ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – Get to Know the ICANN Community: SSAC and ALAC
Saturday, March 7, 2026 – 16:30 to 17:30 IST

FERNANDA IUNES

Hello, and welcome to Get to Know the ICANN Community SSAC and ALAC, which, again, we'll learn the acronym meanings in a few minutes. My name is Fernanda Iunes. I am a participation manager for the session. Please note that the session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy.

Please observe the following guidelines to participate in the session, which I'll be posting in the chat in just a minute. During the session, questions will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for the session will include English, Hindi, and Spanish. If you would like to speak during this 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.

Only questions posted in the Q&A pod will be read aloud during the session, as time permits, and when directed by the chair of the session. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English, and speak

clearly at a moderate pace. And with that, I'll hand it back over to Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Fernanda. And, again, welcome to our last session today. During this session, we will learn about two new communities for us. One is SSAC, which is Security and Stability Advisory Committee, and At-Large Advisory Committee, ALAC. And we will learn about the At-Large end users community as well. So we will start with SSAC, Security and Stability Advisory Committee, and it's my great pleasure to introduce you to the chair of SSAC, Ram Mohan, and vice chair, Tara Whalen. So the floor is yours. Tell us about SSAC, what you are doing, and how the newcomers can be part of it, and what they need to know about SSAC.

RAM MOHAN: Thank you, Siranush. Hello, good evening, and good day for everybody else who is dialing in remotely. I'm Ram Mohan, I'm the chair of the ICANN Security and Stability Advisory Committee, SSAC, and it's a pleasure to be here in the country of my birth. And so namaste, and, you know, welcome to everybody. It's good to be here.

So the SSAC, just as a matter of background. So many of you are newcomers; some of you were not even born when the SSAC was created. And the reason why the SSAC got created back in the day was there was an event that happened that some of you may only

have read in history books called 9/11. When those bombings happened in the U.S. and a bunch of buildings and other things went down and people died, there was suddenly a realization: what if this happened to the internet? What if the internet went down? Who is looking at security and stability of that?

So inside of ICANN, we had a conversation about it. So if you go to the next slide, you'll see that ICANN's mission itself is about ensuring the stable and secure operation of the internet's unique identifier systems. That's in its bylaws, in its mission. And so we created the SSAC to focus on advising the ICANN community and the board on things that matter to security and the integrity of the naming and address allocation systems, the identifier systems. So that's what our charter is; that's what we focus on.

And on the next slide, you look at what our responsibilities are. We engage with the internet technical community. We analyze the risks and threats. We coordinate with the entities that are responsible for naming and address allocation security. We inform the ICANN board, as well as the ICANN community. And we provide advice to the ICANN community and the board, and our recommendations are grounded in security assessments and operational insights.

One thing you should know is we're an advisory committee. What does it mean to be an advisory committee? In the ICANN world, what it means is that we have no power. We have no votes. We get to say what we get to say, and the people who we provide our

advice and our recommendations to get to take it or leave it. And so, as a result, what it means is that when we do publish reports, when we do our work, we work really hard to make sure that there are facts, there's a lot of detail and proof behind the things that we're saying, so that when we make a recommendation to the board or to the community, and we say, "You ought to do this," or "You ought to consider this," it is blindingly obvious that if you don't do it, you're going to make a big mistake.

So we try and ensure--so the fact that we have no votes and no power is actually our superpower because it actually pushes us to increase the diligence and the quality of the work that we do. So that the effect of it is, we're only as good as the quality of the reports that we provide, the quality of the advice that we provide. So it's kind of an inbuilt accountability mechanism for us.

Next slide. Who we are. We're becoming more and more diverse as a group. We're still dominated by the traditional old membership of the SSAC, so there's a bunch of us who are from North America, that's where the majority is, then we have a bunch of folks from Europe. We're growing our presence in the Asia-Pacific Australia region, and also from the Africa region, so we're just starting to grow that. And we're keenly interested in growing our membership in the Latin America, Caribbean region. We don't have any representation at this point. We're aware of it. It's not for lack of awareness, but our focus is not just on checking the box and saying we have representation from each part of the world.

The focus is on having people who are really great at their area of technology, at their area of expertise in security and stability, and then making sure that they're on the committee. So the first thing is, are you really great at that area of technology, security, and stability? If you're great, then we look at whether you come from an area that we're underrepresented in.

