
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – GAC Communique Drafting (6 of 6)
Thursday, March 12, 2026 – 13:15 to 14:30 IST

GÜLTEN TEPE

Welcome to the final GAC Communiqué drafting session on Thursday 12th of March at 13:15 local time. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, and The ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

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I'll now hand the floor over to GAC chair, Nicolas Caballero. Over to you, Nico.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Gülten. Welcome back, everyone. I hope you enjoyed your time in Mumbai the whole week and that you had the time to enjoy the food and the fantastic ristretto. And I'm looking

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at my Italian friend right in front of me. He had doubts about the quality of that ristretto. I can tell you, I guarantee it's fantastic.

So, we're going to continue with the Communiqué drafting where we left off yesterday. And for that, and again, congratulations to everyone for the fantastic job we managed to finish before the allocated time.

Again, for the third or fourth time in a row, correct me, Ian, if I'm wrong, but I think it's like the fourth time in a row that we finished. I mean that we don't actually need to use the six Communiqué drafting sessions. I think we're making good progress, which basically means that we're becoming more efficient. Efficiency is always a good thing, especially for very busy people like you and me who have all the GAC related work, and then you have your day job, and then you have other things to do as well.

So, without further ado, let me give the floor to Fabien, who's going to be walking us through the sections we still need to cover, and then we'll go ahead with a full reading, Nigel Hickson style, as we like to say. Fabien, please.

FABIEN BETREMIEUX

So, I think we've covered the entirety of the Communiqué. What we did as GAC Support Team is to go through our editorial review, which consists of making sure that everything is clear, that where there is an opportunity to clarify, we can suggest something, or capitalization, or consistency of reference. And you'll see as Ian

goes through the review of the Communiqué, we've suggested three, in three places, specific additions or modification that address some small issues we've seen. And so, we'll cover those as you go through.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

So, again, before I give the floor to Ian for the full read, I just wanted to mention that we will not actually need, and that's a consequence of us becoming more efficient, we will not need the wrap-up session. So, that's another good thing, I guess. A little bit of extra time for you guys to check your emails and to catch up on a lot of work that you most probably have back home, and so on and so forth. I really think that's a good thing as well.

I myself, I need to stay for the, I think at 4:30 we have the Board meeting. But anyways, enjoy, you know, that extra free time that we ourselves produced, thanks to that efficiency. So, Ian, please go ahead, the floor is all yours.

IAN SHELDON

Great, thanks. Thanks, Nico. So, we're just going to go section by section here. I trust everybody has had a chance to read the document overnight, and so we're seeking final consensus on the document at a broad level.

Pausing, I think, at the three spots that Fabien has flagged, just so we can assess what minor amendments have been made and continue on. So, the preambular text is reasonably

straightforward. Of course, there's a placeholder there to flag that no objections were raised during the agreed timeframe before publication, and as Fabien notes in the comments, we still have that 72-hour period as well, following confirmation of today.

Scroll down, please. Our introduction goes through attendance, the mode of the meeting. There're two paragraphs here in, with relation to Suzanne Riddell. I might pause here. I see no hands or comments.

Inter-constituency activities and community engagement. We have a section here talking about our meeting with the ICANN Board, meeting with the ASO, as well as one with the IETF. A brief discussion on our meeting with the GNSO, with the Review of Reviews cross-community group, the RSSAC, and a brief section here on cross-community discussions. I'll pause here briefly to give members an opportunity to flag any concerns, and I see none, so perhaps we can continue.

Internal matters. A brief update on the latest number of GAC members and observer organizations, a brief description on the GAC elections, as well as an update on the outcome of those elections as well for leadership.

This is followed by a brief discussion on the various internal Working Groups of the GAC, including the PSWG, the USRWG, the UA-IDN WG, and I'll pause here. I'm also assuming that, I'm not

giving you time to read what's on the screen, because I would assume you have read this document overnight as well.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Which was the whole idea of having this session today, right? The idea was to give you time to go back and forth with your capitals, have enough time to read between last night and this morning, and come with a fresh mind to check for the final little details. Back to you, Ian.

