
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – ALAC Open House
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MICHELLE DESMYTER

Hello and welcome, everyone, to the ALAC Open House session. My name is Michelle DeSmyter and I am the Remote Participation Manager for this session today. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation will include English, French, and Spanish. If you would like to speak during the session, please raise your hand in Zoom when called upon. Virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom.

On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak, if speaking a language other than English, and please speak at a reasonable pace. And with this, I will hand the floor over to Jonathan Zuck, Elect Chair.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks, Michelle, and thanks everyone for joining us here on International Women's Day. So, we all look forward to a time when we don't need to have one of those, but for now, let's make sure that we celebrate it. And I think the At-Large does a particularly good job in the ICANN community in terms of diversity, but we

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always have more that we can do. So, happy International Women's Day.

This is our open house, which was modeled after the Board's public forum to be an opportunity to have guests come with small presentations and things they want to show us or discuss with the At-Large community. And so, I think the thing to do is to jump right in.

And first, we'll be hearing from the IETF with Dhruv Dhodi and Warren. Yeah, it ran off the page here. And Warren as well. Thank you. So, folks, take it away. And Michelle, put up your slides if you can, I guess.

MICHELLE DESMYTER

And Jonathan, this is Michelle for the record. I believe he's going to share his screen. There we go.

DHRUV DHODY

Good morning, everyone. Hi, thanks for giving us an opportunity to talk to you all about the IETF, the Internet Engineering Task Force, where all our internet protocols that we use, including DNS, is defined. So, before we jump into the standard space, let's look at the overall internet ecosystem. We have multiple folks, multiple organizations, multiple communities that all come together and help run this whole internet ecosystem.

We have the naming and addressing on the top, the ICANN, the RIRs, the IANA, gTLDs, ccTLDs, all are naming and addressing

community. The thing that you see on the left is the standards community where I come from. And we have IETF, W3C, ITU-T, all the different standard organizations. But the most important part at the bottom that you see are the users, and that's where this community comes in. And we have civil societies, individuals, and the real end users that use the internet.

So, overall, this is our ecosystem. But from the technical community point of view, I think we are the partners of names, numbers, and protocol. We are the people which, by working together in bringing our expertise and helping to maintain and develop the internet infrastructure, the protocols, and reliable operations.

So, it's not just the maintenance, but also the development of new ideas, extensions, new protocols happen at the IETF, but then gets operated by the ICANN community and the policy development at the ICANN community and the RIR community. So, all of us have to come together and work in a coordinated fashion and represent the technical community, especially at the Internet Governance and other forums.

So looking at the IETF and the mission statement of the IETF, it's very specific. It says we want to make internet work better. That's our bigger one-line mission. But our focus is in producing high-quality, relevant technical documents. We are not the one who are operating the internet. We are developing the technical

documents that influence the way people design, use, and manage the internet.

Again, the key here being on technical documents, key being on influencing, and those are the key things that we do. But before we jump into details about the IETF, I think one question that we ask ourselves is why open standards itself? What do they allow? Why do we need to focus on them?

Open standards allow any device, any service, any applications to just join this internet, this heterogeneous global network of networks that we call internet from any part of the world. By just developing the same standards and implementing the same standards, you just join them. You don't have to ask anybody's permission.

There's no sign-up, no letters, everything. And by making things open, I think the open things becomes very important because all our standards are available for free. You can just look at them, implement them, all information is available.

That makes it completely easy for anybody to join this open internet. Not just the standards itself, I think it's important that our process is seen to be open. And we believe it's open, transparent, and completely bottom-up. That even though we are on the leadership, we don't get to decide exactly what work to charter.

It has to come from the community itself in the same way that we see in the ICANN world as well. So, this openness has given us an

idea that the internet has continued to evolve. We have faced so many challenges but internet continued to work. This led to this permissionless innovation that even though IETF defines standards, nobody comes to the IETF and asks for permission.

We believe that our standards are freely available and that has led to the success of the internet itself. Now, why does this community, the end-user community, care about the open standards? I think this is the most important slide in my presentation today. So, what open standards allow is basically a competitive environment, an inclusive digital economy that any part of the world, any ideas, any innovation can come in and it is available to everyone on the global internet.

It provides a secure infrastructure, a resilient infrastructure over internet where we have seen so many innovations happen. Interoperability across global boundaries. We are in today's world of geopolitics where so many things are up for question but internet is one thing which is truly, truly global in its sense. And it has, to the end-users, it has given them access to digital public goods, digital public infrastructure.

That all has been enabled because of the internet infrastructure itself and standards are the key part in letting us achieve that. It allows us to have no vendor lock-in, there are no proprietary stuff, so you can always have choices of moving things from different vendors, different services. Local innovation from any part of the world can reach any markets. Public services interrupt across

jurisdictions and user gets to get choices in portability and continuity.

