

**Transcription ICANN Los Angeles
GNSO Candidate Question Time
Saturday 11 October 2014**

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Man: Present itself as a way to go ahead. So I would like to change the format here slightly - as (John) had suggested - by allowing everyone to post questions to the candidate.

And additionally, maybe put forth ideas of what things could be changed, could be handled better. Have a review of the past year of the work of the candidate.

And I would like to invite everyone to raise their hands. Come to the microphone and speak up with any questions, suggestions, comments or criticisms that they might have.

(Frank): Yes (Frank) (unintelligible) if you'll just permit me - just make a couple of remarks. I mean you'll see there's a candidate statement. In some ways, it follows on from previous candidate statements.

So it's not entirely new. There are references to others. I'm sure some of you would've looked at it. Some of you may not have. Perhaps it's better to just leave it at that.

And hear if there are any questions, comments or imputes in and around the role and function of the chair or myself in that position.

Man: Okay, (Thomas), please.

(Thomas): Yes I think that (Jonathan) you've sent your newspaper and the (unintelligible) editor - the statement that you previously produced.

And I think that what you've delivered is pretty much in line with what you've offered when you started.

I have no doubt, whatsoever, that you're going to be reelected. And since we have another term of collaboration, I'd like to ask you in which ways you think the council should better support you in achieving the goals of the couple.

So I think this not unilateral thing. You know, a chair can only be as productive as the counsel or the committee supporting him allows him to do.

Jonathan Robinson: That's a good question. And it ties very much into this whole challenge we've had of - I mean, I know. For all of us, myself very much included, it's been - this in particular.

Let's stop for a moment just to pick up the point you made originally. I suppose. I do think we've - we and it's not me. I think we've collectively achieved a lot in the last couple of years.

I mean I really feel that it is in many ways we feel open to the critical make - thought out and critical comments of the way in which we work. But we do it in a civil and constructive way.

And frankly I feel our outputs been pretty good. We've also worked flexibly within the way in which we are able to without being disrespectful of the structures and processes that we work.

Wherever possible, we've tried to operate in flexible, responsive way. So personally, I feel very proud of the way in which the counsel has worked and their kind of achievements.

And I look around the room. And, you know, I think of us coming together in Buenos Aires a year ago and working effectively together. I think we've achieved much of that.

I think the biggest challenge we face and I face and we face together is finding the opportunity to genuinely put time into particular issues. And quite often something's thrown out onto the counsel list or in a meeting.

And we appear to just simply not have time to do it justice to work through it. So I mean I would say looking ahead, the biggest challenge we've got is to try and have the time and the opportunity to give issues the time they deserve and to work them through.

I mean we've had a couple of challenges thrown up this morning. For example, about, you know, making sure we do coordinated and effective work in and around the next round of GTLB's.

And we've said there's some existing challenges that are thrown out to us. Both in terms of the work we do and how we do it. So it's really getting people behind that.

That said, I mean there's some great examples. And I could just look. I mean for me, it's tremendous that the two non-coma appointees, for example, that are here.

I know (Dan) couldn't be here. But I mean I look at the work you've done on the - well it's frustrating and challenging as it's been on all the IGO, INGO off the LLC stuff.

And you've put hours and hours of patient working to try and nurse that through. I mean with just heard from the - with the work with (unintelligible) working on the GNSO review.

So there are plenty of examples around of counselors who have. And so I wouldn't want to suggest people haven't been productive or put their hard work and hours into things either.

Man: Thanks Jonathan. Next question please.

(Carl): Yes thank you. Continue on (Thomas)'s question - compared to one or two meetings ago. I see a new element in the general of the GNSO, particularly, cross community working groups.

And the discussion we recently had on how to lias (sic). I don't know - with the (GAK) and so on. So I would like to go back on this. And then the discussion we just had, 360 reviews shouldn't change anything.

While we know that they are a new five year strategic plans for ICANN as a whole and suggestions from congress how to separate policy from operations in a very interesting letter.

So I want to go back today to (Thomas) question. Do you think you can keep just working just like this without any additional resources, time or more methodology?

Jonathan Robinson : Is that a question to me (Carl)? After I think we've got the capacity to carry on. It's a difficult question.

I mean, I should say that one of things that there's was a recent - there was meeting yesterday of so called SO, AC and SG and constituency leaders - together with the senior ICANN staff.