Next slide. This is our leadership team. I'm Ram, I'm the chair of the committee. Tara here to my right is the vice chair. Jim Galvin is our board liaison, and he's actually at board sessions right now. Jeff Bedzer to my left is on the leadership team. Barry Leiba, I don't know if he's here in the room, but he is another member of the leadership team. And then, from the ICANN policy support staff, we have Carlos and Danielle, Kathy, Dan, and Michael. So all of us together form the leadership of the SSAC.

But we're leadership in the sense of we're administrators. So we provide leadership to where the SSAC should go, but the work of the SSAC is done by the SSAC members. So I'll just quickly ask for the SSAC members here in the room to please raise your hands so that you can see who is in the SSAC. So we have several people here in the SSAC, so go hit them up after this meeting is over if you have questions about it. We also have an open microphone session on Wednesday. Come to that open mic session. You can ask us anything; we will answer a few things.

Next slide. We have, really, five topics that are keystone for us. These are the topics where we work to be an authority: DNS abuse,

new gTLDs, DNSSEC, alternative namespaces. And we say alternative namespaces, but that includes really new technology areas, so things like blockchain, what's happening with AI, post-quantum cryptography; all of those things fit into that area number four. And area number five is internet governance and the security, stability, and resilience aspects of internet governance. So those are five areas where we consistently have focus and we devote time and energy on it.

And our desire is that inside of the ICANN community, when any of these five topics come up, and they have to do with security and stability, we would really like for the community to say, "What does SSAC think about this?" Or "Has the SSAC written about this? Does the SSAC have a point of view on this?" So we aim to be an authority in these five areas.

Next slide. We have over one hundred and thirty reports that we have written in the course of our twenty-five years of existence. But out of those, there's a few in here that we have for your just information. As you can see, a lot of them have to do with DNS security. We have a bunch on DNS management, on registration data, the accuracy of the data, the data model. And we also have a bunch of work that we've done on internationalized domain names, IDNs there, routing security, and open-source software. So we have diverse interests. We publish these reports.

Now, our reports tend to be many pages long, and often tend to be quite technical. So in addition to the reports that are there, if you

go to the SSAC website on the ICANN site, you will see that in addition to the actual technical reports, we also have a five hundred-word summary that is written in regular, plain English, without a lot of the acronyms and a lot of the jargon that you're expected to know if you want to participate in ICANN. So we're really trying to make the work that we do accessible to everybody in the community.

And on the last slide, the most recent things that we've done: SAC132 really is about the reality that the domain name system, the DNS, runs on free and open source software. And what does that mean, that the DNS runs in free and open source software? What are the implications of it? So we have written a report on that, and that is aimed at, in particular, regulators, at governments, because we've been starting to see some governments saying, "Oh, you know, open source software means something," and we're trying to say, "This is what it actually means," so they have a reference that they can use.

SAC131, the root server system governance: there are some welcome changes, positive changes on how the root server system is being governed. So we have some comments that encourage that, but also encourage for even further work to be done in this area. We had some comments on SAC130. Some of you may know that there's a new round of gTLDs that is gonna start. And we have some comments on how to make that round more stable, more secure, especially when it comes to a specific technical area called

name collisions. So we have specific recommendations and some suggestions there.

So we have quite a bit of work that we've done in that area. What are we working on right now? We have those six things that we have. The first one is responsible integration into the DNS ecosystem. It's written in that way just so that it can be a cool acronym: it's a RIDE work party. But what that is, is if you have names in the blockchain ecosystem, as an example, they want for those names to integrate with the DNS. Well, that's great, but if you have dot-com in the DNS world, and you have a dot-com identifier in the blockchain world, how do you make sure that there is no conflict between them? How do you make it responsible?

The second one is on DNSSEC. For those of you who don't know, DNSSEC is a foundational security protocol that helps protect domain names. When you click on a domain name on a website, one of the threats that is there is between the time you click on it and when you get to the end destination, you can get hijacked and you could be taken somewhere else, except if that name or the gTLD is signed with this technology called DNSSEC. If it is signed, and if you click on it, if somebody tries to hijack you, it'll stop the hijacking. But it's a complicated technology to implement, and so we're writing a paper on if you want to implement DNSSEC, what do you need to be ready for? How do you do it? What kind of resources do you need to put together?

