
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – Joint Session: ICANN Board and ALAC
Wednesday, March 11, 2026 – 9:00 to 10:00 IST

FRANCO CARRASCO

Hello and welcome, everybody. My name is Franco Carrasco and I am the participation manager for this session. Welcome to the joint session between the ICANN Board and the At-Large Advisory Committee. Please note that this session is being recorded and follows the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy and the Community Participant Code of Conduct Concerning Statements of Interest.

Interpretation for this session will include today English, French and Spanish. For our panelists today, we ask that you please state your name for the record and the language that you will speak if speaking a language other than English. Please also remember to speak at a reasonable pace.

This discussion today is between the ICANN Board and the ALAC only. Therefore, we will not be taking any questions from the audience. Having said that, I will now hand the floor over to the ICANN Board Chair, Tripti Singh.

TRIPTI SINGH

Thank you, Franco. Welcome, everyone. Today is Wednesday. It's the third day of constituency meetings and we kick off the day with a joint meeting with the ALAC. And the facilitator for the session is

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Leon Sanchez, my colleague, so I'll turn it over to him because we've got lots to talk about and let's just dive right into it. Leon?

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Tripti, and thank you everyone for showing up early and in time for our meeting. I think it's always good to interact with each of the constituencies and, of course, me being selected by At-Large, it's always good to have you here, guys. And as you know, we have sent a couple of questions to each of the constituencies, the SO/ACs and, of course, At-Large and ALAC received their corresponding questions from the Board.

So, I would like to ask if you have any feedback, any input that you would like to provide in response to those questions that we sent in advance. I don't know if we have the slides with the questions handy so we can go through them. If not, I can read them. I have them here.

So, the first one is related to the ICANN five-year Strategic Plan, the 26-30 Strategic Plan. And -- I'm sorry? Oh, yes. You're right. Sorry, I'm so eager to get feedback from At-Large that I forgot to actually get introductions from everyone on the table. So, before we dive into the subject, let me just go around the table to see who's at the table. Maybe we start with you, Wes.

WES HARDAKER

I'm Wes Hardaker. I'm the RSSAC liaison to the ICANN Board.

JUSTINE CHEW Good morning. I'm Justine Chew. I'm one of the ALAC vice chairs.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY Good morning. I'm Amrita Choudhury from APRALO, At-Large.

RAÚL ECHEBERRÍA Raúl Echeberría, ICANN Board.

JONATHAN ZUCK I'm Jonathan Zuck, the ALAC chair.

LEON SANCHEZ Leon Sanchez, ICANN Board.

TRIPTI SINGH Tripti Sinha, ICANN Board.

KURTIS LINDQUIST Kurtis Lindquist, President CEO, ICANN.

SAJID RAHMAN Sajid Rahman, ICANN Board.

CHRIS BUCKRIDGE Chris Buckridge, ICANN Board.

GREG DIBIASE

Greg DiBiase, ICANN Board.

CHRISTIAN KAUFMANN

Christian Kaufmann, ICANN Board.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, everyone.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Claire Craig is online. It's on Zoom.

LEON SANCHEZ

Welcome, Claire. Hi. Welcome, Claire.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Hello. This is Claire Craig, one of the ALAC co-vice chairs. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Claire, and welcome. We know it's a difficult hour for you to be with us, but thank you for being here with us as well.

So, back to what I was saying, we would like to get your views and feedback on these questions that we sent in advance. And, well, I assume that you've reviewed them, and we would like to know in

regard to a Strategic Plan, from your perspective, what is the top emerging trend that may impact ICANN that you think the Board should consider? And I don't know who's going to take this from your side, Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK

I think Claire is going to first take the top of the question with the Strategic Plan.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you, Leon. This is Claire Craig again for the record. So, I am going to begin to address this topic by starting with a quote from Tripti that she would have made at the opening session on Monday and I quote her where she said, “We gather today against a backdrop of profound difficulty and unrest in the world. Pain, suffering and conflict are touching the lives of so many and none of us is entirely removed from the reality whether the impact is felt closely or from a distance”.

Now let me give you some more context before I answer the question directly. This broad context matters for the future of the internet and for ICANN's role within it and that of the At-Large community. Recently geopolitical developments illustrated and sorry there is a slide which has some of this if you could scroll to that slide please. Recently geopolitical developments illustrated the scale of the challenge.

On February 28th just a few days ago the United States and Israel launched a coordinated large scale military strike against Iran. What we have witnessed is massive destruction and significant casualties and regional escalation which are contributing to global insecurity and deepening geopolitical fragmentation.

This has intensified instability across the Middle East and highlighted the vulnerability of digital infrastructure during geopolitical crises. Beyond the human cost, beyond the tragic human cost modern conflicts increasingly affect communication networks, critical infrastructure and digital systems and societies that societies depend upon.