To look particularly into the - at least to start to define the problems and issues associated with perceptual (unintelligible) of excessive workload. And so, I mean, I think that's something which we'll need to be.

I mean, it's a community wide issue - rather than simply a counsel issue. And I'm very conscious that, you know, there is a variety of levels of commitment that people can give to this work.

I mean this is, technically, volunteer work. In practice, for some people it forms some or all of their job with a paid or unpaid.

But for many people it's got to be filled in around their jobs. So that's - so I'm always sensitive to that - that that's an issue.

And I think there are some real challenges to this whole concept of a volunteer model and how we maintain productivity and all of that.

That said, I mean I don't know what the numbers of the - at this meeting are. And this is one of the things that came up in the discussion last night. I mean there's probably going to be, you know, maybe a couple of thousand attendees at this meeting.

And yet the active participation in the work of ICANN from those is much - you know, we have a kind of tip of the iceberg type phenomenon. So it's, personally, it's a mantra for me.

Is that there are different challenges. There's this very broad level engagement, you know, that work. And either way they're through a lack in other organizations that goes out to mass participation and engagement.

But I think sometimes we haven't concentrated enough on the middle. And maybe that goes to the point that (Jay)'s (unintelligible) some of it. It's about how we work.

But one way or another that feels to me like it's an unanswered challenge or question is getting participation from that middle - if you like - of the pyramid we've got.

This was expert top. We've got a lot of work on broad outreach and participation. But somehow our active engagements of qualified of potentially well qualified participants.

Either we don't - we somehow are not engaging those groups as much as possible. So that feels to me like one way of fixing the problem, if you like. But it's certainly not the whole solution.

Man: Stephane, please go ahead.

Stephane Van Gelder: Thanks (unintelligible) Stephane Van Gelder. Jonathan, I think the fact that you're running unopposed is probably a measure of the quality of the work that you've done in recent years as chair.

Either that, or recognition that you're crazy to do it and no one else wants to do it.

But one question of personal interest to me is when I was chair, I found that it was difficult to combine the outside perception - the perception that there is outside the community of the way the GNSO and the GNSO counsel works.

And the outside community tended to look at the GNSO counsel chair as basically the leader of the GNSO community or certainly the leadership.

Inside the GNSO community that's often not the case. You've got really two different views knocking up against each other. And you're sitting in that chair.

Which is sometimes a lonely position to hold when you have to both defend the GNSO as a whole outside and not do - not appear to be leading the GNSO inside the group.

Is that something that you found? Is it something that you've been able to balance?

Jonathan Robinson: I think I really would like to make a comment before I respond. And so okay I'll respond then just (unintelligible) if you could make sure that Avri gets a chance to talk as well.

I mean I suppose there's different things. First of all, thank you for what I think was a compliment but may have been a recognition of the lunacy there.

Stephane Van Gelder: Right, it was a compliment.

Jonathan Robinson: But, you know, I mean I suppose. That's the first thing to respond to. I mean there are many who make that, you know the joke. And say, "Well is it congratulations or commiserations?"

It's hard work and thankless. And I don't mean that in a kind of let's all start, you know, feeling sorry for me. But there is - there's definitely an element where there's some significant hard (unintelligible).

But one of those have been actually working - one of the key things I think I set out to do. And I think we have done as a group, relatively well, is start to - and I think this is the sort of what I call the PR role of the chair.

And I think PR is probably it could be misconstrued. But it's the outreach that the linking with the other organizations. I think we haven't done a - I mean I feel much more comfortable and that, in part, due to the work of the liaisons.

But with - when I work with the CCNSO, for example, and we've had some very good, you know, we've come together well with the CCNSO to do the CWG on the (unintelligible) transition and, of course, others - the other groups that are chartering that.

As you're noticing, good progress made with the consultation group with the (GAK). But you were right. There's certainly, at times, there's a conundrum as to whether, you know, if I'm on a platform or in situation where, you know, I might be perceived to be the voice of the GNSO.

And that's got to be handled carefully. I think for the most part. I think people have come to trust me over the term of being in the chair. That I respect and understand the limits of that and what can and can't be done.

I think what's partly helped is that - if not every time - periodically, at the front of these ICANN meetings we no longer have the SO and AC chairs meeting.

