Yeah.

Chuck Gomes: ...require you to be accountable to the corporation, not the community.

Fadi Chehadé: Yeah but then answer the question, who do you think we are working for then?

Man: The corporation.

((Crosstalk))

Fadi Chehadé: Which corporation?

Chuck Gomes: ICANN the corporation.

Fadi Chehadé: Okay.

Chuck Gomes: You've heard me say this before, this isn't new. And many of the public comments into - with regard to the issues we've been talking about, with

regard to accountability and the IANA transition, have said the same thing.
It's not just coming from me. You are accountable, your first priority...

Fadi Chehadé: Yeah.

Cg : ...is to the corporation, not to the community.

Fadi Chehadé: Well that may be the case for you at VeriSign but at ICANN it's not the case. You work for a corporation and you are paid by them. We work for you. So if you feel we work for somebody other than you then tell us whom. Who is the corporation that you think I'm working for? We need clarity on this because this is a big accusation. You do not say that we are working for somebody other than the community. Who is that? And who do I answer to but you?

Jonathan Robinson: This is a challenging discussion to manage, I've got people who have been very patiently in the queue. I'm conscious of your time as well, Fadi, but I don't want to cut short something. So the queue we've got is (Anton) - who's...

Arthur Zonnenberg: My name is (Arthur).

Jonathan Robinson: (Arthur), sorry,

Arthur Zonnenberg: Yeah, my name is Arthur Zonnenberg for (unintelligible), one of the Dutch registrars now getting more involved. As time progresses, you will see more and more members joining the GNSO and joining other stakeholder groups.

I was triggered by Fadi talking about trust. I think the mistrust between ICANN staff and stakeholders is also maybe a projection of the fear of the other stakeholder groups or indeed of countries in between one another.

There is a lot of mistrust between governments and businesses in the GNSO. There is a lot of mistrust between businesses and nonprofits or law

enforcement stakeholders. As I'm here on this meeting and spending my time I'm trying not to get too bogged down by policy but I'm just trying to spend my time talking to GAC members, talking to law enforcement members because what they are proposing are old-fashioned authoritarian models where we propose a multistakeholder model.

Now you guys know this; you know that we are about the multistakeholder model, we're about consensus. But if you truly feel that way, if you truly think that way then there is really - it is really a black-and-white proposition. Either you propagate the multistakeholder model and talk to other persons about what is effective and is not effective and what is effective is consensus; what is not effective is old-fashioned authority or you don't.

So it's upon us, the members of this room, not just the people over there because they are working their socks off but to reduce the level of mistrust in the public comments, to reduce the level of mistrust from governments, from any stakeholder group does not understand the Internet.

Please engage with them instead of blaming or telling ICANN that they're only responsible to the corporation. In the end it's about the people. It's about all of us. And it's also about the future of the Internet and the future of this entire endeavor. Because if this fails the consequences will be compartmentalization, as I'm sure you know. So I just went to make that's completely clear to all.

Jonathan Robinson: Thank you, Arthur. It's great to have you here and it's great to have a new voice at the microphone, relatively new voice making contributions. We've got John and Phil next up.

John Berard: Thank you Jonathan. Good morning Fadi. John Berard from the Business Constituency. When you are out and about globally on behalf of ICANN one of the points of differentiation, one of the strengths that you use to leverage

decisions in ways that you on behalf of ICANN think best, is the strength of the multistakeholder, bottom-up, consensus driven decision-making process.

But I think you've heard here today is evidence that that process is being hollowed out. And as you allow that to continue - and I use that phrase very specifically - as you allow that to continue you undercut your ability to negotiate from strength on a global level.

And so why do I say, "When you allow that to happen," because we've heard a lot even this morning about the effective externalities on the workload at ICANN. And we are aware of the Internet governance adventures that began with NETmundial. We are certainly aware of the IANA stewardship transition responsibility that ICANN has taken on.

And whatever we individually might think of those assignments that we have agreed to, that you have agreed to on our behalf, I'm curious, is there anything that you've ever said "no" to?

Fadi Chehadé: I said no to my own feelings of sometimes saying certain things. And I'll keep it this way.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, Fadi. Can you indulge us for another couple of minutes? Okay, Philip Corwin at the microphone.

Philip Corwin: Yes good morning. Philip Corwin, member of the Business Constituency, speaking solely in a personal capacity and very extemporaneously in response to this dialogue. And I want to start by observing I think everyone in this room and in the broader ICANN community is very dedicated to the ideal of ICANN and wants to see it remain independent as a continuously improving organization; that's the spirit in which I make these comments.

