
SINGAPORE – GAC/RSSAC Joint Session
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CHAIR DRYDEN: Okay. Let's get started ---

....they have made to their structure and to brief us about those changes, as well as, if there's time, perhaps take a few questions about the committee.

So up at the front here, to my right, we have the chair of the RSSAC, who I call Liman, but I think that's a shorthand for his full name.

But -- and then to his left, we have Suzanne Woolf, who is one of the board members and members of the RSSAC as well with a great deal of experience from the root server operator side of things. And as well, we have Finland represented here, who has helped organize this session today with our colleagues in the RSSAC.

So at this point, can I hand over to Liman to take us through the brief.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thank you. So my name is Lars-Johan Liman. I often go under the name Liman, because Lars-Johan is impossible to pronounce, even in Swedish. Not even my mother calls me that.

I'm one of the two co-chairs of the Root Server System Advisory Committee, and the other one is Professor Jun Murai at the Keio

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University in Tokyo. He couldn't make it here, so I am the sole representative here this time.

But with me, I have Suzanne Woolf, who is RSSAC's liaison to the board. So she's a full member of the RSSAC but also a member of the board.

I'm looking at you. So I wonder if you want to make introductory remarks, or should I just keep going?

>>

No, I think you should just go.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN:

Okay. So we would like to introduce you very quickly to where ICANN -- sorry, where RSSAC is in the ICANN environment and also brief you a bit about the restructuring work we're going through and what we are currently looking at, the substantive work we are looking at right now.

But I would like Suzanne to start off the overview.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Sure. Thank you, Liman. And as Heather alluded, Liman, also, I've been part of RSSAC and involved as the liaison to the board with the broader community for quite some time, so it's really nice to be here again and working with you again, and also to have a few more of my RSSAC colleagues with me than I had quite been used to. So we have several colleagues in the room here also, in addition to ourselves. And that's a very nice change. It's -- very pleased about that.



I'm going to give sort of a quick overview of where we sit in the larger ICANN and Internet ecosystem, and then we'll get into the specifics of the organizational work we're trying to do.

Next slide, please.

We always start with who we are, because we have a little bit of a set of distinctions we need to make between RSSAC and the root server operators. The root server operators are formally represented on RSSAC. In addition, RSSAC, we're working towards a broader group of -- broader working group that also includes other stakeholders in the root system, the root management and distribution system for the DNS. We do have in -- throughout the larger group a technical and operational orientation. We view our work and our orientation as principally about making sure things work. We draw on a lot of DNS expertise, TLD and RIR technical folks, because of large experience of infrastructure requirements and operations, and we are, as part of our reorganization, which Liman will talk about, looking at who -- making sure that we are getting a reasonable and appropriate cross section of other stakeholders in our system and our work.

Next, please.

We always need at least one chart. I promise this is the only one. Just showing where we are. We are an advisory committee, chartered by the normal ICANN process. We sit -- we work closely, in fact, on a regular basis, with the Security and Stability Advisory Committee. We have done, in addition, you know -- organizationally, we sit next to the GAC and ALAC also. And we do try to work with the other advisory committees on issues of mutual interest. In addition, we do have a



liaison to the board, along with the SSAC and the IAB and the GAC and so on.

Next, please.

And, again, when we talk as either root -- we do have to make the distinction between what we do as root server operators and the activities of RSSAC as an advisory committee. As the root server operators, we're here to perform a very basic technical service. We make sure that DNS queries needed to allow users to interact with the DNS on the Internet are answered as quickly and efficiently as possible. It's a very simple, straightforward technical function.

We work closely with IANA and Verisign as the root zone management partners to make sure that the system works smoothly for Internet users all over the world to get the most up-to-date, required information through accessing the DNS. We also do a fair amount of educational work. We do a lot of explaining to people what is and is not within the purview of the service we offer.

As RSSAC, we provide liaison -- you know, our function in the ecosystem, in the ICANN community, includes liaisons to the NomCom, the board, to other working groups as requested. And our charter in the ICANN bylaws is basically as an advisory committee, we provide DNS expertise and advice, both specific to the root and in a larger -- and sometimes in larger questions to the board, to the staff, and the larger community.