We have SO, AC, SG and constituency all coming together. And I've really felt positive about that last night. Because it felt to me like we had all of the voices at the table.

But, in my mind, a proportionate voice for the GNSO by virtue of those - all of those voices there. So I really - and I didn't feel like any one group was swamped by that.

It really felt, to me, and it maybe a selective perception. And it could be challenged unless I accept that. But no, I didn't feel like anyone was being shut up.

You know, CCNSO had a voice. SSAC had a voice. ALAC had a voice. GAC had a voice. Everyone was able to speak. Yet the constituent parts of the GNSO were also represented.

So I had a good feeling about that. So that seemed to work okay. But you're right. It's a challenge that's got to be handled sensitively. And I'm sure there's a puddle to step in or a trap to fall into somewhere along the way.

Man: Thanks Jonathan. I think Avri's next in line.

Avri Doria: Thank you. First of all, I think it's - I will actually want to actually say something. But I think that you have dealt with that issue - that you are the Chair of the GNSO as the bylaws indicate.

And I think you have, actually - I know I'm supposed to be asking questions as opposed to praising you. But I think you have threaded that needle where all the SG's and C's are insisting on also being there, quite well.

I kind of wonder about it because I wonder about were also all the RALO chairs there. So I wonder. And, you know, perhaps that a discussion for another time and not for this meeting.

But I do wonder about that tendency that many people in the GNSO have to sort of, "I want to be there too. I got to be part of the leader's group. So invite me."

So I really do want to praise you for having threaded that needle quite deftly and quite politically - much better than I ever could've done. And so I'm really happy to see you there.

Now one of the questions - that I really have. And I did read your statement when it went out but I forget. Did you answer the question of why you want to do this for another year?

Woman: That's (unintelligible).

Man: Thanks every praise is, by the way, perfectly fine - if anybody else wants to praise (John). Jonathan, do you want to answer their question.

Jonathan Robinson: Yes, thanks - one quick comment. I mean, I'm sure it's clear to you Avri. But I didn't set the invite list last night. I was just reflecting on those that were there seemed to be a good bunch.

And seemed to work and represent the different interest. In terms of why - I mean, I suppose there's a - I've actually got to enjoy this a little bit more as I've got to know and understand how to do the job better, I think.

But also having started off, I felt there were certain things that we had to try and achieve. And I think we're a long way down the road of achieving those but probably not complete.

So there's a point with me when I like to complete a job. I feel part of that completion of that job - just to be very clear - is to effectively hand that over to whomever is coming along next - wherever they come from - whether it's from the existing vice chairs or from outside.

And that clearly will be a key part of this next part. So that it's not just walk away and leave it. But, you know, it's challenging but also very satisfying to achieve some of the things we've managed to achieve.

And I'm not going to go through it as list. But it certainly, it has its rewards as well as its punishments.

Man: Thanks Jonathan. Chuck, go ahead.

Man: Maybe just to use Avri's microphone to talk (unintelligible).

Avri Doria: I was about to shout no.

Chuck Gomes: I don't think it's accurate to say that the bylaws say the chair. The chair is the chair of the GNSO - - chair of the GNSO counsel. But if it is - and I don't have the bylaws in front of me - then I think we need to change that.

I don't think we've ever function that the chair of the GNSO counsel is a leader for the other FG's and constituencies and so forth nor do I think we want to go there.

Man: (Unintelligible).

Woman: Most definitely does say it.

Man: Marilyn.

Marilyn Cade: Thank you. And Jonathan like others, I want to thank you for your stewardship. I tend to look at these positions as being positions of stewardship.

And I think you've done - as we all examine your past contributions. So I welcome the fact that you are interested in taking yet another turn at it.

I really also appreciated something you just said about an innovation that has been introduced. And that is in - when I was the chair of the business constituency, I first pushed hard with (Fahdi) about the idea of having a meeting with the chairs plus one.

And that is now grown into a regular iteration between the chairs of the SO, AC and SG's. I think that is in fact a real innovation. And I think I would just ask you - you made a comment about it. But it has clearly added both an opportunity but a burden of leadership.

And I wondered if you might talk a little bit more about - this is a bottom up consensus based organization. We've lost our way recently with a kind of the top - I don't mean the counsel - by the way - or the GNSO.