In the DNS world, this has led to DNS security, DNS stability, resilience, and basically the idea of a global interoperable internet that we all champion for. So, open standards are not just documents, these are the foundation over which we have built user trust, openness, and sustainability for the global internet itself. And in IETF, when we are developing these specifications, you need to factor in various different points of view.

And in IAB, we publish an RFC 8890 which we hold very dearly, which is internet is for end users. That given choices that what operators want, what governments want, it is the choice of the end users that is primary for us and we should factor in as the most important point of view when considering any technical discussions.

IETF ethos. These are the key things that define the IETF culture itself. Everyone participates in IETF as an individual, which is a bit unique. That is even though we declare our affiliation and we tell who we work for, but that doesn't, we are not representing the organization that we are coming. We are speaking in an individual capacity.

So, one thing that you usually see people from the same organization hashing it out in the open mailing list, having discussions, different technical point of view, all in open and coming to a conclusion that this is the right way based on the

technical information out there. And we don't do memberships. So, if you have an email, you join a mailing list, you are an IETF. It's as simple as that. No membership rules, no membership dues, completely open and free in that way. And our specifications are building blocks, like we are from IAB, Internet Architecture Board.

Sometimes folks come and say, where is the grand architecture, the whole blueprint of the internet itself? No, we don't do that. We believe in developing building blocks and others decide how they want to use those building blocks to build things. And this has led to even the specifications that were developed when the internet looked very different. When IP was developed, there was no mobile, there was no satellites, there was none of those things happening. But the same protocol continues to work in a brand-new architecture because of this building block way of doing things in the internet.

I mentioned all our work is available for free. This is not just the final output, which is what we call as RFCs, but everything, every draft, every version, every meeting minutes, all discussions, everything is made available completely for free. And we don't do voting. We judge contribution by something what we call as rough consensus. And the decisions are made not just on how many people support it, but what's the technical reason they put forward, why they want to support some feature.

And even when we develop something like RFCs is out there, we have this thing that we don't have protocol police. That means we

can't go force people to use those standards. They have to believe that these standards are useful. Yes, they are solving some problem. There is a business interest. Then only those standards get implemented, then they get deployed, and then actual end users get to use this. So, it is buy-in from all the other communities. Then only we get success for our protocols by voluntary deployment.

Now, looking at what is our community who participate at IETF, it will be no shock that it has a huge number of participations from our technical industry, around 52%. But at the same time, we get a lot of participation from academia, from civil society, and the government itself. In one of our last meetings, we had participation from around 77 countries. And as I mentioned, everyone participates as individual.

All communities have the same standing in our IETF process. Nobody gets a veto. Nobody gets a special treatment. And we do realize that at the same time, we need to focus to have some engagement programs which are targeted for some communities. For instance, we were just talking about women. We have a sister's program in IETF, which is targeting how women and non-binary participants participate in IETF process and how we can make it easier for them.

Similarly, we have with ISOC a partnership program about policymakers, how we make it easy for policymakers to understand our processes and be able to provide inputs into those processes.

Warren does a program on IPG, which is targeted towards operators, getting operators' inputs into the standard process. And of course, hackathon for Open-Source communities as well. So, we have tailored engagement program, but as far as the standard process is concerned, that's individual only.

Then how do we run things in the meeting itself? We have around a lot of remote participation, and we have around 35% to 45% of folks in the meeting who are always remote. There are some Working Groups that only meet remotely, and we take remote very, very seriously.

Our tools put people in the same queue, whether they are in person or remote. We have people chairing remotely as well. That's pretty common. And we believe even though you come to the meeting, even though people in the meeting have made some decision, those decisions need to go back to the mailing list. So, people who are asynchronous, who are not able to attend the meeting because of time zones or other constraints can also have an opportunity to give their input.

This is basically how the different IETF areas is. Link layer, that's where our boundary is, we don't do that. We'd start from IP. This is where IPv6, DHCP, all that stuff, including DNS protocol comes in. Routing, DGP. Web and transport are HTTP and things like TCP IP quick. Art is email. Web RTC, the thing that we are using in the Zoom itself.

And two pillars, which is ops and security, because you need to worry about ops and security irrespective of the protocol layer that you are in.

The different organizations that we have within the IETF, we were talking about standards part, which is on the left. This is the key. But we also have other organizations like IAB, Internet Architecture Board. Warren and I are from the Internet Architecture Board. We provide long-range technical direction.

We do some pre-standardization workshops as well, liaison, appointments to ICANN, all that happened through IAB. And outreach, the function that I'm doing right now.