These developments have serious implications for the outreach and engagement efforts of the At-Large who advocate for the interests of end users.

The Middle East has a vast number of ethnic groups with an estimated population of roughly 450 million people with growing internet penetration. In such context the internet is no longer simply a communication platform. It is an essential infrastructure supporting financial services, healthcare systems, logistics, energy distribution and access to basic goods and services.

When conflict disrupts connectivity through cyber operations, infrastructure damage or shutdowns, the consequences directly affect people's ability to meet basic needs. These developments reinforce a broader trend which is the core internet infrastructure increasingly viewed by some governments as a strategic asset in

geopolitical competition. This includes the domain name system coordinated globally by the ICANN.

Concurrently these sovereign narratives are gaining traction and adjacent naming systems provide a contextual example of governance outside the ICANN framework. As geopolitical tensions grow, pressures related to digital sovereignty, network control and potential fragmentation of the internet may also increase.

For this reason, the At-Large community are actively engaging in this environmental scanning exercise being undertaken to review the assumptions underlying the FY 26-30 Strategic Plan. In particular we see relevance for strategic objective 1 which focuses on the evolving and promoting ICANN's multi-stakeholder model and strategic objective 4 which aims to strengthen the stability and security of the internet's Unique Identifier Systems.

From the At-Large perspective the key emerging trend, the Board should consider and this is the direct response to your question is the growing intersection between geopolitics and internet infrastructure governance.

As global tensions rise the resilience and neutrality of the DNS and other core coordinated systems will become even more critical. So, it is against this backdrop, ICANN's continued effectiveness depends on reinforcing its position as a trusted state trusted neutral technical coordinator of the global DNS ensuring the

stability security and interoperability of a single global internet namespace and preventing fragmentation of the DNS.

This will require ongoing commitment to the multi-stakeholder model and sustained collaboration among governments, the private sector, civil society and the technical community and academia. I thank you for this opportunity to present this position on behalf of the ALAC and At-Large community.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Claire. You just highlighted this definitely on top of the Board's mind and I see Tripti has her card up so Tripti would you like to add something?

TRIPTI SINGH

Thank you, Leon. Claire thank you very much for attending the meeting remotely and you have hit a very key point. I don't want to reiterate what you just said so elegantly but yes, indeed the world's infrastructure is being destroyed for various reasons and of course, with it comes all the collateral damage where we take away critical services from humankind.

We all recognize without a shadow of doubt that ICANN needs to continue to play a very neutral role in ensuring that we meet our mandate and what ties in very nicely with this is what happened at WSIS where the multi-stakeholder model was endorsed, the technical community was recognized as being critical and the IGF is now made permanent.

So, we need to use all these modalities, come together as a community and ensure that while this world continues to spin in various directions, we ensure that critical infrastructure and services continue to operate. It's not going to be an easy task because of what's happening but we need to put in architectural models such as you know lots of duplication and replication of services. But nevertheless, we have entered a very difficult time and we need to ensure that we continue to remain united in our mandate to deliver on our mission.

So, thank you again, Claire, for recognizing this and it is indeed very much on our radar and in fact yesterday it came up during the SSAC meeting if I'm not mistaken. So, I appreciate your recognition of this. Thank you.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Tripti. Sajid.

SAJID RAHMAN

Thanks, Claire, and I think what you highlighted is very much on the point, and I'll just supplement that. We have seen this play to some extent in the trade world with countries imposing trade barriers, and I would not be surprised if some form of those barriers gets

replicated in the world of internet with artificial digital barriers created by governments to protect specific interests.

That's where I think how ICANN, as a model, the multistakeholder model, the efficiency of the model, and we'll essentially strengthen if we continue to perform well. If we don't continue to perform well as a model, then of course the barriers and the people who want to impose those barriers will have more excuse nowadays.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Thank you. Agreed.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Sajid, and thanks, Claire. Does anyone want to make any comments on this? Yes, Wes.

WES HARDAKER

Thanks for bringing up this topic. It's certainly the forefront of the mind of the Board in general. I want to call out one important element, which is that the DNS ecosystem is actually quite resilient and available worldwide without filtering the root server operators. For example, as I'm a member of the root server operator committee, we have pledged not to do any filtering.

We have pledged to support communication worldwide regardless of geopolitical boundaries. We're an apolitical group. We have deployed over 2,000 root server instances around the planet to make sure that it is widely available as possible. So, in many ways,

the DNS ecosystem is probably more available than unfortunately many other resources that have been attacked, unfortunately. So, we are certainly doing our part to ensure that at least the top level of the DNS ecosystem is readily available more than most of the rest of the infrastructure.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Wes. Good. So, seeing no more hands up, I think we can go to next question from the Board. Yes, Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yeah, thank you. Jonathan Zuck here for the record. The next question had to do with the Review of Reviews and whether and how that was going and how we're participating. I'm one of the participants along with Avri Doria, who is one of the co-chairs of the effort. And I think there's a lot of earnest discussion going on and a lot of work, and it's happening fairly efficiently as well, so that there was definitely a desire to have that move along.

