
SINGAPORE – Meeting Strategy Working Group
Monday, March 24, 2014 – 15:15 to 16:15
ICANN – Singapore, Singapore

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you. I will just switch language in a few minutes. I want to make sure everybody understood it will be a multilingual presentation. And when I say "multilingual," it will really be in four different languages, and we will use facilities that we have in this room. And if you don't get French, English, Arabic, Portuguese or Spanish, if you don't get one of those languages, better to take a headset.

Now, I will switch in French.

Thank you.

We are holding this program in order to present the recommendations of the meeting strategy working group, the ICANN meetings strategy working group, that was set up about a year ago in the Beijing meeting.

Its members -- it's got 21 members, and I am honored to chair this group. We've got 16 members from our community, and our intent was for this group to be as representative as possible.

And we tried -- we are striving to achieve geographic diversity, and we wanted to strike a gender equality or gender balance. We almost made it. We have three group members from ICANN: Chris Gift, Nick Tomasso, and Sally Costerton. They are group members and they are ICANN staff. And then we have two board members: Chris Disspain and myself.

Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.

And we have received important support from ICANN staff. I would like to recognize the organizer of all ICANN meetings, that is someone who is really, really knowledgeable about the way things work, that is Tanzania. I want to recognize and thank Tanzania and all the other members of the working group because they made it possible for us to reach these proposals. And after working really, really hard, our conclusion is that -- we have a proposal that is the starting point for community debate.

We will be delivering presentations in several languages. Michelle, Tijani, Chris Disspain will be the different speakers giving presentations on these sessions.

This group's objective was to gather information, exchange views and ideas, and present a proposal regarding the future of ICANN meetings from a strategic and operational viewpoint.

As you heard this morning, ICANN meetings have been going on since -- for several years now. ICANN 1 was held here in Singapore.

Since then, there have been meetings, ongoing meetings. Initially, we held four meetings a year. Then we started holding three meetings a year. And we wanted to see how to about go about organizing a meetings agenda. We focused on the ideal alteration of an ICANN meeting and on how many meetings there should be on a yearly basis.

On February 25th, a proposal was published for public comment, and we extended the public comment period until April 4th. And after that, there will be a reply period if needed up to April 25th.



We welcome comments, especially because we have attempted to implement a new methodology, a public comment methodology. On the one hand, we have Twitter at the #ICANNmswg. And if you are not very much into I.T. or technology, to my left and to your right you see some stickers you can post your comments on those stickers.

So I will not go much further into this slide. I would rather focus on the proposal. We want to have three annual meetings with some geographic rotation -- regional rotation. And one of the issues that crops up is the number of sessions, the ever-increasing number of sessions, and the fact that we have a higher number of sessions. Well, that means we have overlappings, sessions that overlap.

Thank you for joining us. Without further ado, I give the floor to Michelle who will be presenting our proposal. Michelle, you have the floor. Go ahead, please.

MICHELLE CHAPLOW:

I would like to explain our key recommendations. We are recommending that we keep three meetings per year. There was overwhelming support in the group and the community for three meetings a year, not two and not four but three.

In order to alleviate the problems of conflicts that Sebastien mentioned, we're proposing to change the formats of these meetings.

So we've actually named the meetings A, B and C. The first meeting, meeting A will be very much how we know ICANN meetings at the moment.



Meeting B is a smaller meeting which will focus on SO and AC policy, giving the community time to actually work on their particular areas.

It will be smaller in the fact that there will be no board meeting at this particular meeting and no grand opening ceremony and no public forum.

The third meeting, meeting C, is the showcase of ICANN to the world which will also include the annual general meeting.

So let's look at the duration. The duration of the first meeting, as I said, it is very similar to what we have now which is four days and the weekend, so that's six days.

Meeting B will be much smaller, four days in total.

And meeting C, the larger meeting, which showcases ICANN's work to the global audience is eight days in total.

Thank you. I will hand you over to over to Tijani for the next slide.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA:

As you remember, since several years, Nick Tomasso has proposed something that had to do with the improvement of the meetings of ICANN. And this is due to the fact that some of the participants and the number of participants have exacerbated and increased a lot. And we couldn't anymore find or accommodate the places where we can gather all these people in some places in the world.



We decided that every year we should have a regional location and mobile locations in places that does not accommodate big halls for accommodating these meetings.

This proposal for the working group we are working with, they have rejected this proposal unfortunately and they insisted that there should be a kind of geographical worldly rotation as it's happening now. There must be global geographic locations, but actually this gave the working group that is doing this work, gave them the possibility to act accordingly. They are not forced every time to comply with this principle of rotation in organizing next meetings so that there must be no duplication in this respect. Thank you very much.