We have worked on issues such as how to properly and safely introduce DNSSEC to the root. We've worked with other advisory committees and



with staff and the community on advice regarding root scaling with the introduction of new gTLDs. We're also working on some current specifications, new documents, on measurements and service expectations regarding the operational root name service.

Next, please.

There's also -- We're also very careful about scoping what we don't do and putting the limits on our mission and our agreement.

As RSSAC, the root server operators are represented on the RSSAC, but RSSAC does not tell the root server operators what to do. It's a collaborative effort to form advice, standards, expectations that the participants will then voluntarily follow. In addition, we don't -- unlike other advisory groups to ICANN, other bodies in the community, our advice is nonbinding. Again, we hope that it's good advice and that the board and the community will be willing and able to take it. But we do not provide normative or -- sorry, prescriptive advice.

In addition, as either the root server operators or RSSAC, we play no policy role in the contents of the root zone. There are processes and -- there are processes for that which we are outside of. We provide the service, accessing the contents, not determining what it is.

In addition, all of the organizations involved do perform other services. We're businesses and nonprofits and other activities within the community. We are -- Some of the organizations operate commercial Internet services of various kinds. But we provide those separately from the DNS root service, which is provided as for the public benefit of all Internet users.



Next, please.

Real briefly, for anybody who's interested in some of the technical comings and goings, there's a lot of root server information at rootservers.org, operational detail of what we're doing and how we're doing it. And there's always -- we're always actually adding new information there.

Next, please.

And because it's the topic of the day, I figured we needed to touch briefly on the IANA functions transition.

Process to have a process, I suppose is the stage we're at.

First, the folks performing the root server function for the Internet, most of the organizations, and many of the people, have been performing this function and providing this service for the Internet for longer than ICANN has been around. So the transition in the stewardship of IANA that we've been discussing to many of us is something we've been working towards and certainly has been part of how things could be reasonably expected to work out for quite a long time. And we're happy to work with the process. We expect to participate in the process along with all the other stakeholder groups. Certainly exciting times. But for us, there is a basic and overriding principle, and what's close to our mission and to our role here is that we focus on the security, stability, and resiliency of the root zone distribution system for the benefit of all Internet users. And we will -- That's the guiding principle of our participation in this -- in the process and in our role in the community. So I will let my colleague sort of give



the overview of the new organization, and we will go on from there with any questions or comments.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN:

Thank you. Next slide, please.

So we are reorganizing the RSSAC. The old one has been closed down. We are now trying to form and get the new one into operation.

We have requested changes to the bylaws, ICANN bylaws, that the -- the part that describes RSSAC. And these have been implemented, and we are now trying to create a two-layer model where we have an Executive Committee and a caucus, which will be a larger group of people with various forms of expertise.

Next slide, please.

The Executive Committee will consist of one voting representative from each of the root server operating organizations. That equals 12. You probably are familiar with the number 13 when it comes to number of root servers. But one organization operates two letters, two instances. So that's why we are 12 organizations.

We will create the initial procedures and processes for running the new RSSAC, and we are quite deep into that. We are this week trying to finalize the draft version of the new procedures document that will govern how we work. And we will, in the Executive Committee, select and keep track of work items that we deal with, the day-to-day administrative work, we will appoint work parties from the caucus to actually perform the work. We will then publish the work when it's



ready and be responsible for the publishing process, and we will appoint and accept liaisons to other bodies. And, of course, also elect the chairs for the entire group.

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There are currently two co-chairs, as I mentioned earlier: Professor Jun Murai and myself. And these are re-elected periodically on staggered terms.

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This slide is -- describes the liaisons we have. We have outgoing liaisons that we kind of initiate from our side to the board, ICANN board, and also to the ICANN NomCom. And we have incoming liaisons from IANA, the root zone editor is it? NTIA, and the root zone maintainer, which is a service operated by VeriSign currently. So these three together with the root server operators make up the entire system for distributing, editing, and distributing the root zone.