I do have some concerns that despite our best efforts to have a clean start with this clean slate, that everybody's slate wasn't completely clean. There're memories of issues from previous reviews that aren't necessarily being discussed. And so, every once in a while, somebody will make reference to a failed review or something, but nobody's ever said which review failed or how it failed.

So, the assessment of a problem statement, I think, is a challenge, I think, in finding an ideal solution. And I also think that saving implementation for last and the evaluation of implementation will have potential implications on design.

In other words, if we're making an assumption that whatever issues there are a function of the formation and scope of the teams, and then discover that implementation was a larger part of the problem, we may need to go back and revisit the design after that assessment. So, those are a couple of concerns.

Your other question went on to ask about self-assessment, and I think there's pretty broad agreement in the community that the continuous improvement initiative that came out of ATRT3 was wise in that most of the SOs and ACs know what their limitations are, know what they need to work on, and formalizing the process by which they continuously improve those processes, rather than waiting for an external organization to tell them what they already know, or worse, get it wrong because they're not around long enough and having to rewrite them. I think that's the way to go.

I think you rightfully asked the question about, when there's blind spots, how are they best handled, right? How do other parts of the community point out that there is a weakness in the way that you're communicating with other SOs and ACs, or otherwise in your participation in various volunteer efforts like PDPs, et cetera, and I think that's going to take some real thoughtful work on our part to figure out how the CIP program itself gets reviewed, and then also

how individual assessments made by those SOs and ACs that are attempting Continuous Improvement are informed or invited to explore areas that they may not have thought of.

So right now that language is fairly soft, as in its current design, as Leigh-Anne I'm sure you know, but I think we're hoping that if others in the community are able to gently suggest, hey, look at this potentially, your communications, your liaisons, or something like that, that affect the rest of the community, that they'll be open to exploring it. So, I think that's a good initiative, and I think it's headed in the right direction.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Jonathan. Does anyone want to comment on what we just heard from At-Large? Tripti

TRIPTI SINHA

So, thank you, Jonathan, for that feedback. Just one point of clarification. So, you're saying people still have memories of past reviews, and that might be coming in the way, or I mean, I'm trying to understand, would you prefer everyone have amnesia?

JONATHAN ZUCK

If we were having this conversation in the absence of prior reviews, we could truly have a green field discussion that said, what would be the best way to review things, how should they take place, et cetera.

Given the fact that we have 10 years of reviews under our belt, everyone comes to this with some biases about what they believe to be the problems that existed within the reviews, and I think in large measure, those biases go unexpressed. So, for example, and I don't mean to name names, because I think it's true for all of us, but the PIR proposal, for example, made reference to bad reviews.

Without proper scoping, you get bad reviews. But there was no point in this process, because we were trying to be green field, where we sat down and said, were any of these reviews a failure, and if so, why? I think there's a fear of that, right, because there were people that worked very hard on them, and we implemented some of the recommendations and didn't implement others, but if you don't have that conversation, then you don't know what conversation you're having, if that makes any sense, because you're talking about bad reviews, but no one has an example of one.

So, it's that kind of thing that I think can undermine the sort of green field intentions that we came with, because we don't really have a blank slate from which we're operating in the conversation.

I know a lot of people have mixed feelings about SSR2, potentially, because that's when the Board decided to halt in the middle, because of a belief that it was going beyond its scope. Well, that raises questions. Is the Board the one that should be deciding whether or not what the scope should be, or should the community be deciding what the scope should be?

And was it really the board's purview to halt that review? I mean, the failure might have been from the community not pushing back on that, honestly, more so than the failing of that review, but even if that's the case, picking these apart a little bit more, and understanding them better, so that we really developed more of a problem statement from which we were redesigning, I think might be more effective than pretending they didn't exist, and trying to have a green field discussion. That's my concern, I guess.

TRIPTI SINHA

Thanks for explaining that. If I can provide some feedback, I understand what you mean by people coming in with biases. If that can be twisted a little, and looked at as lessons learned, what went well, what didn't go well, because we do have 10 years of data now to tell us how to improve our processes, right?

JONATHAN ZUCK

We're not doing that, though. That's my point. We're not going back and saying this worked well, and this didn't work well. We're pretending there weren't previous reviews, because we're trying to do a green field, but each of us still has feelings about what went well, and didn't go well. Does that make sense?

TRIPTI SINHA

No, it does. I think we need to set aside our emotions, and just look at the data, and then use that as an architectural element to build the new reviews, but I understand what you're saying.