Three quick comments. One, I don't think it's the precise analogy of ICANN to the US government. I have some familiarity, I've worked in Washington for 40

years. I spent the first six years of my career on the staff of the United States Senate. I've engaged with many rule-making processes at the executive branch under the US administrative Procedure Act. So I understand that process quite well.

In my own mind I believe that the proper role for ICANN staff and the policymaking role is to support the community because it's a bottom-up policymaking process. And I think - I don't know what's going to come out of this weekend discussion on how to deal with the workload but I think some ICANN staff support for the community in its policymaking role might be a good move.

But I think everyone should recognize that you might have staff supporting the community and developing policy, that the people they report to may not be entirely happy with and that's going to be a situation, that's going to be - how to deal with that is going to have to be addressed.

Second, I think part of the workload - the feeling that there's too much too fast may just be a function of the growing size of the organization. And it's not just ICANN, any organization that's filled with very intelligent and vicious people is going to be - have - you're going to have staff who want to accomplish things, who are going to show, I had a project and I brought it to fruition and my promotion and bonuses and all of that are going to be based on that. And they want to produce things and the community has to react to.

Finally on the trust issue, absolutely agree, we need to bridge that. That we just - as you walk in you heard other people questioning Theresa. There was nearly unanimous comment on the IANA accountability proposal that the scope was too narrow.

Every comment on that was the scope should not be predetermined. The community group should determine the scope. And to me personally, the

scope of the mission is much more important than the composition of the group that's going to address it.

And yet I think what we heard was that the scope, despite those comments from the community, the scope remains the same and is exactly that type of occurrence that undermines community trust in the process that they put a lot of hard work into engaging.

And so I hope those are constructive comments and we can all move forward to work this out to make ICANN a better organization. Thank you.

Jonathan Robinson: Thank you, Philip. It looks like the last word from you, Elisa...

Bret Fausett: Jonathan, I've been in the queue for a...

((Crosstalk))

Jonathan Robinson: Bret as well.

Elisa Cooper: Thank you. So I think I want to just make sure that we don't rehash the same stuff over and over again. And I don't want us to spend the entire meeting like, you know, complaining about the fact that the workload is so high and the participation is not great.

And I'm just wondering by a show of hands is there somebody here that doesn't think that there is an issue with workload? So, I mean, I'm just going to take from that we all know that there's a problem. I don't want us to spend the entire time.

I appreciate the opportunity that Fadi has given for the SO and AC leaders to meet on a weekend. And I encourage us to do that and to try to do that as soon as possible.

And if we all agree that there is a problem can we just say okay there's a problem, and let's focus on some of the more - and it's not at this isn't substantive; it is. But there's real work to be done and I want us to not spend the entire session focusing on the fact that, you know, there's too much to do and how are we going to do it all. Let's at least focus on the things that we have to do.

Jonathan Robinson: Thank you. And finally Bret.

Bret Fausett: Thank you. Fadi, there's an old saying in the United States that everyone hates congress but loves their own congressman. And I think ICANN staff is a little bit like that. If there's any distrust of ICANN staff there's great trust in the six people who work with the Council on a regular basis.

But, you know, as far as increasing the trust overall, I mean, one of my enduring frustrations with ICANN, and this is coming from the perspective of a new TLD applicant, and now a contracted party, is that so many of my communications with ICANN are anonymous.

When I open a customer service ticket, when I deal with ICANN through the GDD portal, they all come back unsigned. And I don't know if I'm dealing with someone who's very low or someone who's very high. I don't know when properly to escalate it because I'm not getting a satisfactory response. So I think one very simple thing ICANN can do is just sign the tickets.

I don't know that it's necessarily going to change the interactions but it's going to let me know who I'm dealing with.

Jonathan Robinson: Thanks, Bret. Fadi, would you like to...

((Crosstalk))

Fadi Chehadé: Yeah and that's a great idea, Bret. And I see Christine right in my sight there so I'm sure she took note of that. And we will - I appreciate that you'd want to know who you're dealing with.

Again, we have deployed a CRM system. We have now a support team. We are soon going to offer 24 hour support five days a week around the clock. There's a lot going on to improve our services to you.

None of this existed two years ago. None of it. We had no contracting capacity to really deal with all of this, no service capacity. All of this is being built.

And in terms of our operational excellence if you recall at the last meeting because we didn't touch a lot on that, Jonathan, we - I asked Keith Drasek, the head of the stakeholder group for registries, how he rated GDD and he told me publicly that he rated them 7 out of 10.