But I think ICANN lost its way recently. Two good examples are the top down approach that was imposed on the IANA transition and then the accountability mechanism. We're in recovery mode for that.

Maybe you might opine - just a little bit about the - now we have a new leadership circle - this SOACSG chair.

Maybe you might opine just a little bit on how you see that strengthening or contributing to improving the understanding of the board and the CEO and staff on bottom consensus base decision making.

Man: Thanks Marilyn - Jonathan (unintelligible).

Jonathan Robinson: Well you are right. I mean it does seem like there was - we passed a little bit of a water shed moment. I mean one of things that was most striking was we had a coming together - as you well know Marilyn and others.

At the end of the London meeting of combined statement from all of the constituent parts of the GNSO on the accountability. And I think, you know, one of the things we were hoping to come to before lunch.

And we'll probably touch on it a little bit after lunch is the new revised structure for - or proposed structure for handling the accountability issues.

I think the important thing that - the point that I've taking is to continually try to remind the board.

And I feel we've - I mean something we seem to have to do, just as a general sense, is our, sort of, institutional memory doesn't seem to go on very long.

We seem to have like a kind of memory stack where two or three things come in. And the other bits fall out. So some I feel - for example, when we meet with the board, I sometimes feel that they may see as a bit of a stuck record.

Because I quite often say, "And by the way, let's just tell you, we've done A-B-C-D-E lately. And just so you're aware. And this is D-E-F that we're working on."

And so that's - yes. Anyway I see you're deep in checking this GNSO chair that says, "GNSO council chair" on the vinyl. It's ambiguous, actually. I've read it carefully. And it doesn't. It's not well worded - put it that way.

Chuck Gomes: Yes, and Chuck speaking again. It does say, "GNSO chair." They're correct, okay. I don't think we've ever functioned that way. Nor, and again, I'll repeat what I said. I don't think we want to function that way.

But we can debate that. And I don't think we need to take more time on that now.

Man: Thanks Chuck. Avri was there the hand?

Avri Doria: Yes, just a quick comment. I think we actually did function that way until I was chair and the revolution started.

Man: Okay, we have one more from Stephane. And then I would like to wrap up because lunch is waiting.

Stephane Van Gelder: This is turning into an old boy's club discussion. But I think it's a quite - it really isn't a bylaw question. Although, we do the bylaws are the guidelines by which we work.

I think, I forget who said - I think it was Avri who said, "You threaded that needle very Jonathan. And just to make a clear compliment, this time. I do think it's up to the chair to work it out.

And I think you've done well in including both the CNSG chairs and the GNSO counsel leadership in these overall discussions.

I also think it's a question of support and the support you can get from the counsel and the community.

And I think you alluded to that earlier on as you've progressed through this position and people have got to know you. And you've got to know them.

You probably feel that support is there now. And you've got more confidence to just be a PR spokesman for the GNSO as a whole. And I think that's probably how we want to define that - more as a PR.

You know, go out and strongly advocate for the GNSO - rather than just a leadership position in the GNSO.

I think, you know, the problem is making sure that outside of this room or this community, the perception of the GNSO remains positive and productive.

Jonathan Robinson: Yes and thanks Stephane. That's actually a very helpful queue even though it may not have been intended to be. But I really appreciate it.

Because actually it's about - in many ways - that the area to be very comfortable on. It's not about the policy or expressing a single policy or a view of the GNSO - but rather structural and procedural.

And relationship components of that is very comfortable territory now to be on - particularly because I've become ever more familiar with it. But, you know, you're right.

I mean that's where one's got to be very comfortable to speak and say, "Well this is the opinion of the GNSO" because it's almost tautological anyway because the GNSO very rarely has a single opinion.

So, for a single entity or individual to express that would be a problem anyway and probably (unintelligible).

Man: Thank you Jonathan. I think this was a very helpful discussion with - we've heard a good couple of questions and comments on the - not only the candidate himself but also his vision on the future of his role.

I think this is a very helpful discussion for the future going forward. And Jonathan, in personal opinion, you will do a bang up job in the next term. So I hope you are reelected.

With this, I would like to (unintelligible) through with this is session. And invite everyone on the counsel to lunch.

As usual, counselors and everyone working on the GNSO staff eat first. And then everybody else, of course, is also invited.

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