JONATHAN ZUCK

I would love to look at the data. Yeah, okay.

TRIPTI SINHA

All right. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Tripti. Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

I was just a question for Jonathan, because you're saying that we're not looking back at a problem statement. We can probably all argue how well-formed the problem statement was or not, but there were concerns that were put as input to what you said about the sequencing, the frequency of reviews, that there wasn't enough time to complete them.

There wasn't enough time to follow that up, and that was one of the statements, and I have no idea what PAR meant, but bad reviews, but I'll offer the probabilistic review, which the team itself said was so poorly scoped they couldn't execute it, so I think that there has been some examples of where the outcomes and the intent hasn't been as good as it may be, or formulated as well as it could have.

So, are you saying that the little input that existed isn't being taken into account or not? Because there was clearly input, but that's why the community decided to move forward. I'm just trying to

understand if that has been looked at or reviewed, because although we can always ask for more data, which is a very good thing to do, but there was some input into the group.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Yeah, I'm obviously happy to have a fulsome discussion about this, but to say that there was some, a bad cadence or something like that, I certainly, I think that that was definitely mentioned, but that's an abstraction that applies to the whole program as opposed to a failing of a particular review.

Another pattern was that almost every review that had more than one instance began with an assessment of the implementation of the previous recommendations, and in many instances, there was a complete disconnect between a belief in whether or not implementation had taken place or not of a particular recommendation.

So, that's why I think implementation needs to play an important role in this assessment that it has not yet done. You know, I was involved in one of the CCT review, and there are Board approved recommendations that 12 years later have not been implemented without explanation. So, I don't know how to use that data to improve a review.

I can't take that information and say we should have had a different group of people on the review. We should have scoped it differently, because what I have instead are recommendations that

went to the Board, that went to the public for Public Comment, were approved by the Board, and are 12 years later not implemented. So, what data do I take from that to redesign the review in which I participated?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

So, right, I mean, I don't know what example you're referring, but you said that we didn't start. My question was, at the start you said there was no input.

JONATHAN ZUCK

So, sorry, it was abstract. That's what I wanted to ask. It wasn't, but it wasn't the way that Tripti was just describing. Let's look at what worked and what didn't work. Right, okay. It wasn't that process. The process you're describing is, oh, we're overwhelmed with recommendations now. I didn't say anything of that.

KURTIS LINDQUIST

I said that there was an input into that community felt that the cadence of the reviews was too short, too much. That was one of the feedback. Another one was that one of the recommendations, which was you said there was no bad reviews, and I just gave the example that the political review team decided to shut themselves, or asked to be shut down, because they didn't feel they had enough clarity. And I was asking, so those top, as two examples was given, has those been discussed in the review that was the more real question.

LEON SANCHEZ

So, let me give a step back. I think we need to take a step back and remember that this has been, in a way, a learning process that has taken us 10 years since the transition. We stated, or we designed these reviews back when we were designing the new bylaws and the transition in 2016. We are almost hitting the mark of 10 years from that, and I guess it's just fair to say that some things did turn out to be the way we thought they would. Some others not. Some of them being parts of the reviews, how they were performed, how they were scoped. I mean, again, this is a learning process. It's a working process. We need to do this exercise.

JONATHAN ZUCK

We're just skipping the learning part. I'm sorry, I apologize for interrupting. I agree with everything you're saying. We're skipping the learning part.

LEON SANCHEZ

I'm not sure I would agree with us skipping the learning part, because I think it's part of what the CCG is doing at the moment. Maybe not in the depth and the form that you would pose it as a learning exercise. Nevertheless, I think that the work that we are all doing in the CCG, because I'm also part of that Working Group, is a learning process. And my hopes, and I think that the hopes of the Board too, because that is our focus, is to have, again, a new set of reviews, a refreshed set of reviews that are lightweight, simple,

and that the cadence is flexible enough to not put us back where we are at the moment.

So yes, it's going to be a process that I could even say that could be challenging in many ways, but I'm pretty sure that our community is going to stand up to the challenge and is going to be able to, update this set of reviews that will be fit for purpose. And I don't want to say that will be future-proof, because that's maybe a little bit too far-fetched, but I think that we're going to get out of this exercise with a good outcome, or at least that's my hope.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Mine, too.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Jonathan. Anyone wants to add anything to this topic? No? Good. So, now let's go to see the questions that you've posed to the Board, and I think you have some topics, as we've seen in this slide, and I would like to hand it to Justine to pose the first topic.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thank you, Leon. This is Justine, for the record. So, this question, I don't know whether we actually have the questions or not, but let me give you a bit of context, right? So, this question that we're asking stems from a recent Public Comment that was put out by the GNSO pertaining to their processes for allowing the Un-

Adoption or a reverse adoption of already-adopted recommendations, adopted by the Board, that is, right?