Apart from standards, we have the research sister organization, which is IETF, Internet Research Task Force. They focus on long-term evolution of our internet protocol, things which are not ready to engineer right now, but they are still bigger research questions that needs to be explored. And there are around 16 research groups as well. We also have IETF LLC, which is our legal home, and IPMC, which was called IETF Trust before. They hold and manage the rights of all our IETF contributions.

So, these are different leadership bodies within the IETF. The key thing that we also want to talk about a little is the multi-stakeholder model itself. And I talked about how IETF does things, and here in the room people well know how ICANN does things.

And look, both are multi-stakeholder, but they do function in a little different way.

As far as participation is concerned, IETF is all individual, whereas here we have sort of a membership model. When we speak at IETF, we are representing ourselves. It's an individual opinion, but here you are speaking for a multi-stakeholder group. Or in this room, you're speaking for a particular region. So, there is a representation angle as well. How we govern things in IETF and ICANN, again, a little bit difference.

Similarly, in consensus, rough consensus versus voting, or other ways in which we make decisions here. And accountability and transparency. IETF believes in complete openness, and in fact, as I was mentioning, all our outputs, everything is done in open. In ICANN, we have sort of a mixed model. There are open processes, you get open feedback, which is put in public domain as well. But as well as we have some processes which are closed as well. But the key thing is, it's the same principle, same multi-stakeholder principle, we just implement it in a different way because of the role that we serve in our internet ecosystem is a little different.

There are places in IETF where we see a lot of civil society and end user engagement as well. Just wanted to talk about AI pref. We all are seeing this; a lot of content being read by AI crawlers. So, a Working Group which was formed, focusing specifically on how do we make sure that as a content owner, I am able to signal what is my preference for that content.

Similarly, there was Location Tracker, lots of good different groups there. IETF, again, lot of different research groups. I wanted to call out the policy-focused research group, HRPC, so human rights impact on protocol consideration itself, and making sure we get a global access for internet for all. So, there are these research tasks which are also very policy-focused and not just on the technical side as well.

Speaking of time, I think we covered the IAB and the technical community part as well. So, I think I'm going to ask for maybe more questions rather than going over the slides more. Just one tiny thing before I close. We have our IETF meeting upcoming next week. We will be flying to that, and this is in this region, especially for folks from APAC, please consider attending. Remote fee waivers are available, no question asked. Anybody can easily participate remotely, and if you are there in person, that would be much better. Thank you.

JONATHAN ZUCK

There's a webinar coming up after the ICANN meeting as well, right?

DHRUV DHODY

Within this meeting as well, we have how it works, the IETF session, which is for tomorrow at 4:30 p.m. So, if people want to know more, if this was too condensed and too quick, I'm sorry. I just wanted to talk about a bunch of different things.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks so much for your presentation. I wanted to open it up for questions.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Thank you, Dhruv, for taking us through this IETF 101 and how to get engaged in the different scope of this. I'm Ihita Gangavarapu for the record, and my question is, yesterday and also in the meetings that we've been having within ICANN the last couple of months prior to today's, we've been discussing about DNS Abuse.

I just wanted to understand what efforts or what are the working groups within IETF that are actively working around DNS Abuse or could be in silos, or are these working groups directly contributing to the discussions that are happening at ICANN or will be happening at ICANN in the next subsequent days?

DHRUV DHODY

Why don't you take this one?

WARREN KUMARI

So, I mean, the IETF has a whole section on security, but a lot of what the ICANN community calls DNS Abuse is more policy-type stuff, sort of around registration policy, that sort of things. Things that I can think of that are related is more on the DNS Op side, so developing things like DNSSEC, things like that.

Something that also is somewhat related is efforts like web. auth, which is the ability for a crawler to prove who it is, which should cut down on some of the sort of crawl abuse. Some of the other things are a lot of the email work we're doing is to provide ways to cut down on spam and similar, which ties into things like phishing. So, they're sort of spread out over a broad range of working groups, but I think Dhruv might have some. Do you have any additional thoughts on that?

DHRUV DHODY

So, one of the things is if I wanted to talk to you as well, if you have ideas, if you have thoughts, we are completely open on how we can get inputs from the ICANN community and take it to the technical community as well, so we are the right people to talk to further after this.

JONATHAN ZUCK

We've got one more question online. I had a quick one. You very quickly went by the AI issue and documents being read and having preferences there, and it made me think of P3P. They came out of W3C that was a platform for privacy preferences, which was sort of embedded XML that sort of gave preferences for how that page handled information. Are you envisioning something else that's a sort of voluntary framework for AI accessibility of information?