And we also have incoming liaisons from the Internet Architecture Board, which is this technical body on the IETF side of things, and from the Security and Stability Advisory Committee within ICANN, and also we've had either to -- with the old RSSAC, we had a liaison to the GAC. And that is something that we would like to continue so that we have a channel to communicate with you if there are questions from your side or questions from our side that we would like to have response to or if we -- if we produce a document that we believe will be relevant for you in some way that we can ask you -- them to be forwarded to you to be reviewed and so on.



Next slide, please.

The caucus is expected to be made up from people with various expertise, DNS protocol people who design the protocols, how the servers and clients are going to talk with each other, people who are involved in DNS operations, who operate DNS services in various shapes and forms, both on what we refer to as the authoritative side, which is the side where you give out DNS answers, the root servers typically operate in the authoritative mode. But you also have the client side, where the person with the laptop at home tries to receive information from the DNS system. That's referred to as the resolver side. And we would like to have people who operate that side of it as well in this caucus group. And we also would like to see people who work with registry operations, security, and have various types of expertise pertaining to the entire system.

From this group, we intend to form work parties. When we have an item that we need to work on, we will try to form a work party from subgroup from the caucus who will then produce a draft document. And then that draft document will be circulated to the entire caucus, and we will try to form consensus within the caucus, and then eventually, when consensus is reached, the document will be published by -- by the Executive Committee.

Next slide, please.

So the current status of things is that, as I mentioned, we are developing our operational procedures. And we have actually just set the time line for that. So we expect them to be ready by the last of April this year so



that we can form the caucus and have -- hope to have that lined up and ready to start working on June 1st.

The procedures document will, as I said, specify processes for elections and liaisons and work party formation and publication and so on. And we have had one, and we are just after this meeting going to have a second editing session on that work to progress with the document.

Next slide, please.

The publication process that we propose to have is, as I mentioned already, the Executive Committee decides on a work item, forms a subgroup -- forms a work party from the caucus as a subgroup of the caucus, and they produce a draft document. The entire caucus will finalize the document, through consensus process, and the Executive Committee will eventually publish it.

Next slide, please.

So the next steps we're looking at here is to finalize this document, appoint the caucus, publish the two inherited documents that we kind of took over from the old RSSAC. They weren't published -- they weren't ready to public when the old RSSAC closed down. So we have real documents that we need to get out. But we can't really do that until we have a process defined for publishing the documents. And we also are trying to establish better relationships with the other ICANN bodies to be able to pick up issues that relate to root service that is being discussed, and to advise on root server-related issues when they are touched upon. But we want to do so at an early stage so that when -- so that we can influence the process when the work is being done



rather than when the work is ready so that I have to take back and start over again if it's a critical thing that needs to be dealt with. And being here is part of that work.

I mentioned the two documents that we're looking at and that we've kind of inherited. These are two documents. One is a document that tries to describe the expectations of root server operations. Root servers operate under -- under hitherto -- actually, there are two documents, two old documents, that specify requirements for root server operators or for DNS servers. These are both old and even older. And they've been found to be outdated. The youngest one is around ten years old by now. So it's -- things have happened. It was time to renew them. And when we started to do that, we realized that there's a difference between the protocol side and the operational side and that RSSAC is not really the right body to set specifications for the DNS protocol. That belongs with the IETF, and the proper body to do the specifications is the Internet Architecture Board. So the IAB has written a document for the protocol side of things, and we, within RSSAC, are writing the operational requirements document.

These two need to be published in tandem, together, at the same time, but through different channels, because the IAB has a totally different channel for publishing documents. But they need to be published in parallel, because they reference each other.

The other document is a document that specifies a number of metrics, measurements that we can do or that we are expected to do on the root servers in order to look for long-term trends and changes in the root server system. And this came out of the root scaling study that was



carried out a number of years ago. And we want to have a few metrics to try to see if there are signs of stress on the system, if it starts to behave different when we scale the root, when we put in a lot of new gTLDs there. So these are very simple metrics like the number of queries we receive per day or per time unit, the number of sources, the number of sources, how many different clients are asking things from the root servers, how big is the root zone, how long time does it take to distribute it from the source, the zone maintainer to the end machine that actually performs the root service, the dots on the map that you saw before.

Those kind of simple things. But by keeping the statistics over long time, we hope that we will be able to see trends and watch the system as it grows and changes with time.