IAN SHELDON

I should also note that GAC support has done a reasonably thorough review of grammar and typos, but we'll be conducting one final review before finalization, so if you do happen to spot any of those grammatical inconsistencies or errors, please do feel free to raise them with GAC support and we can make those amendments as necessary.

Continuing on. Section 5 on the HLG. I'm just pausing here and I might read out this sentence. Yesterday Zaina had raised the point about perhaps the wording at the start of this paragraph was a little unclear, so the suggestion here from Fabien is highlighted in pink.

So, the GAC welcomes the invitation from the Sultanate of Oman for member governments and observer organizations to take part in the next high-level government meeting HLG in Muscat on 18 October 2026. Are we all okay with that minor amendment? I see no hands, so perhaps we can accept that change and move on.

Section 6, GAC readiness for the next round of gTLDs. I see no requests for the floor, so perhaps we can move on to issues of importance. Here we have a brief discussion on domain name registration data and here we have a suggestion for an inclusion of a qualifier to address the issue at the start of the sentence.

So, I will pause here and read out the refreshed sentence. Given the vital Public Safety Interests involved in Urgent Requests, a new PDP would unduly delay further progress on the issue. I'm just providing an extra layer of context and specificity here. Are we all okay with this proposed amendment? I see no hands, so perhaps we can accept that proposal and continue. Thank you.

We have a section here on Registration Data Request Service, RDRS and policy recommendations for a System for Standardized Access and Disclosure. This text is as it was yesterday. I see no hands, perhaps we can continue on. I see no hands, so perhaps we can accept that proposal and continue on.

And finally, Privacy and Proxy Services. So, there is a suggestion here to include a little bit of qualifying text to bring it in line with perhaps more formal communiqué language. So, the new sentence reads, the GAC welcomes the IRT's timeline to advance this work during the 2026 calendar year. Are we okay with this proposed edit?

I see no hands, so perhaps we can accept it and continue. I think that's the last of the edits. Is that right, Fabien?

FABIEN BETREMIEUX

No, there's one more.

IAN SHELDON

One more, okay. So, the next section here is on DNS Abuse Mitigation. So, scrolling down, we do have one suggested replacement with quite a bit of new text here. So, perhaps we can pause and I'll read out the new sentence and give GAC members time to consider, including a reasonable amount of comments here as well. Sure, I'll read it out and then I'll hand to Fabien to provide a little bit of an explanation as to what's proposed here.

As the INFERMAL study notes, when the validation of registrant information takes place during the account creation or before the domain purchase, it is associated with a 70% decrease in malicious registrations. Over to you, Fabien.

FABIEN BETREMIEUX

And so, this suggestion is part of our review of accuracy of reference. For instance, you may recall that the sentence prior to this one regarding the 15-day timeline for registrar to validate and verify registrant's contact information. As part of that verification, we verified the following sentence as well. And it occurred to us that the text that was proposed in the communiqué was quite different from the actual source of the statement, the note in the informal study.

So, we went through the various references and to the text. In fact, what we're proposing is a paraphrasing, simplified, shorter version of the statement in the informal study, which the GNSO Small Team on accuracy had itself referenced. And so, this is suggested for clarity and precision of reference.

So, there is no misunderstanding about the meaning of that sentence. And we circulated this earlier today to make sure that who we knew were involved in the drafting of this text could consider it. And so, we'd welcome any confirmation or concern that this can work. Thank you.

IAN SHELDON

Thank you, Fabien. Are we all okay with this language? Yes, I get a thumbs up. Yes? Yes? Great. Thank you. Let's accept that text and move on. Next Round of New gTLDs. A short section here on the Applicant Support Program, followed by community applications and the TLD application management system.

Any concerns here? I see none and I see no hands in the room. Let's move on. A very brief section here on the UDRP review, followed by a discussion on the governance of regional internet registries. I see no hands. Let's continue.

Section 6 on the Root Service System, followed by a brief discussion on the Review of Reviews. I see no hands, which I will take as comfort. Let's continue. And finally, I think that brings us to the end of the substantive portion, with the final section here on

the next meeting of the gTLDs. During the ICANN86 policy forum on the 8th to the 11th of June 2026.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Just one thing, should we mention the beautiful city of Seville there? What do you think? This is a question for the GAC, right, or for consistency, we don't normally mention there. I'm just asking.