How can we do this? This will be through -- today, as you have seen, there has one of the three meetings, which is the intermediate one that happens every year. It is a small one so that there is no plenary session or opening session. There will be no public forum that necessitates having a big hall. Consequently, we will try to organize this meeting in a place that does not accommodate a big number of people.

Previously, we couldn't do that in organizing ICANN's meetings. This philosophy is to maintain this rotation of global meetings so that every five years in every location in the world, we would have organized A and B and C of the meetings, as we've mentioned before. This is my only recommendation and proposal in this respect. Thank you very much.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Tijani.

Ana, you have the floor. Go ahead, please.



ANA NEVES:

On this slide, we can see -- this slide reflects our concern during this debate. That is, this new model should enable two things. First, supporting organizations and advisory committees should have more time to change or modify their ongoing work.

Also, we would also like to see the following, something that is not taking place right now; that is, a kind of interaction among the different working groups or stakeholder groups.

It is our understanding that there's a wide gap between the GAC and the other groups. There are certain groups that do not know us. They are not aware of what we do about our objectives, and we are not aware of what the other organizations are doing or engaged. And there is plenty of work that we could do together with them and that ICANN -- or in that way, ICANN could work much better.

So what we want to see is a better or more efficient allocation of time. And that is part of our proposal; that is, having enough time so that every group can work and operate and continue working.

Also, every group should have time to interrelate with the other groups because on the basis of these differences, we're going to be able to work much more efficiently.

There is another issue that needs to be raised and addressed. And I wanted to bring it to the fore. And that is, we need to engage in outreach activities with the people in our host country. So we propose better engagement with the different stakeholders.



We propose a kind of interaction that as of today is still -- or only beginning and requires further development. And we have further opportunities to do that. Thank you.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Good afternoon, everybody. I shall speak in only one language.

>> Chinese.

>>CHRIS DISSPAIN: Yes, exactly, Chinese. So this slide covers the public forum which all of us know is an incredibly important part of our ICANN. We're suggesting some changes to that. Because of the middle meeting of the year, the short meeting -- the shorter meeting, I'm sorry, for SO and AC work and cross-constituency work and for outreach, the public forum will be at the first meeting of the year and the last meeting of the year, A and C.

And what we're proposing is that we actually split the public forum and that we have a 90-minute public forum at the beginning of the week. And that would be available for SO and AC updates and for listening. And that would enable people to talk about things they want to talk about during the week and would enable the board to hear from the community at the beginning of the week what it is that is on their mind.

And then at the end of the week as per normal, we will have our public forum which would be two hours. And that would be the public forum as we know it today with topics and open comment.



We think that that change the make -- so the amount of time that there will be public forum will be the same. It is just that it will be split over to two periods. It also, of course, has the advantage of making the days a little bit more flexible.

That's really all I have to say on that slide, Sebastien. Thank you.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Chris.

Eduardo, please, for the conclusion of the working group.

EDUARDO DIAZ RIVERA: Thank you. In summary, the meeting strategy working group is basically suggesting a strategy entailing further or more SO/AC interaction and entailing more time for internal SO and AC meetings.

We want to change meeting structures in order to avoid conflicting schedules or conflicting meetings. And we would like one meeting per year, that is, Meeting C, that is a smaller meeting that enables certain geographical rotations so that we can hold the meetings in places that generally cannot hold that many people. Basically, that is our recommendation.

But, Mr. Chair? Sebastien? You have the floor now, thank you.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Eduardo.



So we are now going to open the Q&A session and we welcome your comments as well.

Okay. I'm going to stop speaking Spanish. I will speak in French.

I would like to thank you all for your presentations, and I hope that the use of our different languages and skills, or linguistic skills or competencies, has not been a challenge for you.

We believe that if we truly want to evolve behaviors and resort to our available tools, we need to use these tools, to put them into practice.

Okay. You have the floor. Go ahead, please.

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

Microphone on, please.

PATRIK FALTSTROM:

Hello. (Speaking in a non-English language.)

So yes, there are some of us which rather prefer to use languages which are not translated to, which I don't have a problem with that personally, but we should remember that there are also other languages in the world than the ones that we are -- happen to translate to.

Now to the question.

When I read the report, I really appreciate the work you've done. I think it's good that you're categorizing the various meetings so it's easy to do scheduling.



So for example, that it's easy to ensure that you don't get -- that we simply minimize the number of clashes when you do scheduling, so I agree with that.

What I have a little bit more problem with is to really understand how to classify each one of the meetings, so my question to you is: Have you taken, for example, the existing schedule for this very meeting, ICANN 49, and applied your method?