And obviously, the ALAC and the At-Large community participated in that Public Comment, right? So, we were able to provide our views to that process, but of course, as I said, no, that process was convened by the GNSO Council or GNSO, right, in particular.

So, we want to take this opportunity to ask the other party within that relationship, because it's about the GNSO recommendations, and it's about the Board doing something to those recommendations. So, we thought that this would be the perfect opportunity. Now, if I can just, address the questions that we have, right?

So first of all, our community, the ALAC and the At-Large, appreciate that there was a lacuna in the documented processes to facilitate this process that the Board is trying to get at, right? And we understand that processes need to be updated, they need to evolve in order to meet changing circumstances. And in this case, circumstances that there are more and more recommendations being adopted by the Board, potentially for some reason rather than not immediately implemented, and then there are circumstances that change, which may require the Board to then revisit these adopted recommendations and see what to do with them if they're not being implemented quickly enough, right?

So, we are supportive in principle of this request, sorry, right, but we also would like to hear from the Board what your thoughts are

on when and under what circumstances you would seek to use this new process that's being introduced to Un-Adopt or reverse adopt an already adopted recommendation, right?

And in particular, what sort of safeguards the Board will apply or have in mind to inform a decision to seek this path, taking into account, as I mentioned earlier, possible delays in implementation, regardless of the reason why, because potentially a delay would lead to the Board wanting to revisit something that's been adopted.

And also, what sort of safeguards would be applied in terms of giving due regard to the fact that those recommendations were consensus-based driven, so they came up through the community through bottom-up process, but now the Board seeks to revisit those, right? Yes, so we would love to hear the Board's perspective on these questions. Thank you very much.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you very much, Justine. Those are a lot of questions, but we came prepared and we have Greg for that.

GREG DIBIASE

Thanks, Justine. You know, great questions. This is, an evolution in the process, right? So, we agree that it's good to scrutinize and make sure we're all thinking about this as a community. I guess a couple high-level thoughts about how we're thinking about it.

To your first question, like, when is this necessary? It's when a circumstance may change, which makes a recommendation no longer in the global public interest, or perhaps something that violates the fiduciary duty of the ICANN Board. So, we're really looking at this as the ICANN Board adopts something, something changes, the world is changing at a faster pace, we need the flexibility to be able to Un-Adopt.

To the second part of your question, we view this as something exceptional, right? That this is not just a regular tool in our tool belt that we would deploy on a whim. It's something we'd really think about and, use in exceptional circumstances.

And then regarding safeguards, we're supportive of the process that went out to Public Comment that really viewed this as a community consultation, right? So, if the Board does believe that circumstances have changed and we need to rethink the recommendation, then when we would go back to the GNSO, provide with specificity what we think changed and why there is a difference now, and then have that conversation to hopefully align on that everyone's on the same page, why this is the right thing to do to Un-Adopt this recommendation.

So, I think that's evolving. We've been hearing great feedback through the Public Comment and even in these sessions, right? The contracted parties, I think, raised a great point of, making sure these are tracked, for example, right? Like this, since they are

exceptional, they should be tracked and highlighted and there should be transparent metrics around that.

So, we're still coalescing around what the safeguards are, but hopefully that gives you a sense of how we're thinking about this and continuing to evolve process to be more resilient.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Greg. Any other comments? I see Chris and then Wes, so Chris.

CHRIS DISSPAIN

Thanks, Leon, and thanks, Justine and ALAC for this question. I may have been a little premature in putting my card up because I think Greg really covered it very well, but I do think the point you raise about these consensus policy proposals, consensus recommendations, is certainly something that the Board is very mindful of, very much recognizes, and this process, I think, is not a sort of stance to say the consensus policy was wrong.

It's to say the environment has shifted, has changed, and to find a way for ICANN as a community to engage with that change, to reflect that change and react to it. So, I think that's a really important point about it.

I think the other one is, and you talk about in what circumstances would we use it, I think this is obviously not a step or a process that anyone wants to see used if possible.

So, I think by definition, it will only be used in very exceptional circumstances, probably very unpredictable circumstances, and I think there's been a lot of work in the last few years on things like the Board readiness work that the GNSO has been doing and also trying to work on the efficiency of PDPs to make sure we don't find ourselves in this situation where a recommendation comes through and time passes and so much so that the environment shifts underneath our feet and we have to go back to something like this.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Chris. Wes?

WES HARDAKER

Thanks, and thanks for the excellent question. This is certainly top of the Board mind, too, for when we have been making decisions around any time we have to think about how do we deal with recommendations that come to the Board and sometimes they take a long time to think about as we're trying to figure out the best way to go forward with things.

I want to pull it up a little bit higher and go beyond just ICANN. Anytime policies and decisions are being made, laws, whatever they may be, even constitutions, they're always designed with the best solution in mind for the problem space at the time. But it often turns out that when you get down to implementing something, you learn something.