DHRUV DHODY

Yes, as it says, it's preference, and the first focus that we have is first agree on the vocabulary itself, like how do we all need to understand what AI would mean, and there are different things like search AI overview, AI training, AI inference, so having the right vocabulary, and second would be what is the right attachment method for that vocabulary, whether it is via robots.txt itself that we put a different identifier there or whether an HTTP header, so those discussions are still happening, but the first deliverable is the vocabulary itself.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Makes sense. And the final question, Olivier is online.

OLIVIER CREPIN-LEBLOND

Yeah, thank you very much, Jonathan. Olivier Crepin-Leblond speaking, and I wanted to ask what was the status of the transfer of intellectual property from the IETF Trust to the IETF Intellectual Property Management Corporation, and why the last minutes of the IETF IPMC date from November 2025?

DHRUV DHODY

I would think that, like, let's take this question offline a little bit. As we say, we are from the Internet Architecture Board, and we are not the right people to give you a definitive answer on that, so I would rather take this up with my colleagues at the IPMC, and let's answer that question there.

JONATHAN ZUCK

All right, thank you, and thanks for joining us today, and we appreciate the information. I didn't hear what you said, sorry. Oh, yeah, there's going to be a webinar that we're hosting. I don't, yes, that's what I was bringing up. There's going to be a webinar after this. There'll be more opportunities. The problem is we have other guests for this short hour. That's the issue. And then Jan is next. Are you ready? Go ahead, please.

JAN AART SCHOLTE

Okay, good morning, and my International Women's Day greetings as well. Thank you, Jonathan and ALAC for the invitation here. Thanks, Gissela and Heidi, for organizing. Thank you for being here. ICANN never sleeps, Sunday morning. So, I'm introducing a project that I'm working on at the moment. I don't know if I just asked for the next slide, is it?

Just quickly myself, many of you know me from previous engagements, but I'm an academic based at Leiden University in the Netherlands. I've been working on questions of novel ways to govern global challenges for far too long. I came into the ICANN space in 2014 as an advisor on accountability and the IANA stewardship transition, then did a study on ICANN legitimacy.

Many of you were interviewed for that. And then a study of the regional internet registries. And now, next slide, I'm going to occupy myself with a team on multi-stakeholder global governance

for the next, these four years. And this project is looking at how multi-stakeholder global governance can operate well. That's the general question. And more specifically, we're looking at the Forest Stewardship Council, the global fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and ICANN, and asking how far they have capacity, effectiveness, and legitimacy.

So, capacity means what resources do they have available to execute multi-stakeholder global governance. Effectiveness is how well they operate, and legitimacy is how much approval they attract. And the idea is those three things interact. So, with more capacity, you get more effectiveness. With more effectiveness, you get more legitimacy. With more legitimacy, you get more capacity. And so, you get a vicious, well, sorry, a virtual circle. But of course, it can also be a vicious downward spiral if you get it wrong.

It's the first comprehensive, detailed, systematic comparative analysis of multi-stakeholder global governance. There's lots and lots of research that's been done, of course, over many years. But everyone tends to sit in a silo and look at one particular issue area, or one particular. And so, all of you probably think that ICANN invented the multi-stakeholder. No, I kid you. But as we've seen, the IETF is doing it as well. But it's actually well beyond the internet sphere too.

If you just look at the next slide. So, multi-stakeholder principle. Yeah, we use the word. What do we actually mean? It means that you are governing through assemblage of multiple parties, that's

the multi, who have a stake, stakeholders. So they affect and are affected by a given societal problem. Multi-stakeholder means a contrast to multilateral. Multilateral, multiple states. See that in the United Nations. Multi-stakeholder governance is also different from private governance, like through a business association. I name here International Organization of Security Commissions, but there are many others also.

So, it's neither purely private, nor is it purely public. As I say, it's not something that is so new even. If you want to, you can see the multi-stakeholder principle going back to the ILO, which assembles employers, trade unions and governments. Or the International Organization for Standardization, which assembles NGOs and governments as well.

So, it's not new, as some might think, but you are right that the main spread of multi-stakeholder global governance happened since the 1990s. And we can see that if you look at the next slide. So, the dark line that you see in the middle is multilateral global governance. So, that's the intergovernmental. And you can see that the number of multilateral global governance institutions was already at 200 in 1970, increases a bit until the mid-1990s, and then has been flat since.

And that's not only flat in terms of the numbers of organizations, it's also flat in terms of their resources, their mandates, and so on. But then you see this dotted line. Well, the dashes are informal global governance, we won't spend time on that. But focus on the

dotted line, and there you see the new forms of, yeah, here it's called transnational hybrid, but call it multi-stakeholder for our purposes.

And so, you can see there that the main growth happens from 1990 onwards, to the point that multi-stakeholder global governance in terms of numbers of bodies is actually almost twice as large as multilateral global governance by the 2020s. Though, if you look at the very end, you can see it begins to flatten up, which is again a question of where we're going in the future.