Then I asked my own team to approach them and to ask them how we get from 7 to 10. Seven is not bad, it's not great. So I told my team go and make it better. They went and they instigated some of that. Get us a survey. We got your letter. I love the letter. It's one of the most constructive letters I've received on how we improve our operational efficiency. And we will attend to them.

But I want you to know that the journey from where we were to where we need to be operationally, where I frankly can tell you from a CEO standpoint that the operations of ICANN are what I would call on a steady state to be improved but steady state, I think it's at least a three-year journey. We're a year into that.

We at least have two more years. And we staggered it, as you know, we dealt first with the internal HR, Finance operations by bringing Susanna, then we

did IT by bringing Ash, some of you may have met him, our new CIO - he was CIO of Wal-Mart and also CIO of Edwards Life Sciences.

And now we are also adding a third layer of that which will be announced soon. So there's work to be done. There is work to be done. We don't have perfect systems. We don't have perfect processes. We had no basic SOPs at ICANN. All of this is being built from scratch.

But we're getting places and I think you see it and the speed with which we were able to pick up contracting and GDD the system still needs work. We are working on them. And I think with the plan that Ash just presented to the Board - a three year plan, we should be moving very fast towards I think better excellence in that area. So bear with us. But we are building the operation that will serve you much better I hope.

I want to leave with a positive note on the exchanges we had. I said this to you, Jonathan, at dinner with other leaders. I am not your typical CEO. Typical CEOs are extremely stubborn and I've known many of them. I've invested in many companies and I know many of them. Some of you around this room are CEOs of your own companies. You know how stubborn CEOs are.

I listen to you. I've changed course many times over the last two years. That's not the typical CEO behavior. CEOs make a plan and move out of the way. That's not how I behave. I've changed my mind. I've stopped and recognized when I've made mistakes. And I continue to do so.

I need you to continue guiding me. But I work for you. I don't work for anyone else. I want to be very clear about that. There is no such thing as the big evil corporation that is hiding. We are ICANN. Every one of us is.

And so I extend to you, again, that if you think I get things done in a top down way, reguide me, continue to talk to me. Stop me when you think something

is not working and I'll do my best. And that's all I can promise you. I mean, I'll do my best. And I have been doing my best. And I will continue to do that for you.

But please let partner on this; let's not just imagine things and mistrust each other. We just have no time for that. I think we should look at Washington as a good example of the place that has become terrible in that way. Nobody trusts anybody and the country is in trouble in many ways.

Go read Rome, 4th, 5th Century, this is what happened; this is why Rome fell because people did not work with each other and no one trusted anyone. If we fall into that, when we have new people like Arthur coming to the microphone saying hey, then we're going to drive them away. We don't want to drive him away; we want these shoulders because ICANN needs them, we need them To grow these shoulders and to make them broader.

So I am working for you. I am very clear on that. And please remind me of that all the time. But I need constructive, you know, mechanisms that built on trust, not built on mistrust. We spent an hour and a half here, there wasn't a single positive comment about our staff other than Bret. Frankly, thank you Bret, for saying, "You have good staff supporting us."

But that can't continue; this is not because I need positive comments, we're beyond that. But we need to focus on how we can build not just what is not working, please. The world is watching us. Three thousand people are here; why do you think? Why do you think?

I mean, we're not on a beautiful part of the city here. Not everybody is here for Edgewood Road, right? They're here to work very hard into come and figure out, as Arthur said, how we make this multistakeholder thing work. Please, let us be a beacon for them; let us be a light on the hill for them. And let us grow beyond this mistrust and start building good things.

And when people put misconceptions on the table and put mistrust on the table ask yourself why would they be doing this? What is driving them? The people who want to slow down the transition from the US government, what is driving them? What are their intentions? Let's think about that because not everyone here who's speaking isn't speaking without interests.

That the interests of ICANN and the Internet should be first. And I'm committed to it and I hope you'll join me for that.

Jonathan Robinson: Thank you very much, Fadi. I would be tempted to say thank you for your time but as you said, your time is our time so I'll thank you instead for your approach and your attitude and your receptiveness to the discussion; it's much appreciated. And, you know, thank you for absorbing what's been said and for responding in that way.

And I can, on a lighter note, I can assure you we won't be initiating a PDP on your coffee at the ICANN offices.

All right, we can stop the recording on that session now. So the next session in some ways feeds directly on from this as we...

END