We just talked about lessons learned within the Review of Review system and making sure we learn from the past. RSSAC actually just heard this week about implementation of a document we wrote quite a while ago from ICANN staff that basically said your ideas of creating metrics for the root server system is great. Turns out we can't do it, right? It's technically challenging.

So, it always involves sort of a back and forth. I will agree with what both Chris and Greg said. This should happen rarely, right? Ideally this should happen rarely, but you know RDRS is a good example of the Board has heard from the community that things weren't as perfect as we had hoped. So I'll end with that, that the Board's decisions to not adopt something is always based on community signals, right? It's not, we're not just deciding on a whim that this is not the right thing to do. It's based on we have heard that there are issues in the same way that RSSAC heard this week.

I don't think we can even fix the RSSAC document. It's actually, it turns out no is actually the right answer in that particular case. So, that happens sometimes based on the reality of how the world changes around us.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Wes. Greg?

GREG DIBIASE

Greg. One quick follow-up. The part of your comment that I didn't address that I think is worth calling out is I think you're talking

about if it takes longer to implement something, the higher the chance the circumstances could change, right? And so, I think that is a great point that the Board needs to think about as we're thinking about the speed in which we look at recommendations and implement them.

We need to be keeping in mind that we're only on adopting in exceptional circumstances and so I don't know if I have a great answer to that per se, other than that that's a great point for us to consider while we're thinking about this.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks Greg. Yes, Justine.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thank you, Leon. Just a quick follow-up. This is Justine. So, thank you, Greg for picking up the nuance in my question. I think we all know that policy development processes, is only one part of the chain, right? And we can obviously, or I believe that GNSO Council is already making an effort to make that more efficient, right? But the other side of the coin is implementation, which we don't have as much control over from the community side, right?

So, that's why we're also looking to the Board for how to make this better, that side of the coin, to make it better and not to have because of whatever delays in implementation be the only factor, if I could put it that way, that would force the Board to use this step. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Justine. Is your card in order now? Okay. Any other comments on this topic or reactions? No? Good. So, I guess we can go to the next question from the elected Board and I think it's Jonathan who's going to talk about this near-term, middle-term risks.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Oh. So, I mean this question is similar to the one that you asked us, which is what do you see as the near-term and middle-term risks for the Next Round and the other things that are on the table for ICANN? I don't want to spend a lot of time asking a question that you've been preparing for, so let's just go ahead and go to answering it.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks. And for that, I'm going to ask Wes.

WES HARDAKER

I have an answer for you.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Perfect.

WES HARDAKER

So, thank you for the question and I will say that identifying and mitigating risks is a continual hot top priority for the Board. It seems to creep into all of our discussions as it should.

A couple of things about risk management, within ICANN in general. The Board creates a risk appetite statement that sort of sets top-level categories for where we think we have concerns and what those should be. It's a publicly available document. You can go get it. The appetite statement is then used by the ICANN organization to really drive into a much deeper sort of function, management function, within the organization. And we meet on a very regular basis with the ICANN organization and the risk management staff.

They are doing what we believe is an excellent job of, have excellent directions going forward for managing risks. The thing about risks is that we don't treat them as a static list. And so that's an important takeaway. So, we do have, near-term risks do sort of bubble to the front sometimes. They, for example, things like operational execution, program delivery, financial steward things, things that might, change on a rapid basis.

Obviously external events to ICANN can suddenly change our perspective. Whereas more middle-term risks are generally more strategic in nature. For example, sustainability, effectiveness, long-term resilience, and the multi-stakeholder model at times, those can pop to near-term risks, right?

So, the dynamic nature is really what I want to reiterate, and again, it's not a static system. And we are, I should say, the ICANN organization is constantly adapting. It's not like they do a risk evaluation once and then, it's done, right? They're continually reviewing, which is sort of the procedures that are set forth by common risk management frameworks like the COSO ERM and the ISO 31,000 risk management standards. They actively use those and then adapt according to ICANN.

I don't know if you know, ICANN is kind of unique. There're not many organizations like it. So, they do a very good job of subscribing to best current practices as well as adapting those to the needs within ICANN. As I said, I think the Board is extremely pleased with the directions that ICANN has, the organization has taken lately to reflect on our high-level risk appetite statement. When we have questions about it, we ask them for greater detail. They give us a better explanation.

And finally, I'd like to note that we also, I should say, they have an internal audit function that is designed to be looking at the things on a regular basis to get an external perspective. It's funny that you get, you hire an internal audit firm to get an external perspective. The irony of those words going together is humorous to me. But anyway, so that is going to continue and they're working toward making that a continual process as part of risk evaluation.