FABIEN BETREMIEUX

We usually do not and that's why it's not here. If we want to introduce new practice, we're fine with it, it's up to the GAC. I think we've seen in the past challenges with meeting being relocated, so you know that might, not mentioning, not that I'm aware of any plans of that happening in the future, it's happened in the past.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Who knows any scandal about paellas or something like that but yeah, okay, for consistency let's just keep it as it is, it was just a question. So, that basically brings us to the end of the communiqué drafting. Thank you so very much. I really think we all deserve a big round of applause. So, I don't know if at this point, we're missing anything. Let me give the floor to Rob. Is there anything we're missing here? Any final announcements or anything? Over to you, Rob.

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- ROBERT HOGGARTH Well, yes sir, you had, I think, postponed or actually canceled the wrap-up session and suggested that we do that, or at least the information.
- NICOLAS CABALLERO I did, we're canceling, unless you tell me otherwise. Yeah, Fabien, go ahead.
- FABIEN BETREMIEUX Yeah, I'm sorry to interrupt. We did forget something, and it's a mention of Rob Hogarth in the communiqué.
- NICOLAS CABALLERO Can we get to that part, please? Can we get to that part of the text? And we do have a hand from the USA. USA, you wanted to take the floor?
- SUSAN CHALMERS Thank you, Chair. I was just going to offer a few words in reflection on the progress that we've made on one of these issues, on the Urgent Request issue, just to give a little history, but I'm very happy to do that whenever is most appropriate. Thank you.
- NICOLAS CABALLERO Perfect, we'll do just that. Fabien? So, as you can see, this was supposed to be a surprise for our good friend Rob. You know, we do mention Rob under internal matters with his name right there.

The GAC expresses its sincere appreciation and thanks to Mr. Rob Hogarth for his long-standing contributions and years of dedicated engagement with the committee.

The GAC thanks Rob for his unwavering support and collegial collaboration with the GAC, which will be greatly missed and wishes him the very best in his retirement. A big round of applause for Rob, please. Thank you very much. USA, the floor is yours.

SUSAN CHALMERS

So, I just want to take a moment to recognize that we have achieved a milestone at this meeting. The GAC successfully separated, I just want to take us back in time for a minute, the GAC successfully separated the Urgent Request timeline from consensus policy. It was a procedural first and we were able, really, that the Board has now finalized that the 24-hour timeline for responses to Urgent Requests, that language.

It was a hard fight, but we eventually got there. And so, I just wanted to note that. I think it really is a demonstration of how when we focus and put our minds together and work with others, we can really achieve results. Thanks. That's all.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, USA. I had Switzerland also. There was a hand from Jorge.

JORGE CANCIO

Oh, thank you. I'm trying to put my camera on. Yeah, Jorge Cancio, Switzerland, for the record. I just had raised my hand after the text about Rob, because I was about to veto it or object to it. But no, I just wanted to share the recognition I put now in the chat, because I've been in the leadership now for quite some years in different positions.

And it's something that is most of the time invisible to the rest of the committee, what our support staff does, Fabien, Benedetta, Julia, Gülten, all of them. But Rob, of course, has a very important responsibility, steering this team, and supporting us and also sometimes advising us in a very diplomatic manner.

You don't really want to do that, what you are intending to do, because there's a bylaw, or there's an operating principle. But you can do it this other way, which is very useful, or transforming some notes or some interventions of a couple of seconds into very useful texts, for instance, for the GAC Board interactions.

So, long story short, thank you so much, Rob. I really missed you already. And I'm very sorry not to be there to hug you as it would be proper. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Switzerland. We miss you too, by the way, Jorge. So, let me say a few words to Rob on behalf of my distinguished delegates and colleagues. And most importantly, for Rob. There's a saying that in the world of Internet Governance one year in the

GAC is like seven years in the in the real world, so to say. So, by that math, Rob, you've been with us for about a century. If I've been around for four years, that would make a quarter of a century, a good 25 years. So, in your case, it would be a full century.