That's what I had to say. I'm looking at you, so if you want to comment further.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Thank you.

So that was a very interesting presentation about the issues that you deal with in the reinvigorated RSSAC.

If there are any questions or comments from colleagues -- I can see Italy -- then I think we have a few minutes to take those.

Go ahead, please, Italy.



ITALY:

Thank you, Chair.

So what these guys are doing is a very, very professional engineering task, and it is ensuring that the routing of the information over the network is functioning, is functioning well.

Another think is that the 2.8 billion people using the Net, they don't even perceive their role. So this is something very important.

And we understood from the presentation that there, let's say, the policy commitment is regarding to continuation of security, stability, and resiliency of the process.

So my point is a question like this. In this IANA function transition, you said clearly that you want that security is continued at the same level or even better, if possible.

You play a good role, especially with new gTLDs, in verifying that adding so many new records, this will not cause degradation of the services and so on. But concerning this transition, where you see problems that you might address, the fact that changes to the root server A operator or what else.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Thank you for that question, even though I'm -- it's a little bit early yet to respond to.

First of all, I'll say that questions about the IANA transition and the implications of that, I can't speak for RSSAC because RSSAC does not yet have a position on -- you know, like everyone else, we're sort of trying to figure out what the role is and what the implications are.



I think the answer to your question is that we are -- again, from my personal perspective, but this is something that colleagues have been discussing here, and I think it's early days yet but we expect first to be participants in the process of identifying what the changes might be and of being part of the process and providing our best advice from the operational perspective as to how to handle them as they come up.

Because we don't know yet what the implications really are, I think the preliminary answer to your question is what we're doing is showing up and being part of the conversation.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Thank you. And so I have requests from the Netherlands and China. So Netherlands, please.

NETHERLANDS:

Yes. Thank you, Heather. And thank you, Suzanne and Lars or Liman, or -- well, let's say, the names you are known for somewhere. Just to say that I think it's a kind of timely moment in which you probably self-organize yourself, let's say, more professional because of this NTIA announcement. And I think we had -- I think I had some experience with the old RSSAC, as you called it, being also the liaison a couple of years ago, and it's good that we now have, let's say, fresh faces on your side also, and also a new fresh face on our side, if Finland is very glad to take this up.

I have a question also in line with Italy concerning the IANA announcement. I think probably you are the guys who should, let's say, in your requirements to the service which is being given to you from



IANA and VeriSign, to be able to really put down the good requirements for performing a stable and function service from IANA.

So I expect very much from you, I think, as one of the key elements in the IANA system to put down. And in the new context, I think you have -- let's say, you are better equipped to do this. And I hope, really, that you will give good input for this process, on this, especially on the part that Italy mentioned, security and stability of the system.

Thank you.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Thank you very much for your confidence and we take it very, very seriously.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Okay. So next I have China, then France, and Iran.

China, please.

CHINA:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I also thanks for the committee to present us very clear introduction to your work. We know that your work is very important, and especially for the stability of the root servers. You know, we care much on the security, the stability of the root server. And we also know that it is the -- something mysterious of your commission because I heard that most



of the work is closed-door meetings. So as we are nearing the transition period, especially for the IANA transition, so during this kind of critical period it is -- we have -- maybe have some suggestion that maybe you can open your door or somewhat door and make it more transparent and also the governments appears much attention on the root server stability. Not only for the ccTLD but also for the root zone server.

So maybe I'll want to seek your suggestion or seek your opinions on how to enhance the GAC's involvement in the -- in your commission.

I know that there will be a liaison of GAC and your commission, but if there are any other means that can enhance the governments' involvement in your commission.

And my second question is concerning the work of the (indiscernible) for the root zone infrastructure that told the whole picture of the structure of the root zone around the world.

We know that they identify working group or expert group has the proposal on the shared root zone control. So what's the progress of this kind of work? Is there any suggestion from the commission regarding the shared zone control?

And also, another question concerning this is that many countries requesting to have the -- have the right on the root zone server. We know that the root zone server distribution is based on the conditions of 10 or 20 years ago. Not many distribute in the U.S. and Europe, but now the Internet has become the world property.

