
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – AFRALO-AfrICANN Think Tank: Community Engagement Research and Dialogue Session
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YESIM SAGLAM

Hello, and welcome to the AFRALO African Think Tank Community Engagement, Research and Dialogue session. My name is Yesim Saglam, and I'm the remote participation manager for this session. Please note that this session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. During this session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include English, French, and Arabic.

If you would like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom, and when called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. Onsite 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 speak at a reasonable pace. I will now hand the floor over to Hadia Elminiawi, AFRALO chair. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Yesim. This is Hadia Elminiawi for the record, and welcome all to the AFRALO African session. This session has several objectives. One of the main goals is to strengthen the engagement of ICANN fellows from Africa and encourage their

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active participation in the AFRALO community. Another objective is to take a step back and look at the AFRALO African joint statements produced over the past fifteen years. We will review these statements, analyze them by topic, and identify potential areas for future discussion and collaboration. AFRALO statements began in 2010, and over the years, the community has drafted and discussed thirty-nine statements covering more than forty-one different topics related to Internet governance and the DNS ecosystem.

Today, we focus on three main topics: bridging the digital divide, internationalized domain names, and universal acceptance, as well as DNS abuse and data security. These topics will be presented by three ICANN fellows and one AFRALO member, who will share their perspectives and insights with us. As you see on the screen, those are our thirty-nine segments. We can see here, if we look at the numbers, they covered forty-one topics. We have forty-one statements. So we have eleven statements on governance and accountability, six on DNS security and abuse, a total of six on universal acceptance and digital divide. We have five on participation and capacity building, five on gTLD policy, three on Internet governance, and two on AI, two on data protection, and one on community resilience. With this, I stop and give the floor to Russ.

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Thank you for having me here. I'm Russ Weinstein, I'm the head of the Policy Development Support team at ICANN, and it's a real

pleasure and honor to be here with you today. It's pretty amazing. This is, I think, the fortieth instance of this gathering that you do as AFRALO, and congratulations to you all. I'm pleased to be here with you today.

I look forward to listening to the fellows speak on these topics. They're the same topics that are prevalent across the ICANN community. If you look across the ICANN meeting agenda, these are key and important topics for all stakeholders, and particularly relevant for yours. So it will be great to listen to those and engage on those topics. As we head to a next round of new gTLDs, these things become all the more prevalent and pressing, and so it will be interesting to see where the community takes these items and how ICANN can help them. So with that, I'll pass it to Catherine.

CATHERINE ADEYA

Pierre is advising me what to say. Anyway, thank you very much, and honestly, it's such an honor for me to be here. I got extra steps trying to look for the room, and I'm glad I'm here. Yes, I had a conflicting agenda, but when I looked at what is happening here today, I don't think there's any better place for me to be. You've just talked about forty-one statements, and in my time in ICANN, I sometimes read those statements and they are so rich. I always wonder, what else?

To hear that we are going to, to some extent, demystify, step down on those statements, have an engagement, and it's coming mostly from the fellows, to me is honestly a great honor. I'm looking

forward to some kind of peer mentorship, hearing from the fellows, and we see how we can engage. But honestly, on behalf of the board, Alan, I know, would have liked to be here. I'm not sure if he is going to speak online. But on behalf of the board, it's a real honor, and we really thank AFRALO for organizing this and for the engagement with the fellows, because that's one of the things that is very big for the board right now. So thank you very much, and I look forward to hearing more.

PIERRE DANDJINOU

Catherine said all I had to say. Sorry about that. Pierre Dandjinou, VP Stakeholder Engagement, particularly in charge of Africa. We do also have a few staff, and we also have our engagement center in Nairobi, and also working under our hubs in Istanbul. Well, it's always... I mean, the figure, starting by statistics for me, is also telling that you were able to produce so many of those statements. Definitely that's hard work, and I would like to really commend you on that. And the variety of themes or thematics that you actually tackled was quite important.

Believe me, you really cover the whole spectrum of the issues we are facing in Africa, and thanks very much for that. You're doing something which is also great, because that's the first time I'm hearing that you are having the fellows around. So I would suggest that we just let them stand up and putting questions, whatever question they have, because we also need to rejuvenate the whole thing we are doing so that they understand.

I would like the takeaway to be that we met so many acronyms in this place, but let them also say that we met so many people that were ready to really hold our hands and move things in Africa. Of course, the thing I always say is that we, as GSE Africa—another acronym, but I'm sorry, you have to live through this, we live with the acronyms anyway—Global Stakeholder Engagement, one of the things we would like to be seeing is your footprint in Africa. Whatever you are discussing here, it's always great that this also be reflected in the digital economy in Africa. This is something that I would like you to be better involved on that, if possible. We, as GSE Africa, of course, as you know, are always happy to be working with you. There are so many issues that you guys have been discussing. We are part of this; we are part of your meetings also. As I always say, I do have one of my staff dedicated to you, so yeah, we are here really to support, and again, congratulations for what you are doing, and thanks for having me here.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Pierre, and now I give the floor to Akinbo, and he's a fellow ALAC member and part of the leadership team as well.