So, the important takeaway is that nothing is static, right? It's a very dynamic system and it's designed to adapt based on near-term and medium-term and even long-term fluctuations.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Wes. Yes, Jonathan.

JONATHAN ZUCK

So, thanks. I understand the mechanism, I guess, and at one point we got the SO and AC chairs received a presentation on the risk assessment framework. One of the things that was interesting about it is that there was a risk appetite dial, if you will, that was dialed down to its lowest number, generally speaking.

And how do you think that's working for the organization? The risk appetite seems to be very low, I guess, and that can have implications across the Board in terms of what gets done and the expedience with which it gets done.

WES HARDAKER

No, that's actually a hot topic for me personally, so thanks for following up with that. It is always a balance. When you have critical infrastructure and a critical, naming and numbering kind of system, you tend to have a lower risk profile. One of the things that the risk committee within the Board is doing is considering that risk appetite statement and where do things not align.

It turns out that some things are actually very hard. You would like all of your things to be low, just because you don't want any risk. But as is well known in the risk community, when you do that, then you're probably not going to take as many chances and get the rewards of a more.

So, ICANN especially tends to try and balance that, but as an organization, because of the importance of our function globally, we have to take a slightly more conservative risk profile for most categories. You'll note that not all the categories in the risk appetite statement are, low on the other hand.

And sometimes when you're doing an evaluation, what you're really trying to do is figure out when you've identified risks, how do you mitigate them to bring them sort of back into a plan so that you can expect things to happen and come back. And so that's one of the reasons we end up at, even evaluation at low. It's not because the events won't happen. It's because we've figured out a plan ahead of time of what we're going to do, and often that's the best we can do. The unknown unknown risks, of course, are the hardest.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Wes. Good. Any other comments on this? Yes, Justine.

JUSTINE CHEW

Thanks, Leon. Thanks for that answer, Wes. If I may just ask, does the Board or ICANN or maybe Kurtis could answer this, share that sort of risk change in the risk appetite or what the risk level that the

organization is prepared to take or not take or whatever with the community in a more periodic fashion?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

So, the risk committee looks at and assesses the entire risk registry. We don't publish that, and few organizations ever do for maybe obvious reasons, because we don't want to invite the risks, we're aware of, right? The risk appetite statement, I believe, is published, so that is shared. So, the risk appetite statement is shared.

The actual risk register and how we analyze this, as Wes said, I think is also, it's a little bit of a handwaving, right? Because if you look at certain functions ICANN has performed, I don't think the community wants us to take any risk, right? Roots, generation, financials. I mean, there are some areas where you probably do want us to be phenomenally conservative, and we are.

At other areas, we try to contain risk. At other areas, we try to mitigate risk. I mean, it depends on the risk category that you're looking at, and we have, across all of ICANN's operations, we have many of these risk categories.

Generally, we don't share, or any organizations don't tend to share that risk register or the actions taken, because that's an invitation to risk exposure, and we don't want to do that. That's different. But the risk statement we do, that's shared with the community. Is there more that we could do? I know it's been discussed in the risk

committee, if there's anything else that could be shared, and against trends or et cetera.

Again, I think that would have to be done very thoughtfully, because we don't want to invite publishing risk or risk mitigation matters to make things, because it's such a broad range we operate in. I know that Wes and the risk committee are discussing that. I don't think you have reached a complete agreement, but I think we had to be very clear on, or maybe you have, and I didn't pay attention, but I think that's the dilemma, right, is that we want to share the risk appetite, we want to share what we do, and I think what we probably could do is, what Wes just talked about, is the process of risk and how we handle that.

That's something we probably could have Wes write a blog post on, or share with the community, that this is how the risk committee works on risk. I think that the framework is not unique to ICANN. It's ISO standard, but we do work that, and maybe we should make that public.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis. Wes?

WES HARDAKER

Yeah, one really quick point that I didn't indicate earlier, but even our risk appetite statement is not static. So, it's a very dynamic situation, and we do change it over time. We set the biggest review of it a year ago. We're about to go back and review more individual

elements of it, and it will adapt over time based on how risks change as well.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Wes. Good. So, we have one last topic. We have eight minutes to go, and my acquired German precision from my colleague tells me that we should go to it, so Amrita.

AMRITA CHOUDHURY

Thank you, Leon. Amrita for the records, and I'll be brief. We've been discussing about the WSIS+20 review, which reaffirmed the multi-stakeholder cooperation with stronger collaboration, and ICANN contributed significantly, the community, to this outcome.

It reiterated the multi-stakeholder model, the role of the technical community, as was mentioned, and also the IGF was given a permanent mandate, and we had this discussion the other day during the panel, and it was brought in that, how does ICANN plan to engage, and the ICANN Board obviously is looking at it in supporting the practical implementation of the WSIS outcome to ensure that whatever agreements or whatever we were pushing for can be actually realized, and we don't, in the next review, we don't have to run or scuttle as much as we did because of the changing dynamics.