In Asia, in Africa, and also in other regions, there is no root zone servers. So is there any plan for the commission to expand the distribution of



the root zone servers around the world to make it more actable, more resilient and more quick response to the world?

And also, our suggestion that the more open and more transparent of the commission can be expected in the future.

Thank you.

SUZANNE WOOLF: Want to start?

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: So thank you. With respect to the openness, yes, it's been closed for -- too much closed, I will agree to that, for the past months. Mainly because we wanted the reorganization process to finish.

We do expect to hold more open meetings in the future, especially as we work with the real work items as opposed to internal process for creating -- creating our advisory committee.

So I would absolutely expect that. And as you mentioned, the liaison to this group and the many liaisons we have to other groups also help us to be open because these liaisons will also participate in the closed meeting. So we will try to shift more work into the open meetings, but remains closed; will still be available for the liaisons to be carried forward to this group.

When you speak of root zone control, that's something that the root server operators have stated, many of them -- many of the root server operators have made statements, public statements, sometimes



exchanged mutual letters with ICANN where they specifically make sure that they stay out of the zone content process.

So the root server operators, as I feel, are only concerned with taking the data and accomplish it to the general public.

So there is no process involved as soon as root server operator gets the data. No change whatsoever. That means that discussions regarding shared root zone control, they happen outside of the RSSAC and root server business. It's not something that we want to get involved with.

What the contents, and that's what you talk about when you control the data. In other words, you change the data. The content of the database is not our problem. That's something that is governed by policy processes within ICANN, in various other places but not within the root server system.

And your last question was about, yes, server distribution. I would argue that there are a fair number of actual root servers in countries in Asia and Africa and South America as well. The map that you saw earlier in our presentation actually shows that. So I think that you're referring to is that there are root server operating organizations. Most of them are based in the United States, and only three of them outside the United States, and two of them in Europe and one in Japan. That is true.

On the other hand, these are very dedicated to work on behalf of the Internet community. The Internet community are the people we serve, provide information to, and we are very happy to work with almost anyone to try to improve service where service is not good. And since



the process that the root server operators do does not involve changing the data in any way, the same data is provided in Johannesburg, in Nairobi, in Singapore, in Rio de Janeiro. It's actually the very same data and it's not changed any way -- where.

You want to continue? No?

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Sure. Just to pick up on that last point. As kind of a -- maybe a principle overview of how we tend to regard, I think, the relationship between policy processes and what we do is with regards to something like -- and I believe I understood that you referred to a European Commission proposal regarding a shared root zone -- shared administration of the root zone, if I'm recalling correctly. But there's a set of issues, as my colleague says, that are strictly policy. We do not make those decisions.

We provide the best input we can in an advisory capacity regarding those policy issues. For example, there were policy reasons why it was a good idea to deploy DNSSEC for the root zone several years ago having to do with security and reliability of the information. That was a policy decision that that should go forward.

The root server operators were a very active part of the conversation about exactly how to deploy it in the safest possible way so as to make it beneficial for all -- for users of the system.

So I would expect that as concerns on these policy issues advance, that we continue to do that; that we provide the best advice possible in the context of a policy process that we're supporting and providing input for.



CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you.

So we have time for our last two speakers. We have France and then Iran.

France, please.

FRANCE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The map you showed showed that there are a lot of, well, numbers of operators throughout the world and so I guess that they share the same level of skill and knowledge about maintaining and operating a root server. So can I infer very candidly that many or several operators could actually do the job that VeriSign does as root zone maintainer with the same level -- with providing the same level of confidence and reliability and security should the contract be re-opened to other bidders in the future?

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: That's an interesting -- an interesting question. Right now, I don't see any reason to change the system because we have a system that works very well and we have people with lots of experience working at VeriSign doing a very good job.

That said, if things were to change substantially, I foresee that there will be organizations that will be able to do the same job. It will -- The knowledge and the skill is out there. Maybe not the actual physical



resources to do it right now but to build such resources is not a -- how shall I put it? It's not really rocket science. It's something you can do. Given enough money and given some time you can build facilities that perform the same service under someone else's regime. That would be technically possible, yes. Definitely.

So that's a possible, however unlikely, way forward, I would say.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Thank you.