We're also working on AI. AI is actually transforming how abuse is happening on the internet, and so we, especially with DNS abuse, have a work party that is specifically focused on what is happening with how DNS abuse is being changed dramatically by the use of AI. We also have a work party on DNS transparency, but the simple way of explaining it is that some of our security researchers have found that certain parties have found a way to utilize a loophole in how quickly zone files are published. ICANN publishes all the zone files once every twenty-four hours. So we have some enterprising people who register names, use them for abusive purposes, and delete them within twenty-four hours.

And if I delete them within twenty-four hours, and you're only publishing it every twenty-four hours, you can't even see that the abuse happened. So we're looking into understanding that, and then coming up, potentially, with some suggestions on it. And of course, inside of the GNSO, there is policy development that is happening on a really important area called associated domain checks. Say somebody registers a very long domain name, and that domain name is used in an abusive way. You can demonstrate that it's used in an abusive manner. So there's a protocol to go and look at that and say, "Okay, this is being used in a bad way, take it down."

Now, what's happening is, people are registering that first name, and then they're registering another ten thousand names underneath it that are just one or two characters different from the original name. That's what an associative domain name is. This is

work to say, if you can find one name that is abusive, and there's a pattern that you can establish of a whole bunch of other names that are just a little different from that first name, can we say there's a pretty good likelihood these names are also going to be abusive, and can you do something about it? So we are involved and engaged in that. The last thing I want to mention is that we're--this is the first time we're doing this, and Tara is helping lead that effort on an SSAC research apprenticeship pilot program, so I'll switch to you, Tara.

TARA WHALEN

Thank you, Ram. So, Ram showed you the membership of SSAC, and when we were thinking about our membership, we were also thinking about the future membership of SSAC and what that might look like, and how we might prepare someone to be a future member of SSAC, or just to deepen their security knowledge in an ICANN context and an online security context in general. And we often get people as members who are at a late stage of their career; they're quite advanced.

But there are probably opportunities to work with SSAC at an earlier stage. So we thought, how might that happen? And so we thought, perhaps we could have someone come in who has some technical background and interest to work with us short-term, so about a year, or a little less than a year, work with us; they'll get mentorship from us, find a project of interest, contribute to a work party, for example. They'll learn a bit more about what SSAC does,

and we will learn from them. They can contribute their knowledge and expertise, so it seems like a win-win situation.

So we're trying this for the first time. We had a pool of people who were drawn from ICANN Fellows. We had help from Siranush, thank you very much, and others to identify some people. We selected one candidate to try it for the first time, so we're very happy to work with Gustavo Ortega this year. And, we're excited that we're gonna learn as we go, we'll learn what's working, be able to refine it, and we hope that we'll keep this going in the future. Maybe run it with two people a year, but we're super excited about this, and we're glad that we had the opportunity to work with the fellows to give us some ideas of a new program.

RAM MOHAN We also have several fellows who've become members.

TARA WHALEN That is true, and Ram reminds me, we have had some fellows who have become members, so we appreciate this as a springboard. We've taken all of your expertise, enthusiasm, and ideas, and we're leveraging them for great success in SSAC.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Absolutely, thank you, and for those who don't know, SSAC used to be closed to the public. All their sessions were closed. We never knew what they were talking about behind the doors. But, thanks to this current leadership, the doors open for the community, and

we have really, for the last couple of years, seen new members coming from the fellowship program, and it's always an immense point of pride for me and for the fellowship program to be part of SSAC. And I always keep thanking SSAC for opening the doors for the community, because this is the opportunity for these young but talented professionals to be the decision makers of the internet, current and future.

So, thank you, thank you, and we have a couple of minutes for asking questions to SSAC members. I know there will be a lot, oh my god. So, who didn't ask questions today? Who is raising the hand and didn't ask the question? Please, go ahead.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Hi, hi everybody, good evening. Thank you so much for the presentation. I'm Ihita Gangavarapu for the record. I'm a former NextGen and NextGen ambassador, so really happy to be back here after ten years. My question to you, Mr. Ram, is that I was part of the lightning talks today of SSAC, and I currently work in the space of DNS abuse. So I'm really interested in participating, or being an observer, rather, at the SSAC conversations. Now, particularly in the space of DNS abuse and AI, the domain I operate in, I wanted to know if there's an opportunity to be an observer in certain areas of discussion, because it's also an emerging work party within SSAC? And, if so, do we also have to wait for the public comments to indulge in the conversations?