And we do realize that, in the GAC meeting you had yesterday, you did mention that ICANN will continue to fund and support the IGFs and RIRs and also promote IDNs, email addresses, Universal

Acceptance. Given all that is the Board thinking of some concrete plans while the ICANN plans to support the IGF, what about the national regional initiatives or youth initiatives or the other aspects of the WSIS outcome.

I know ICANN has a very limited mandate, but the lines are blurring these days. Trust is something which goes across digital access also. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Amrita. So, Kurtis?

KURTIS LINDQUIST

Yeah, so thank you. You're right, we did get this question in the GAC as well yesterday, so I'm going to try and get the same answer. So, I just want to first, I mean, just stress that the WSIS outcome document is of course covers a lot of the topics that are way outside ICANN's scope, from AI to a lot of other things that is, and we're not expanding our mandate into that.

We're going to stick to the parts in the WSIS outcome that relates to ICANN's mandate. I mean, one thing that I'd like to stress, and you mentioned it, but I think I just want to highlight is that getting Universal Acceptance mentioned and recognized in the outcome document, I think it's a phenomenal achievement, and that's actually not even in the internet governance part, it's actually already in the wider document, and that's something we will

continue to support and work very hard on, as we have done as part of the Strategic Plan, and we're going to continue to work on that.

And we will continue to support the IGF, as I said yesterday, and the national and regional IGFs, as we have done, and we'll continue with that work, and that's part of the ongoing operational plan and funding we have. So that work will continue, and we are working to see if we can be more effective and how we can make most use of this, and I know so is the IGF, by the way, I mean, we're not operating in isolation.

That was one of the questions we got yesterday in the GAC, are we coordinating, and yes, we are. Obviously, the WSIS review is also ongoing, so we'll have to see how the permanent IGF and the permanent structures are implemented, so if I sound a little bit vague, that's because we don't actually know what's going to happen, right, as that work, as Chengetai said on Monday, that strategy session is in April, I think it was, so after that, we will know a little bit more of the forms, and we can start making more concrete plans, but we will continue to support it.

On the other parts of the WSIS outcome that relates to Internet Governance, we will continue to support and champion the multistakeholder model and the principles of which ICANN operate and built, and the technical independence of that, I think, and the role of the technical community.

As I said, we actually all said on the session on Monday, continuing this work and the platform we built ahead of WSIS is crucial, and I

really think we're going to continue working with this. We have a very good working relationship with ISOC, we continue to work with the wider community on these topics, and as I said, we've been doing this for 23 years, I know it says WSIS+20, but reality is we started three years before that, so it's actually WSIS 23, and we'll continue that work.

We had a plenipotentiary this year, we will have, this topic won't go away, and we continue that engagement, we will continue to engage member states and the wider community on that, because as we all said, I think bringing the technical community's view into the decision-making in the UN process is really, really crucial

So, that's understood and well established, we continue to have some Work Plans for that, and we're now working on the strategy and Work Plan for plenipotentiary, and the outcomes we hope to achieve there, so we'll continue to work on that, and we will continue to really support these outcomes.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thanks, Kurtis. Anyone want to add something? Yes, Raul.

RAÚL ECHEBERRÍA

Thank you, Leon. No, just to remark that the role of ICANN in all this process has been crucial, and I think has been outstanding, the work that was done during all the process of discussion of WSIS+20 review, and as it has been pointed out before, the geopolitical

situation is a challenge, and so I think that this process that ended in December is one milestone.

And as Kurtis said, there are very good results, important achievements of ICANN and the technical community in general reflected in the outcome of the process, but of course there are new challenges in front of us, and I think that ICANN is very well positioned to continue working and making contributions, valuable contributions to bring the voice of the technical community in the future discussions, but don't take anything for granted. There's a lot of work in front of us and a lot of uncertainty.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Raul. Tripti.

TRIPTI SINHA

I'd just like to make one comment. I would really like to thank the community, because everyone rose to the occasion and came together with a very successful outcome, so that was the multi-stakeholder model at play, so I would extend thanks on behalf of the Board. Thank you.

LEON SANCHEZ

Thank you, Tripti. Good, so if there are no more comments, I think we have just exhausted the agenda for this meeting, so I'll turn it back to you, Tripti, with one minute to go.

TRIPTI SINHA

Okay, thank you for keeping this meeting on time. I would like to share one observation. Yesterday, I said there's a new verb that's been created, and I noticed that verb did not come up today. So, Artificial Intelligence was not mentioned in this bilateral meeting, so I don't know if that's good or bad. Jonathan, food for thought, take it back to your constituency, but once again, thank you very much for the conversation, and this meeting is adjourned.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]