So, have a look at the next slide. So, why are we, what's motivating this work? A general aim that we want to govern planetary problems in ways that are maximally democratic, effective, fair, peaceful, and sustainable.

And then as we saw in the previous slide, conventional intergovernmental multilateral global governance is generally falling short. And the global problems though are not decreasing. So, what do we do? Multi-stakeholder constructions are one of the ways forward, and have significant potentials to help us fill the governance gaps. But when and how does it work in practice? So, that's what this study tries to look at. Because if we can figure that out, it might improve existing multi-stakeholder global governance, and might also inspire new initiatives of this kind.

Okay, next slide. What do you get out of it? I get to entertain myself academically, but what do you get out of it? One thing is to get a sharper understanding of key concepts in multi-stakeholder global

governance. You hear yourselves talk about effectiveness and accountability and the like, but what does that actually specifically mean? And what data do we actually have for that?

Hopefully this project will give systematic evidence to establish where and when capacity, effectiveness, and legitimacy are happening, and also when they're not happening. And then again, this project will be comparing things across policy fields. And I suspect that most people here, you may have got deeply, deeply, deeply involved in multi-stakeholder global governance in ICANN, but I suspect you don't have very much idea what's going on in other areas.

And many people think, and we find this in the environment area and in the health area, everyone thinks they invented the multi-stakeholder principle, that they're the big leader. But in fact, you're doing many of the same things, and having many of the same analyses, but also different in other areas. So, it'll be interesting to look across the three.

The project is based at Leiden University, just for the transparency of it all. It's funded by the Dutch Research Council, so it's public money, academic peer review, so not beholden to any government or business or NGO or anything, happily can do what we like and say what we like. There's four of us, and we have an advisory board, including several people connected with ICANN, but they're not there in an official capacity.

Okay, just quickly for you to be aware, the Forest Stewardship Council was actually established before ICANN. It has environmental, social and commercial chambers, that's their version of the SOs and ACs, and they are managing sustainable forestry worldwide. ICANN needs no introduction.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is governing campaigns against those three diseases worldwide.

Next slide. So, what's interesting about them, they are three long-standing, highly developed and widely lauded, applauded, multi-stakeholder global governance arrangements. So, they're three good cases to see what has worked well in the past.

That said, all of them, yeah, 1993, 1998, 2001, all of them were born in the neoliberal heyday when everyone said, non-governmental arrangements were a way to go forward. And as we know, world order shifts are quite big today, including a major reassertion of state priority and sovereignty discourses and the like.

So, they're also three good cases to see how things are developing now and how they might need to change in the future. I might mention they have different roles of governments. The FSC is completely government-free zone in terms of its official arrangements. There's no government at all. And the Global Fund, half of the Board are government seats and voting seats. And ICANN sort of sits in the middle with an advisory role of government.

Okay, next slide. So, what are we going to do? Collect data. I guess I'm partly here because I'm going to come up to you later and say, would you do an interview with me? And I hope after this, you might say yes. So, we're going to be busy for a couple of years. I hope there's still a couple of minutes for reactions or questions. Thanks.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks, Jan. I hope that you go around to those other organizations and pop their balloons that they didn't invent.

JAN AART SCHOLTE

Absolutely.

JONATHAN ZUCK

It's not just us that you pick on. Okay. Questions for Jan? Quick, a couple, just a couple. Oh, yeah, go ahead. Of course.

MACIEK PIASECKI

Hello, Maciej Piasecki here, currently with EURALO. I was wondering, after those 30 years of the proliferation of the multistakeholder model, do we have the data where this model is more successful than the models of the past or is it something that your research is about to establish?

JAN AART SCHOLTE

Well, it would be grand if after four years and three studies, we can give you the final answer. That's not going to happen, of course. But no, what we're trying to do is look at capabilities that different multistakeholder global governance arrangements have, so we can compare what are their legal capabilities, what are their organizational capabilities, like their procedures and so on, what are their material resources, what are their people resources, what are their ideational resources, by that I mean what kind of discourses are they able to use, what kind of ideas are they able to deploy.

And if we compare that across the three, that must tell us something about capability. And then on legitimacy, we're going to survey people from all three bodies and see comparatively how much support do they give the multistakeholder bodies? And does it vary by region? Does it vary by stakeholder groups? Do business people like it more than civil society people? So, it's that kind of comparative research. Hopefully then, we'll be able to say something. But you probably know boring academics, we just always say if and we need more money to do more research.

JONATHAN ZUCK

You want all the funding without the accountability. We're all very familiar with that, I think, as well. Go ahead.