RAM MOHAN

It's a great question, and one that we have wrestled with for quite a while. Here is the problem. Sometimes, when we do the work inside the work parties, we have members who bring highly sensitive data, highly sensitive information to bear, and when we do that, we end up working to make sure that it's kept in a very closed way. This is operational security at work, right?

So, as a result, our general model is that when the SSAC writes its papers, publishes its papers, it consists of SSAC members and invited experts. Those are the people who are brought in to work on it. And we also don't have a practice of putting a paper out and looking for public comments on the paper, and then revising the paper. Because our general model is, it's not that we know everything about everything, but a few things we know quite a lot about, and most things we don't know anything about, so we try to speak on just those few things.

The place where you get to at least observe is at the ICANN meetings, because we have moved to this model, as Siranush was talking about, where we're running some of our work parties in these sessions publicly, and that's one opportunity. You get to see how we do the work. But if you want to participate, apply, become a member, and then you get to do that.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes? I saw the hand here, yes, please go ahead.

RUPAM BARUI

Hi everyone, my name is Rupam, for the record. My question is regarding DNSSEC. Not all registrants know what DNSSEC is, and they might not know how to implement DNSSEC to their subdomains or even domains. So why not, you know, be proactive and implement the DNSSEC by default to every domain and the subdomains they are creating for the domains they own, so that they cannot be hijacked and, you know, be safe from the DNS abuse.

RAM MOHAN

I love the idea. But if you look at the way SSAC works, we don't look at ourselves as the organization that can say, "You should do that." For that to happen, it has to go through the policy development process, and inside the GNSO, they could sit together and say, "We want it to be the default," then it'll be done. But from a pure technical stability and security point of view, it's very hard for us to make the case that it should be automatic for everybody.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes, please, go ahead.

SRIJAN RAI

Hi, I'm Srijan, I'm a NextGen. My question was somewhat related to the previous question, and it's sort of related to the age-old problem of translating action from policy reports. So, as you said, you do publish a lot of interesting reports. I just wanted to ask, for

example, if we take the example of some AI threats, and you kind of do recognize that say, it's kind of impacting, say, end-to-end encryption, and it's a very emerging threat, how do you sort of then ensure that action on the same can be taken up at a speed so that end users aren't harmed? Because as you said, you do not control the policy development process, but what are the ways through which you can highlight the emergency of the issue, and what are the challenges that you're facing there?

RAM MOHAN

Thanks. This is what we are really building some muscle on, to make sure that we can shine a very bright spotlight on areas that we think are of really critical importance. So, we think, for example, DNSSEC is important to implement. We also are saying it's not a lightweight protocol to implement, so be careful about how you implement it, because if you look at a lot of the outages that are linked to DNSSEC, you will find that they have happened even at highly skilled organizations because it's a heavyweight protocol to implement.

But our focus is on shining a bright spotlight, but also raising awareness inside of the community. Monday, 10:45 AM, we are running a plenary for the entire community on resilience of the internet. And we really believe that we are at an inflection point. The SSAC was started twenty-five years ago, and, you know, there was 9/11 and all of that. We think there's a similar kind of an inflection point that is upon us, where it's no longer the case that

you can just say the internet and interoperability is guaranteed and it's just gonna work.

We see more and more that disruption at a local, regional, national, global scale is the reality. So we're saying we need to focus on resilience, and resilience means survivability. You know, things go down, how do you bring it back up and not have significant harm? So our job is to spread the awareness, provide the briefing on it, and then work hard with each of the different communities so that they understand that strengthening the core ecosystem is really important.

We have now moved from "the internet is useful" to "the internet is essential." We have moved from "the internet is important" to "the internet is a utility." And when you get to that stage of the internet as a utility, that means that governments start to get engaged. Because when the internet goes down, people go to the government and say, "What are you doing about this? How can you allow this to happen?" And so that's kind of--so the short answer is: shine a spotlight, increase awareness, make sure that the misconceptions are removed, and we can provide clarity on the technical facts on which the core protocols and the core system works.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Thank you. I know that we are out of time, but maybe briefly take last question over here.

KARAN KALRA

Thank you. Thank you for the presentation, Ram. I'm Karan Kalra, for the record. I'm building on the previous question asked. Innovation is rapidly advancing, and regulation is catching up, not only here but in all parts of the world. So, what are some steps that we take to advance our policy to catch up with innovation? I mean, if we have to take account of AI-based threats, and the kind of attacks that are advancing every single day, what are some steps that we're taking at ICANN so we are there at pace with innovation? Thank you.