So, I've had the distinct privilege, and I would say occasional exhaustion, of working closely with Rob for the for the last four years. In that time, I've learned two very important things. First, that Rob has a level of patience, especially with me, that is technically impossible for a human being. That's whether it's explaining a bylaw for the for the 15th or 20th time or navigating the, let's say, the delicate nuances of communiqué at 3 a.m. in the morning, or, you know. So, Rob basically remains the calmest person in the world, I would say.

Second, I've learned that being a lawyer, and we talked about that many times, it's actually some sort of facilitation superpower at this point, and you know why. You know my opinion about lawyers, with all due respect there are some good lawyers, but let's say, in general. So, Rob, no, seriously, your ability to translate, let's say, government speak to ICANN language and back again without losing your mind and your patience is, I would say, nothing short of miraculous. And I mean it, right?

You've been the bridge, let's say, the anchor, and occasionally the referee for all of us, depending on the situation. On a personal note, I can say that your wisdom and cooperative spirit have been a guiding light for me during my time in leadership for the last, I

would say, four years. You didn't just support the GAC; you cared for it during this time. You've seen us through the transition of the IANA stewardship, the launch of the new gTLDs, and enough Urgent Requests that could last a lifetime, I would say.

Not to mention the strategic planning retreats in Brussels and endless conversations about the influence of supernovas in Italian cuisine. Rob, so as you head into this well-done, well-deserved, I would say, retirement, please know that your legacy is built into the very foundation of this committee, of how this committee operates, as a matter of fact.

We will miss your guidance, but mostly we will miss your friendship. So, may your future be full of fewer acronyms and more peace of mind. Thank you, thank you very much for everything. I have Manal, I have Netherlands, Egypt and India. Egypt?

MANAL ISMAIL

Thank you, Nico. Really, it was a true, true pleasure working with you, Rob, and I'm very sorry to miss your last meeting and to properly celebrate your long-standing contributions to the GAC. I had the pleasure of working with you as a GAC representative, but also as a former chair of the GAC, and cannot but thank you for always being there to help and support super polite, super diplomatic and brilliant in integrating our casual folks into, I put it as Nico said, into ICANN language.

So, always been there, always helping, always behind the scenes and always giving the credit to everyone else. And thank you for always training the GAC support team and to those who have not been here for long enough, also bringing back that trust in ICANN support, that secretariat. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Egypt. Thank you very much. I have the Netherlands next.

MARCO HOGEWONING

Thank you, Nico. And yeah, I'll try to be short and breaking the habit of raising all these flags at the end of the wrap-up session, but I'd like indeed to take the opportunity to thank Rob, as a lot of colleagues already said so many nice words.

Being here now for the GAC with about four years and working closely with you, Rob, it's been a wonderful journey. Indeed, as I said, as previous speakers already said, your guidance, your wit, but also, yeah, sometimes the subtle ways of signaling that we might sort of be creating new precedents or skirting around the rules has always been very helpful in finding our way.

Looking back, of course, I've been around longer than that. I've been a member of the GAC. It's also wonderful to see how the GAC has evolved over the years and especially also the role that you and your team have had in shaping the GAC. It was this morning also recognized that our transparency is a shining light in ICANN and

you and your colleagues also always helpful to navigate the network and intricacies of ICANN have been, I think, a great contribution to the collective image of the GAC.

As Manal said, we've come a long way. We've went to many iterations also with the Secretariat and your leadership in this will be duly missed and really hard to replace, but looking forward to working with the team and working with your replacement to keep up the good work. But thank you for all the hard work and I hope that maybe you can just stick your head into an ICANN meeting when we're close by somewhere in the future. It would be lovely to meet up again. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you, Netherlands. Egypt?

CHRISTINE ARIDA

Yeah, so I'm overwhelmed with everything that the colleagues have said. I can only and I'm so sad that I'm not there in the room to say a real shake hand and goodbye, Rob, but I'm definitely going to meet again very soon. But I'll just share my very personal experience through the past few years on the leadership team.

Rob, your current presence under pressure, your attention to every detail and your ability to manage everything so smoothly and seamlessly has made every single complex moment easier for all of us. So, your support behind the scene never went unnoticed and leadership simply wouldn't have run as smoothly without you.