FREDERIC TAES

Thank you, Jonathan. Frederic speaking, and thank you very much, Professor Scholte, very interesting. I saw the figures and the graphics wasn't until 2018 or '19. Did you saw recent evolutions, recent threats? Are you also studying how to say that perspectives on the future in your studies?

JAN AART SCHOLTE

We can see that in the case of the FSC, there's some unrest in a number of circles and there's some exits from the process. In the case of the Global Fund, there's a great dependence on money and public money and more specifically US public money. And there's been a major withdrawal of those fundings, so they are in an issue. And in the case of ICANN, I guess we don't want to invite any initiatives by talking about their possibilities, so we won't mention them.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Last question, Hannah.

HANNAH FRANK

Thank you so much for your presentation. Hannah Frank, for the record. I have seen in the last few years that some scholars argue that the multi-stakeholder model is currently facing an effectiveness crisis. From your perspective, do you see this as a real crisis of the model or rather a phase of adaptation or evolution? Thank you.

JAN AART SCHOLTE

Yeah, thanks for that question and for the others. This is one of those moments where you want to be a little bit more precise, so people loosely say, oh, there's an effectiveness crisis. Well, what do they mean by effectiveness? So, I think what we're going to do is say effectiveness means do you get decisional output? And you get decisional output in a way that is high quality deliberation, timely, accountable, and so on. So, decisional output is one thing and then you can look at effectiveness also in terms of implementation.

So, it's one thing to get to the decisions. It's another thing actually to implement them and to get compliance with them. That's the second part. And then there's a third part about impact of the decisions and their implementation. So, do you reach the goals that were intended? And then there's an effectiveness in terms of review. Do you look back? Do you adjust, et cetera?

So, the different stages of a policy process and you can ask about effectiveness in relation to each of those. So, we're going to look at that systematically across the three and then give an answer in relation to the way we have conceptualized effectiveness. Now, people will then come back to us and say, oh, you had the wrong indicators and the wrong concept. That's fine. But at least we'll have been explicit and I hope consistent.

JONATHAN ZUCK

All right. Thanks very much, Jan. Thanks for sharing your research. Look forward to updates. And I think we should all think of this as a tasting menu. These folks are all willing to talk more. And so, if there's interest to have a dedicated session where we get deep dive, let's have that conversation perhaps in our wrap-up about who we want to bring in to get into deeper discussions with. And so, with that, I'm going to go to Edmon to talk to us a little bit about what's going on with the Universal Acceptance Expert Group.

EDMON CHUNG

Thank you, Edmon Chung here. Actually, in case people forget, I'm from ISOC Hong Kong, one of the ALSs from APRALO. And it's in that capacity that I'm doing this report. Thank you for putting me on this expert Working Group. This is one of the evolutions of the multi-stakeholder model as well. And I'm going to just use a handful of slides.

So, please jump to slide four if whoever is controlling it can. So this particular group was put together with a very specific task which is focused on providing some guidelines to the ICANN staff team to support Universal Acceptance. So, again, the wider community participation in the whole work of UA is not necessarily the focus of this particular report. This is very focused on providing guidelines to the staff team on their priorities.

So please, I guess as you look at the document, have that in mind. It was created from a Board resolution way back, a little bit back in last year. I think we can, okay. The group started work in August.

Actually, in Dublin, I gave a brief update to this, to the At-Large. And I promised to bring back a draft report, which we have, and it's out for Public Comments right now. Public comments are going to run until 13th of April. I really think ALAC should weigh in whether it's through ALSs or the ALAC or the At-Large or the RALOs. Feedback is important as I, again, it's focused on giving some priority to the staff team in terms of Universal Acceptance.

Next slide, please. And just a quick note, of course, myself, I'm serving in the capacity coming from the At-Large, the ALAC. And then we have representatives from the GAC, the SSAC, the GNSO and the ccNSO, as well as liaison from the Board.

Next slide. But more interestingly, we also have some outside experts, including from UNESCO, from the Unicode Consortium, from a former IAB member from China, and from big tech and from academia and from W3C. So, that's kind of the makeup of the group.

I can skip to slide eight. And basically, the scope of work, as I already mentioned, the Public Comments is out. And I'll go to the next slide. And this is the structure of it based on the charter. There were 10 questions that were asked in terms of how to encourage big tech organizations, open source, specific standards bodies, and so on. I'll pretty much stay at this side and conclude by just highlighting for each of them that there are 45 recommendations that are put forward by the group.

Again, it's for Public Comments and we're looking. I'm sure we have blind spots and we're looking for it. But just quickly, when we did the prioritization, we realized that there are two overarching aspects, one which is included in general there. And it's really when we talk about Universal Acceptance, it's so important to talk about the multilingual internet and the broader internationalization efforts.