RAM MOHAN

Thanks. I'll take a quick response to that. We're not moving fast enough. And the bad guys are moving way faster than any of us are. Okay, and especially when you look at DNS abuse in those areas, and AI, and how that's accelerating it, we have a problem. But at the same time, we're a multi-stakeholder community, and so you can't just rush forward and say, "We see the nail, here's a hammer, let's go hammer at it." You have to actually bring the community along with you.

It's kind of a situation where we have to exercise some level of patience while at the same time imparting a sense of urgency and saying, "Don't wait too long," especially when it comes to AI and DNS abuse, when it comes to resilience, when it comes to DNSSEC and its operational implementation, when it comes to the governance of the DNS and the security stability aspects of it, when

it comes to things like name collisions and gTLDs. All of these are seriously important topics, and we have to have that sense of time is ticking by, and you have to move as fast as you can, but carry the community with you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, and I would like to thank, on behalf of all newcomers and fellows and NextGeners here, SSAC members to be with us, and we invite you at 05:30 PM to share with us the networking hour here in the hall. And thank you for being here. Our next presenters, I would like to invite my colleagues from At-Large. Jonathan Zuck is the chair from At-Large. Please, if you can come closer here. Thank you, thank you, and see you at 05:30 PM.

At-Large is the community where I myself came from. It's a big community. It's a community where many fellows and NextGeners are part of. I also invite ALAC members who are here, but I would like to give the floor to Jonathan to explain what is At-Large, what is ALAC, and how it works, and probably you already know who will be presenting after you. Jonathan, the floor is yours.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Suppose I hand over to Claire. I'll just do it quickly. Did you already go over who ALAC was in earlier meetings? Is this redundant? Have they already learned? Oh, okay. Because that seems to happen sometimes, that what I'm saying is redundant. Hi, my name is Jonathan Zuck, and I'm the chair of the At-Large Advisory

Committee, which is designed to be the voice of end-user interests inside of ICANN.

But ALAC is just a part of a broader At-Large community that includes regional At-Large organizations, and then their members, which are either individuals or what we call At-Large structures, which are interested organizations that exist independently, like ISOC Chapters, or a security firm, or something like that, that might be interested in some component of what we do. And so there's a broad membership that's fairly unique among the different constituencies inside of ICANN.

And so one of the things that distinguishes us, in addition to that depth, is a kind of a breadth as well, because it's a very heterogeneous group of people. You know, when you look at the intellectual property constituency, it's made up of trademark attorneys. And so, I can almost 100% predict what the outcome is going to be of any conversation that they have.

Whereas, when we debate policy inside of the At-Large community, it's a very fulsome discussion, because there's so many different perspectives that come to bear, and people with different priorities. You know, people that might be more concerned about cybersecurity, and other people that might be more concerned about human rights, and so when those things are in opposition, how do we resolve those issues? So we have pretty meaty debates and discussions inside of the At-Large community. I want to make sure that we leave enough time for questions and answers, so I'm

going to allow my vice chair, Claire Craig, who began as a fellow and is now a vice chair of the ALAC, to tell a little bit about her story. Claire, hopefully you're ready.

CLAIRE CRAIG

Yes, thank you, Jonathan. This is Claire Craig, for the record. I'm really very sorry that I'm not in Mumbai with you all. It's such a difference speaking to you online compared to actually being in the room with you, but it is what it is, and I'll do my very best. So, I actually started, like you all, back in 2017. Now, that might sound like a long time to you, but in ICANN years, it isn't.

And if someone had told me back then that today I would have been one of the vice chairs of ALAC, as well as a co-vice chair of the Operation, Finance, and Budget Working Group, I would have said to them that they were crazy. Primarily because I felt at my very first meeting like I was drinking from a fire hose. I'm sure some of you may understand that expression. And, believe it or not, even though I wear these hats today, sometimes I still feel that way. So, take heart.

The idea, though, is that you really need to engage from very early, from day one, which is what I did. One of the things that Siranush will tell you is to be visible. To speak up at every opportunity that you can. When you go to the meeting with the board, speak up. When you go to the public sessions, speak up. That's one of the advantages of being a fellow. People give you the opportunity, and they want to hear what you have to say, so please do not be shy,

take advantage of the opportunity. It also helps you to get to know the community.