So, I really thank you for your dedication, for your reliability, and for your quiet confidence that you brought to everything you did. I wish you all the best the coming time. And I really hope we can remain friends on a personal level and touch base every now and then. Thank you. Thank you.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, Christine. Egypt, India, please go ahead.

SUSHIL PAL

Thank you, Chair. I think this has actually been a surprise. I mean, I really wish if we could issue a back advice on this that we recommend to the Board that we don't agree with and maybe his tenure needs to be extended.

Honestly, I think this meeting has been very satisfying. I think there have been definitely quite a few hits and misses. I think hits, as Susan just mentioned, that 24 hours timeline has reached a final, I mean, finality. That's great news. And the miss is that I think we'll be missing Rob from here onwards. I think although Jorge, his colleague, mentioned that I think you guys work in a background that is not visible, but you're a tall guy.

And I think not only physically, but intellectually and emotionally as well. I think I still remember from my when I walked into the first meeting in the GAC, I think I still have that impression in mind. And you have always been so very accessible and friendly to kind of to explain anything.

I will miss you badly. I wish you all the best, I think, in your whatever future endeavor you choose to do. And also, I would like to, I mean, being a host, would like to thank all the GAC colleagues for engaging very constructively in this discussion. I hope they would find time to go around and hope that, I mean, the arrangements for the meeting and the stays were all comfortable and they enjoyed this ICANN85 meeting. Thank you so much.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Thank you very much, everyone. Two last things before we wrap up. The first one is just to let you know again, Rob, that I will really miss our conversations about the supernovas and their influence on Italian cuisine. That's for sure. And the second thing, I will kindly ask our distinguished GAC colleagues to approach the head table for a final picture with Rob, including the ones online.

I don't know if there's any way to put Christine, Jorge, and everyone else over there on the screen so that they can be including the picture as well. Can you please approach the head table? Thank you so much. And other than that, the session is adjourned. Thank you so much.

Sorry. I'm sorry. Rob, would you like to say anything? I mean, because everybody kept talking and we didn't give you the chance to say at least thank you or anything you would like to say. So, this is a good moment before the photo op.

ROBERT HOGGARTH

Are you sure about that? Because I was brought up here under false pretenses, so I'm not sure. I don't have much to say, but I did. No. No, thanks. Thanks very much. It's rare that as staff we get the opportunity to sort of break the wall. Our job, as you all noted, is really to be behind the scenes. Our opinions, our views, or our perspectives are to be kept to ourselves and not shared. So, this is a rare but brief opportunity. Thank you for that, Mr. Chair.

I don't know. Just one quick reflection or two, if I may. And that is, this is the end of my professional career. But when I started, I was a practicing attorney. And in that time, I learned the effectiveness and the power of effective advocacy.

Then later, I became a trade association executive, and I learned the power of communications and connection, really being able to bring different forces together and form some collective action. Even spent some time as a corporate executive, where I learned the importance of Strategic Planning, the importance of processes, efficiencies, and things like that, that you have often mentioned.

And then, although I didn't plan it, this was sort of the last phase of my career that sort of brought it all together. Because what I learned from many of you here in person and folks online was the value of diplomacy, collaboration, bringing together different points of view to establish consensus.

And that was very important and really a tremendous lesson I've learned from all of you. And so that's something I greatly appreciate.

For those of you at the tables, thank you very much for being inspirations to me and the staff. You are all excellent, fantastic, fabulous, if I can use Nico's words, representatives of your governments, your institutions, your organizations. But more important to me is, as individuals, you represent examples and real true symbols of the cultures, the histories, and may I say the futures of your respective countries and people that you represent. And that's been tremendously inspirational and I really appreciate the opportunity to see that.

Thank you all for sharing that with me. I'm very comfortable that the DNS and the internet is in good hands, seeing many of the people in this room and online. So, thanks very much. I can't say that I'll be observing too closely from my next life, but best wishes to you all and thank you again.

NICOLAS CABALLERO

Okay, so that brings us to the end of the sessions during Mumbai ICANN85. The session is adjourned, but please approach the head table for a final picture, for a final photo op with Rob and everybody, everybody in the room, please, please come to the head table.

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