And the other thing is that we identified that there are different stakeholders and they need customized messaging. And that's one of the things that ICANN staff team can help us do. So, onto the first one, in terms of big tech, one of the interesting aspects that we touched on is to identify multiple value dimensions. So, not only, but of course, business value for big tech, but also social value, cultural values, and so on.

The other interesting thing that was found is that it's important to lay out a full tech technology stack. So, not just one particular layer, because the issue of UA really touches pretty much on all kind of tech stack that needs to be considered. So, that's for number one. When we looked at the Open-Source communities, reaching out to them, one of the interesting things that we highlighted is both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions.

So, horizontally, there are components such as email validation that is kind of code that is used for multiple platforms across different projects. And then there are projects, for example, WordPress that is used by many, many organizations. Those

verticals are as important as the horizontal ones. And that's one of the things that we've identified.

On number three, that is the standards bodies. We feel that most of the work from IETF is probably done on the topic, but bringing that to other standards bodies might be important. For example, those who are doing credentials stuff or authentication of credentials, bringing our stack to theirs is going to be an important part.

For four, five, and seven, which are the software development system administrators and hosting providers, it's a little bit similar. So, I'll combine them. One of the interesting challenges that we identified is that worldwide, the expertise on internationalization is actually quite thin. It's a very small group of people that has this kind of expertise in terms of internationalization of systems.

So, training the trainers and capacity building becomes a really important part of it, and then also showcasing success stories. On six, six is kind of interesting, I guess, for this community particularly. We looked at the DNS industry specifically, registries and registrars, especially in the ccTLDs side to touch on, to suggest that the governments and the digital agenda with the ccTLDs are connected. And for the GNSO side, we're actually suggesting an issue report to be looked into. It's way before a PDP would begin, but at least to look into whether there are policy gaps, such as incentives that can make UA more, you know, registries and registrars more ready for UA.

And then eight and nine are, again, pretty much connected because it's governments and then academia. And we talked about hitting multiple relevant ministries, working with the GAC, working with IGOs, and curricula integration, and how to make it more effective to work with hub universities, if you will. A lot of the curriculum actually is created, and one university is reused in many others, so to identify those hubs.

And then finally, we set out a set of measures, a framework that touches not only on implementation, but also awareness, policy support, capacity development aspects, and also to really urge for self-reporting, such as from registries and registrars.

So, that concludes my presentation here. If you can jump to the second last slide, slide 18. The next part of the work is actually from you guys. We're looking for feedback. We're looking through the Public Comments, and we hope to finalize everything by May so that next time we meet, we should have the guidelines in place with the staff team starting to report to us on the progress.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks, Edmon. It's interesting how all three of these presentations sort of tie together in a way. One of the things Jan's looking at is organizational legitimacy. And, Dhruv, you mentioned that the measure of success of a particular standard was uptake. And Universal Acceptance could very easily be considered one of the strongest sorts of external measures of the legitimacy of ICANN, because if 12 years after the introduction of new top-level domains,

there's still the majority of the web-going public that don't have access to those domains because of lack of Universal Acceptance. I think that really calls legitimacy into question. So, it really is a serious issue. So, thanks for your work on it. Question from you, and then we'll --

SATISH BABU

Satish for the record. Thanks, Jonathan. I'm speaking on behalf of the Small Group which is supposed to respond to the initial draft, so we have actually, the small group has actually populated these pages, there are a number of items which have been pointed out but first of all I'd like to congratulate ICANN and the expert group for taking this on and giving us is a kind of a way ahead for the next maybe 10 years.

UASG was founded in 2015, so that's about the first 10 years or over, the next 10 years. So, one of the points that this small group has raised is what is the sustainability of this? And the two points of view that came up is one is that we don't need a UASG if UA is mainstreamed into the regular, you know.

So, we don't really need a kind of year after year kind of a program. This is a project that had a fixed end. So, we have two points of view there. One group that thinks we should have a sustainable way ahead. Another group that says, okay, there's an end to this. It is not indefinite.

The other point is that about the multilingual internet, we all agree on that, but the draft is stronger on the supply side of this, not on the demand side, meaning end users, ALSs, civil society organizations, et cetera, are kind of weakly projected in the draft, but there are a bunch of other points we will not get to that, but I request Edmon's presence to resolve some of these issues as we go forward.

The small group will be meeting, and then Edmon is also part of that. So, we hope to be able to come out with a bunch of responses from ALAC's side. Thank you.

EDMON CHUNG

Yeah, just quickly in response. As I noted on an earlier document, it's probably not good for me to be holding the pen, but I'm happy to be part of the discussion. I did want to add one thing. You talked about the kind of time frame and the sustainability side. The way that I understand this, maybe it was not, and I do realize that it's not in the document, and we probably should add back to it.