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Chris, please.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Patrik, thank you. I noticed that when you were speaking in Swedish that the transcription said "speaking a non-English language," implying that there is more than one English language, which is an interesting concept.

Yes. I mean, we did an awful lot of background work on this, and fundamentally Meeting A is effectively the meeting we have now. We will -- so there will need to be some implementation work done on -- to deal with some of the cross- -- yeah, some of the collisions. "Collisions" is the wrong word to use. Some of the clashes that take place.

But we think that by applying the meetings over a year, by concentrating SO and A- -- like by having a smaller meeting in the middle of the year with the SO and AC work concentrated -- not only happening in that, of course, at all, but being only about that, that that will have some effect.



Nick, did you want to -- do you want to say anything about whether this is going to make any difference?

I mean, Patrik's question is basically, will what we're suggesting make any difference to what is happening at this meeting.

Is that basically right, Patrik?

PATRIK FALTSTROM: My question was more, if it was -- have you applied this method for either this meeting or the previous meeting or any recent meeting, so that we can see what the schedule would have looked like.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Well, this -- so -- so this does not -- the schedule for this meeting would look the same, right? Would it not?

Because it's the first meeting of the year. So this is Meeting A.

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Okay. Wait a second. I am not talking about Meeting A, B, or C. I'm talking about how to do the scheduling of a meeting, where you suggest that cross-constituency things happens one day, you have SO and AC things one day, you have outreach a certain number of hours.

I just wonder where the quota that you suggest for the various kinds of -
- of --

When I said "meetings," I don't mean ICANN --



Okay. We have a communication error. And this is because English is not my native language. I'm sorry.

I meant the various slots inside an ICANN meeting. Sorry. Not the meetings themselves.

CHRIS DISSPAIN: Yes.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: And Tijani wanted to say something.

TIJANI BEN JEMAA: Yes. We cannot apply it. We didn't apply it and we cannot apply it because it -- this is the uniform mode. This meeting is inside the uniform mode. We are now -- we are proposing a different shaded mode. That means that each meeting has each specification -- specificity, and this means that, for example, for some meetings we will focus on the cross-community meetings. On the other, we will focus more on the internal constituency meetings. So it is different.

So we didn't apply and we -- we didn't intend to -- we do -- we couldn't apply because we are not -- it is not yet implemented.

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Yeah.



SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: To the answer, not for this one because it was after we gave back the report, but when we study how the meetings were organized in the past, we tried to take all the inputs of how it's organized and how we can reshape it to do best what we want to do in the meeting, and then my answer is: Yes, but not for this meeting but for previous ones it was the case.

PATRIK FALTSTROM: Okay. There's still a misunderstanding of what I'm asking for.

I'm not asking for using your mechanism at this meeting. Of course not that could be done. But I claim that you, in your proposal, don't have enough time for each one of the kind of meetings, and that will force you -- and this is the \$10,000 question. That forces a mechanism to be invented to be able to say "no" to people that want to have a meeting and I don't understand how to implement the "no" function.

EDUARDO DIAZ RIVERA: This is Eduardo. I just wanted to say, Patrik, one example of the structure of the meeting that we are proposing that we have, when we talked to you, remember we interviewed you about going -- jumping around from each meeting just saying the same thing. One of the things that we wanted to do at the beginning of the week is to have one -- a specific period of time for people to say what they have to say to the whole community.

So at that time there are no other meetings and you go there and say it and that's it. And that's an example of the things that we are recommending.



And I don't know if I'm answering your question.

PATRIK FALTSTROM:

Let me just say: I really, really, really like the work you've done. I think specifically what you pointed out is spot on what I want. I'm just nervous that the amount of time you have allocated for each one of the kind of slots inside a meeting is smaller than the number of requests for meet- -- for slots that you will get and then -- for example, the meeting today, how many requests for things did we have? How many of those would we, first of all, not get if we had a more specific meeting, whether it's A, B, or C? And then which one of the slots that we have today are in each one of the categories? How much time is that? How much of that should go away if we consolidate, like you just said? And at the end of the day, is there a difference between how much time we allocate and what the actual requests were, and if there were too many requests, how do we say no?

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

So Donna, did you want to say something? You'll need to go to the microphone.

Patrik, two or three things.

First of all, that's a -- that's an engineering solution -- solution applied to what is effectively what is an art form.

But the answer is, in simple terms, we -- in order to come up with this, we went through a whole process with Post-it notes up on the wall

working out what days would the SOs and ACs meet, how much time would they have, et cetera.

The bottom line is that the points you're making about saying no, et cetera, et cetera, are management implementation points, not about -- not about an overall structure.