Next I have Iran, please.

IRAN:

Thank you very much for presentation. I understood that in -- my question is following the question raised by China and the type of answer they have given. And also, I hear the comment made by France. But still, I think it might not be quite a convincing thing that such and such existing operation is working quite well because there has been no comparison between the others quite well with respect to what. So we have to see whether there is a way to -- to investigate that.

But I'm coming to the question for which I have asked for the floor, and that is in the chapter or section, article, perhaps, 11 in section two -- three of the ICANN bylaws, the responsibility of this Advisory Committee is mentioned. Do you have any intention within the new -- I say letter of intent of the NTIA for the transfer of this stewardship, I call it letter of intent until it is going to the reality, to have a look to see whether this area of responsibility needs to be reviewed. And to add



something on that, and some of them in particular, whether there are areas that need to be reinforced. For instance, if I read the part three, that engage in ongoing threat assessment and risk analysis of the root server system, and the recommendation whether you have seen during the last few years, there is a need for fostering or asserting this sort of this assessment of threatening, type of threatening with respect to what is currently being done and making a recommendation in that regard.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN: Thank you, Iran.

Did you want to respond or....

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thank you. I'm --

SUZANNE WOOLF: I think I can.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Please do.

SUZANNE WOOLF: That's a very broad question. And as your colleagues have asked, and you're right, we have a similar answer along the lines of there are both policy and operational pieces to the question I believe you're asking. And, therefore, there's -- frankly, the primary reason we're here, even



more than to give you any specific information, is to show that we're willing to engage on questions like that, the interaction of those kinds of questions.

A couple of specifics. I understood part of the question to be about security and threat assessment, risk analysis and so on. It's important to note that the root server operators separately and together do that kind of work all the time. It's part of running a professional operation, providing a service globally.

With that said, there's also, as we said earlier, we understand the transparency of doing those things is also a concern, and we're interested in input on what it would -- what information you want from us, what you want from us in the way of transparency to demonstrate the commitment that is being made and the measures being taken to assure the system.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Thank you.

So I think we have time for just one last question or comment from Russia before we conclude the session.

RUSSIA:

Thanks, Madam Chair.

Thanks for presentation. Brief question, but let me speak Russian.

It is true that there are many issues related to the root zone; however, there is one that is a priority. It has to do with security and stability.



There is a relevant committee. The presentation showed that there is work being done; however, I want to understand to what extent these issues have been already resolved. There is also requirements for operators in terms of security and stability.

We heard, even during the plenary, an opinion by the experts about the need for stress tests. So we would like to hear a few words about this.

Thank you very much.

LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Thank you. I will try to address that.

Yes, at least some of the aspects of security and stability have been addressed in the requirements document that we have sitting and that we intend to release as soon as we have operational procedures for doing so.

In addition, as Suzanne mentioned earlier, in running our operations, we naturally do stress tests of our own systems. We don't do stress tests of the systems that are running and responding to queries. But I can speak for I-root at least to say we have a laboratory with identical equipment where we perform stress tests and various types of not only stress and load on the system but also various types of, how to put it, sending strange queries to see that it behaves properly and doesn't fall apart when you send strange questions or malformed questions and so on. So that is part of normal operational procedures.

Again, I take that back again to the question from the gentleman from Iran; that what I hear is there is a lack of transparency here that we are -

- we, as root server operators, are not succeeding in conveying this information to the -- to the general public; that we actually keep doing these things and what we do and how we do it. So I will take that back and see if we can either put that into the current document before it gets published or if we can issue a new document that gives recommendations about being more open about what we actually do to make sure that the system stays stable and working.

Thank you.

CHAIR DRYDEN:

Thank you. I think that's a great place to conclude.

So with that, thank you, on behalf of the GAC, for coming to brief us today and answer our questions. And we hope that this can be an ongoing exchange that we have, and that we continue in the same way.

And thank you to Finland as well for arranging this with our colleagues in the RSSAC.

So thank you.

So for the GAC, we'll just take a 30-seconds pause, and then we can move into our next session. So don't anybody move.

SUZANNE WOOLF:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for having us.



LARS-JOHAN LIMAN: Yes, thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]