So, some of the things that I did: I started at Copenhagen, which was ICANN58 in 2017. And I took advantage of all three fellowships that were available to fellows. My second fellowship was at ICANN59, and then my third fellowship was at ICANN62. Then, back in those days, the mentor did not come from the community as it is right now. So I was given the opportunity to mentor fellows, so I took advantage of that.

At the end of that, I still did not know where I wanted to go. And so I started looking around for a community to be part of, and I became part of the Non-Commercial Stakeholder Group, trying to find out what was happening there. And they asked for someone--this was now during COVID, so everything is online--and they asked for someone to speak at a plenary session on ICANN's multi-stakeholder model within the internet governance ecosystem. And so I raised my hand, and they gave me an opportunity to speak.

Having done that, I became visible to my community, which is the Latin America and the Caribbean community. I live in Trinidad and Tobago, which is a small Caribbean island right next to South America. And so we are part of Latin America and the Caribbean. And so, having participated in that, my community then asked me when there was a position that was open for secretary. And they asked me if I would take on the position, and I said, "I don't know

anything about this." They said, "We will help you." And I said, "Okay, I will do it."

And that's the other thing. When asked if you can do something, say yes. There are people who are available to help. And so that's what I did. And after my term was up, after two years, I decided to apply for a leadership position through the NomCom. Now, you may have heard of the NomCom, the nominating committee, where they not only look for leadership positions within ICANN, but they also go to the regions and look for positions.

And through that, I was selected by the NomCom to the ALAC. And the ALAC is a fifteen-member community with two persons coming from within the At-Large community, and one person coming from each of the five regions that exist. And I wouldn't go into all of that now, because as Jonathan said, we want to leave some time for questions. So, that's what I did, and that was a two-year term.

At the end of the two years, I then wanted to come back in again, because it was such a good experience, and so I applied through my RALO, and I was elected to the ALAC. Now, once coming onto the ALAC, I was asked to be one of the vice chairs, and I took the position, and I'm still learning a lot in that position.

And while I was there, I was also asked to work with one of the chairs of the Operations, Finance, and Budget Working Group. That person, shortly after I joined, resigned for family commitments, and so there I was in that position. And again, working with others, they have helped me to learn the ropes and to do what I do right

now. I can say to you: look out for upcoming opportunities. I'm sure you will hear more about it.

ICANN85 is coming. If you're at ICANN85 right now in Mumbai, go to all the sessions that you can go to. We do have an OFB, which is Operations, Finance and Budget Working Group, meeting tomorrow morning. If you want to hear more about what we do, I invite you to attend. And there are other ALAC and At-Large sessions at this meeting that I would encourage you to attend. Then you have the ICANN86 Policy Forum coming up in June.

And I'm sure the deadlines would have closed for applications, but remember that all ICANN meetings are hybrid. So, like me, you can be at home, and you can join. Yes, it can be a little bit of a sacrifice. I could say to you that particularly for this meeting, I had to be up at 11:30 PM until it is now 07:44 AM where I am, but because I needed to speak to you and attend the sessions, you do this.

The fellowship program for the AGM ICANN87, I think that should be opening soon, as well as the NextGen, and that's in October, and I encourage you to take the opportunity and apply for these fellowships, join, and participate. Also, all of these meetings are recorded, so even if you are unable to join the sessions, you can go back and listen to the recordings. So that's my story, and if you have any questions, I'm available to answer. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Claire, and thank you for being with us and joining virtually. Claire was talking about RALOs, and I would like to give a clarification on what is a RALO. It's Regional At-Large Organizations. At-Large itself comprises five regions: African region, which is AFRALO; North America region, which is NARALO; Asia-Pacific region is APRALO; then we have LACRALO, which is Latin America and Caribbean; and EURALO, which is Europe region.

You can go to your respective region and meet and talk to the representatives there. There are a couple of sessions which Claire has mentioned as well. There will be a meeting of AFRALO, where fellows from Africa will present, so I will encourage you also to be there. There is also the meeting with the fellows from Asia-Pacific team, with NextGeners and the fellows. So there are a couple of sessions where you will meet At-Large representatives there.