The way I see it is these flows from the strategic plan for ICANN. So, it's a five-year kind of window from 2026 to 2030, right? I forgot what the exact date is, but okay, I got it. So, it flows from that. So, this plan is part of the Strategic Plan, and then it comes into, and so that's kind of the time horizon for this.

JONATHAN ZUCK

All right. Thanks, Edmon. I think we'll be talking about this a lot more within the ALAC's community. So, I want to hand it, I think, haven't left you a lot of time, Becky, but I'm going to give the microphone over to you to get us going a little bit on Strategic Plan and budget.

BECKY NASH

Thank you very much, Jonathan. Hello, everyone. This is Becky Nash from the ICANN Org planning team. I'm here just to give a very short update. I won't keep you too long, just about the annual FY27 Operating Plan and Budget process.

So, if we could go to the next slide and then one more slide. Thank you very much. One more. Okay. Just to launch this discussion, we want to provide an overview of the annual Operating Plan and Budget process and timeline. Just to note that community input is a key part of the annual planning process and where we are right now for the draft FY27 Operating Plan and Budget is after the end of the Public Comments and before ICANN Org provides responses to Public Comments on the draft plans.

Following this step of producing the summary Public Comment report, we will then move into the steps required for Board adoption, which then is followed by the empowered community period. So, this is just an introduction for those that have not participated in our annual planning cycle, and this happens each

year in these general categories. So today, if we can move forward, we just want to provide a short update.

Next slide, please, on the Public Comments received. So, first of all, we want to thank all of the community members that provided us Public Comments. We wanted to provide a short overview of the process for Public Comments.

So, the draft Operating Plan and Budget were published in December 2025, and the Public Comment period ended mid-February 2026. And as I indicated, the staff report will be published early April 2026. How do we prepare responses for the Public Comment? We receive these Public Comments via a guided Public Comment submission form and also as attachments.

ICANN Org organizes the comments submitted by theme and category. We seek further clarifications where necessary. Then ICANN Org divides up the comments by the subject matter experts and planning liaisons who prepare responses by category and theme. So, it is the planning and finance team that organizes this, but we do not provide all of the Public Comment responses. We coordinate that on behalf of the entire organization.

And then we go through the review process of the Public Comment report, and then we publish it. So, here at ICANN85, we have not yet finalized our responses, but again, we value all of the input that we've received from the community.

So, if we go to the next slide, here is a very short overview of the number of Public Comments received for the draft FY27 plans. We received eight submissions for the ICANN and IANA Operating Plan and Budget, and that resulted in individual comments of 187. On this slide, we're just providing a short overview of the number of comments received by year, and again, that is based on how we receive the comments with the guided form and with attachments via a briefing or a narrative. So, 187 comments were received by a total of eight submissions.

Next slide, please. We have a preliminary Public Comment view by theme. So, here we are providing at the top each of the submitting entities where we did have two individuals, and then we can see the stakeholder groups identified. And on the left-hand side, we have the themes where, for instance, financial management received the most number of comments.

We have the functional activity plans, which is the second comments, number of comments. This is just for your reference as a short overview of the comments that were received.

If you go to the next slide, please. I will just quickly identify that we have two slides from the submissions from the At-Large community where we received 48 unique comments, and they were categorized into eight themes. So, this is a pie chart just highlighting the areas of emphasis from the At-Large community.

If we go to the next slide, we are just noting here several of the key takeaways from the At-Large ICANN submission. Again, this is how

we represent the comments received, and the ICANN Org teams, functional leads, and planning liaisons are in the process of providing responses that will be published on the 2nd of April.

Just highlighting here, very many comments here were regarding the end user and regional benefits and impact, and also just regarding volunteer support mechanisms and stakeholder engagement programs.

So, thank you very much for these comments, and if it's okay with you, Jonathan, I think that we could end here. We've provided a lot of slides. We would promote our prep week session, which also provided a short overview of both the financials and the Public Comments, and I'm happy to take any questions from the group.

JONATHAN ZUCK

We probably have time for a couple of questions. My guess is also we'll want to probably invite you to an OFB Working Group call at some point to go over some things as well.

BECKY NASH

We'd be happy to join any calls.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Always happy to have you too. Is there anybody that wants to get a burning question off the top of their head now, or you're all dying to get out to your coffee break? It's always tough being the last presentation. Those comparisons get made, unfortunately.

All right, well, Becky, thank you so much, and I really appreciate the movement you folks have made toward a sort of customized presentation for us. It makes a big difference. Thank you very much, and thanks to all of you for coming and joining us and sharing information.

Warren, I missed the other hat, but it's good to see you all, and with that, this meeting is adjourned. Enjoy your coffee break. Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]