You're quite right and we do need -- and Nick will tell you that I've been saying this for quite some time now. We need to learn how to say "no." We don't appear to be able to do that.

I do want to give you one other example but Donna, do you want to say something?

DONNA AUSTIN:

So I just -- pretty much what you were saying, Chris. We kind of understood that there's going to have to be a significant kind of cultural change within the community to accept that -- you know, I think Nick said there's 255 sessions for this meeting. That's going to have to cut back significantly because it's just not manageable. So I think we have to understand there has to be a bit of a cultural shift within the community to try to work within the parameters that are reasonable.

CHRIS DISSPAIN:

If I could just give you one other example, Patrik, while you're running to the microphone --

[Laughter]



CHRIS DISSPAIN:

-- as a result -- and it's a really useful example about why this process is worthwhile.

As a result of us meeting and coming to this strategy, ICANN meetings have already changed. If you go to the GAC room, you'll see the GAC room is now not a U shape anymore, it is a chevron shape. That's -- we decided that we thought that was a good idea, thanks to Ana, who said, "I hate the U shape." Sorry. Sorry to make it your fault. And we got -- and we got agreement from the GAC to change the shape.

Now, there's -- it's so complicated because what you have to realize is what that effectively means is that in the future, the size of the room that the GAC needs is significantly -- which I know that doesn't help you with your timing but I was trying to give you an example of the depth that we went into to try and do this.

PATRIK FALTSTROM:

Yeah. No, you have absolutely convinced me that -- first of all, I was supporting this sort of as a theoretical model because I like it. I now understand that you've done the background work that I was asking for.

Let me tell you a story.

Many hundred years ago in Sweden, we built a really big ship with -- we were building it for two hundred -- for two years, spent like about 20% of the Swedish budget on that ship. We put it to sea and it sank after 300 meters.

Okay?



I don't want that to happen with this -- with your product. I want this ship to float.

So thank you for assuring me. Now we're working together to implement this.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: Thank you, Patrik, for your input, and I was very glad that you participate to one of our conferences to tell us what was your need for your specific group, and we have done the same with almost all the groups within ICANN to take inputs, and it was very useful and very important.

Other comments? Questions?

Olivier, please.

>> I believe that your report is really interesting and I would like to congratulate you on your work and on the fact that you have reached consensus.

I had a question about the cost of the different solutions, because eventually this will have a financial cost in terms of costs of organizing the meeting and the traveling expenses.

There are expenses funded or paid for by ICANN.

So that is my first question: What is the impact.

And the second question is: Have you included this notion of hubs in the locations chosen for the different meetings on the different continents?



SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET: The answer to your first question -- Sebastien Bachollet speaking. The answer to the first question is that the budgetary issue was not a major concern in our work. In particular, for Meeting B, we believe that we should be able to travel to places that were not possible before and at the same time reduce the infrastructure costs, but of course this doesn't mean that we are bringing down the traveling expenses and other associated costs.

Our hypothesis is that globally, we would be dealing more or less with the same budget, knowing that budgets increase because we have an increase in the number of participants and also an increase in the community needs.

As far as the hubs are concerned, we did not adopt this solution for the hubs because in our proposal, we believe that we can travel to different cities in different countries -- this is for Meeting B, of course, but it can also be applied for other meetings -- and we can have geographic rotation and we can have some flexibility.

We don't want to say that we are going to go to a certain region in a certain year. Perhaps we need to change from one region to another. If there was a region planned for a meeting, perhaps we will have to switch a location to another region or we may have that region for Meeting B instead of Meeting A.

So we want to accommodate that kind of flexibility on the staff.

So the purpose is to have rotation among the five continents without having a preestablished location.



The staff should have freedom to negotiate prices, to find the best venues, and to meet the needs the best way possible, and this means not having to abide by a schedule that determines that we have to hold a meeting in a certain place in a certain year.

I'm not going to go back to the past, but we had two subsequent meetings in Asia-Pacific, and this didn't hurt anyone.

So it is clear that we will continue to maintain the principle of rotation. We will not focus on the hubs. We are going to give our staff freedom to act.

>>

Thank you. Once again, congratulations on the quality of your work.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET:

Sebastien speaking.

Are there any further comments or questions?

You may all be happy because you will have some time to do certain -- some other things. If there are no further comments, I would like to thank you for your participation at this meeting. If you have comments, you can share them with us using the hashtag -- the Twitter facility #mswg and of course there is also a place for official comments open until April the 4th and answers will be given until April the 25th.

So all your comments are welcome.

So thank you for your participation, and I wish you a nice meeting. Thank you.



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