But we have the opportunity, for a couple of minutes, before we go and meet for our networking hour to have some drinks and some fun and meet with the ICANN community. There is a time for a couple of questions to At-Large, so please go ahead. Yes, let's start here. Please go.

TARUNA KAUR BAMRAH

Taruna Kaur Bamrah, for the record, NextGen, and I have a question: how is ALAC testing new APRALO outreach models to get underserved communities and end users into PDPs before the consensus locks in? Because I also belong to a tier-two, tier-three region, which is North India, Punjab, basically. So, how does

APRALO get into these underserved communities, and how can end users be digitally included?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you. Is Amrita here? No? Okay. So, who can take this question? Any RALO can respond. What is the process within At-Large? Yeah.

CLAIRE CRAIG: Sorry. I was just going to say, part of what the--oh, I'm seeing Hadia has her hand up. So, Hadia, do you want to speak as the chair of the AFRALO?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: No, there is no hand from Hadia. Go ahead, Claire.

CLAIRE CRAIG: This is probably an old hand from before. Right, okay. Yes, so each RALO has its own mechanism for setting up their outreach and engagement. They work with the ICANN Global Stakeholder Engagement group, the GSE, and they work out what their strategy is. There is a session at this meeting where the APRALO is meeting with the NextGens, and that would be a good opportunity to go there and ask that question, where they can tell you specifically what is happening for their specific communities.

In general, however, right now, the one PDP that is currently open is the one on DNS abuse mitigation. And while the ALAC has

selected two persons to be members, one person to be a participant, and one an alternate, there are opportunities for persons to be observers. So if you are interested in following a PDP, you can, once you start to get involved through your RALO and through the ALAC, apply and ask to be considered as an observer on that PDP. I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Thank you, and now I see the hand raised by Hadia. Hadia, please go ahead.

HADIA ELMINIAWI Hello, everyone, this is Hadia Elminiawi, I'm AFRALO chair. Talking about opportunities and how to get involved, it's actually easy to get involved through your RALO, and that's your easiest path right now to get involved straight away. So, each RALO--I speak, of course, for the Africa Regional At-Large Organization. We accept both individual members and At-Large structures. So, as an individual member, you are invited to go to the website, fill in the application, and you will become an individual member.

As an individual member, you are subscribed to the mailing list, so you get involved in all the discussions, all policy work, as well as the work that's happening in the OFB, which is the Operation, Finance and Budget Working Group. You can also, of course, join even from now the Operation and Finance Budget Working Group calls, as well as the Consolidated Policy Working Group calls. In the

beginning, you could be observers. If you find yourself able to participate, you can just start participating directly.

So, that would include commenting on public proceedings. Those public proceedings that are concerned with policy are discussed in the Consolidated Policy Working Group meetings, and the OFB working group discusses other operational issues. So this is a good way to know about everything currently happening within At-Large. So, I invite African fellows to visit the website and become members. Thank you.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks. I just want to echo something Hadia said that may have gone by quickly. You don't have to be a member of anything to participate in the key conversations that are taking place inside of the At-Large community. The two calls that get mentioned the most are the Consolidated Policy Working Group and the Operations, Finance, and Budget Working Group. They are the two main calls on which we discuss what our positions are going to be, either on DNS policy or ICANN operations.

Those are sort of the two distinctions. And those calls, nobody's having their membership checked at the door; everyone's able to speak, everyone's able to express their opinion, and when we take a temperature of the room, everybody can vote. Ultimately, the ALAC has the last say, but they really rely a lot on this group that's very flat and non-hierarchical to make its recommendation up to the ALAC. So, before you join anything, just get on the calls. And you

can join those mailing lists, and you don't have to be a member of anything to start speaking and to start learning what it is that we do.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Absolutely, thank you, Jonathan. And there is a question from a virtual participant: "How does ALAC ensure that complex technical issues related to DNS security are translated into concerns that reflect the interest and trust of everyday internet users?" This is a very interesting question we can take. Who would like to respond?

JONATHAN ZUCK: I can take a first cut at it, I guess, because time is short. That's a complicated question, but for one thing, we do have ALAC representatives on the SSAC, for example, so we're in constant communication with the SSAC, and we get constant updates about evolving issues related to DNSSEC, related to open source software implications, and related to DNS abuse, et cetera.

And the other piece of this is that we invite people from outside of the At-Large to come and speak at the CPWG or OFB Working Group call, so that we have a briefing if necessary, if something is particularly technical. But I think most importantly, when we talk about end-user interests, it's really about that end-user experience, and so, more often than not, it's not a highly technical issue. It has more to do with whether a particular policy is going to make it easier or harder for end users to do what they do.

Things like doing online banking, making hotel reservations, all those kinds of things that are end-user activities; those are the kinds of things that we focus on in terms of when we decide to intervene on policy issues. So, when something technical is there, we get the information we need. But we aren't trying to insert ourselves into highly technical conversations as the At-Large community. Individuals do, but as the At-Large community, that's not necessarily what we consider our domain.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Thank you, and last question. Please, go ahead.

BERNHART FARRAS SUKANDAR Hello everyone, I'm Bern from Indonesia, NextGen. So, I asked this question as well in the previous sessions, but I think this is the right session to ask it. For me, I'm from Indonesia, I'm Sundanese Indonesian. Indonesia has more than seven hundred languages. We have thousands of ethnicities, and maybe India and other countries also have that. But the experience that's being shared, like speaking at an ICANN forum like this, it's a privilege.

Not everyone can have this kind of privilege, and you said as well before, sir, that you don't have to register for a membership to be able to connect to the ICANN world. But in my personal opinion, and please correct me if I'm wrong, if I'm not a member or don't have a chance to speak here, maybe I cannot really follow up or have a concern or a basic understanding about what I can say or

what is my individual power to change this. I don't even understand the benefits of ICANN if I'm not here.

So at the current stage, with the current progress, what are the At-Large Advisory Committee initiatives and positions to, let's say, push representation of not only a country, but people; not only the underprivileged, but also the privileged with the different ethnicities. I know it's not easy, but do you have a blueprint or a plan to go there? Because there is AI and stuff, but is there a plan yet? Thank you.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Well, I think there's a good news, bad news situation. I think it will be a long time before ICANN's gonna go further than, say, the United Nations in terms of official languages, interpretation, and things like that. So, I think increasingly we're trying to leverage artificial intelligence to do translation of documents, transcriptions of calls and things like that, and those tools are only going to get more sophisticated, and eventually will include simultaneous interpretation into many languages, and I think we are going to rely on those things.

But the first part of your question about your participation, again, has nothing to do with your membership. So, yes, if you want to be nominated by a RALO to be a member of the ALAC, for example, you need to be a member of that RALO. That's definitely the case. But if you want to get engaged now and be a part of developing the policy

positions of the At-Large community, you can do that without any association whatsoever. It's that simple.

CLAIRE CRAIG

If I could just add to what you're saying there with the membership. When I first came to ICANN, I was not a member of anything. I was not involved in my RALO, and I was not involved in At-Large. I applied for a fellowship, I got accepted as a fellow, and I applied for two other fellowships. Even when I became a mentor, I was not a member of anything. So I just wanted to reiterate what you're saying to him, that you don't have to be a member to get involved in ICANN. Once you find your niche, then you can determine where you want to be involved. So just start, get involved, and start to be active, and then you can follow up and decide where you want to land.

NATALIA FILINA

Thank you so much. Thank you for your question. I'm Natalia from ALAC, from the European region, and as far as I understand, you're also concerned about the language barrier, right? Being English, so it is not that much about membership rather than the representation and the opportunity to participate, which I sympathize with. In my country, we speak Czech, which is pretty different than the English one. However, to also encourage you, or maybe put a positive note on this issue, those At-Large structures that are operating in the region that become part of the RALOs usually have discussions happening not in English but in that native

language that is useful and most open to that specific region where the organization is operating.

So it means that usually this is a nice connecting point. In your region, you speak and work in an environment also considering the language, that it's the most suitable and accommodating for as many people as possible. And then there's the representative, who is able to translate these things, but also raise these issues on the regional level, and then eventually it goes up and up, and then some of those discussions are being discussed here. And also, some of those issues from specific people in very specific regions can eventually have their place here as well.

It's just quite a long way, and it is why we need more encouragement, not only with individual members, but those At-Large structures to join. This is really their chance to have their very local and specific issues here, with everyone on a global level. So I hope this adds some more clarity to your question. Thank you, and with that, I would like to invite At-Large colleagues to join us for the networking hour with fellows and NextGeners around the corner. And thank you for hosting us for this session to tell us about At-Large. And with that, this meeting is adjourned. See you tomorrow!

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]