ADEBUNMI AKINBO

Thank you, Hadia, Madam Chair, as I would like to call you. I'll just take a few minutes to quickly share what I have had while doing a deep dive on some of the documents we have been able to submit so far. It asks a question, and the question is, why not? The why not is we have so many ALSs. We have an ICANN remit to push on

individual members who often turn off the mic probably within the next two months of having joined us.

So we need to get a solution on board as we move our ICANN fellows forward. What are these solutions? We must ensure that within the first forty-eight hours of a new member, either an ALS member or an individual member, we encourage them to attend something that we can call a Newcomers Weekly, and then transition them from a Newcomers Weekly within two months to what you can call a New Members Monthly Meeting, where they get to meet people that will speak to them about how to participate within the community. Give them an onboarding toolkit that simplifies even our acronyms and makes them understand it, so that the next time they step into a meeting within the next six months, one, they have had a mentor who has taken them through how to participate in the public comment, who has shown them, thanks to ALAC, how to start with the bullets before you start with the full documentation, and then finally be able to understand that there are so many communities that they can either impact or benefit from. On that note, I would like to hand over the mic, but with a final note, I'll say our mission starts now. And that question is, why not now? Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Akinbo. And, Raymond, the floor is yours.

RAYMOND MAMATTAH

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is said that what can't be measured cannot be managed. So, I'm happy the AFRALO leadership has taken time to review the various topics and write-ups that we have done over the periods. We are summing up all of these with the mind of setting up a think tank, which I believe is a good thing for us to move forward with.

I'm happy that this session especially includes the fellows, most of whom are first-time fellows, and they are coming to make statements for us, which I believe is a very good initiative. I want to congratulate all those fellows that have come forward to make this presentation, which is in order. On this note, we look forward to seeing what they have for us. Congratulations for coming forward and making the bold steps.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Raymond, and I join you in thanking our African fellows. Before going to the presentation, I'll give the floor to Siranush, fellowship program manager, and then we go to the presentation.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Hadia. I will be really very brief, just my appreciation to AFRALO for organizing such a meeting and giving fellows the opportunity to show that they are not only the future of ICANN, but they are already the current of ICANN. They are making the history. They are already part of this history, and I feel very proud sitting next to them here to listen to what they will show us.

I'm sure that whatever they bring to the table will stay with AFRALO, and not only with AFRALO, but will be an example for all the RALOs and all the end users how it works and how the Internet will develop for the sake of the users' perspective. So I appreciate all of you, and my congratulations to fellows who step up for this initiative. Wish you luck! Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Siranush, and now we move to Mutageki Cliff and the presentation on universal acceptance and IDNs.

MUTAGEKI CLIFF

Thank you so much, Hadia, and a very good afternoon to everyone. Jambo, Marhaba, Sannu, Bawo, Salam. It's always an honor to speak about a topic I'm very passionate about, and that is universal acceptance. Every time I embark on this, I imagine a day and time where the Internet speaks the languages that we speak. For those of us who don't know what universal acceptance is, I will just sum it up in three words: length, language, script.

The Internet is no longer just the three-lettered gTLD extensions that we have. It has expanded to allow us to be who we want to be. Some of us are photographers, some are architects, some are accountants. So, I'm glad that universal acceptance caters just for that. With the language, we all don't speak English. People speak different languages; some speak Arabic, some speak Aramaic. To

quickly take you through, I'll be taking you through a journey of where we have been, where we are, and where we are headed.

We started talking about writing statements around universal acceptance in 2020. Coincidentally, every two years, as you can see, 2022 and 2024, the focus has evolved over time from technical awareness to digital inclusion and then digital infrastructure. In ICANN 69, which was supposed to be in Hamburg but ended up being online, the focus was looking at universal acceptance as a critical element for digital inclusion. One of the major emphases was looking at language and emphasized that language remains a major barrier online.

For a few trainings I've done, I have realized, especially for my other work back in Uganda, that a lot of people are left offline because they're not able to access the Internet in the language that they speak. Moving on to 2020, ICANN 85, which was in Kuala Lumpur, the focus was on digital inclusion, and the statement emphasized universal acceptance as a key enabler to us achieving a multilingual Internet. It further emphasized how local language content and digital services are essential for inclusion as well.

Then, ICANN 80 in Kigali, I happened to be a pen holder for that. The statement focused more on building digital infrastructure that enables for us to have a multilingual Internet, and then also emphasized how capacity building and stronger infrastructure are needed. Next slide, please.

As you can see, this flow shows a flawless path from identifying technical barriers to promoting inclusive access and advocating for infrastructure level transformation. Next slide, please. The question is, what is our current perspective? As AFRALO, we remain to hold that multilingual Internet access remains incomplete. There's quite a lot of work that needs to be done. Also, much of the digital public services exclude large segments of African users. This is where governments come in key to see that they adopt universal acceptance in the digital public services. If we don't take action, we risk remaining consumers rather than shapers of the Internet.

Next slide, please. So, what are the next steps? I will highlight this in three categories: one for AFRALO, then ICANN, then government. As AFRALO, we have eighty-two ALSs spread over thirty-four countries. Next slide. That is a curation of events that we have done from 2023 to 2025, and as you can see, the event volume slightly increased proportionately, but it remained strong. Africa had about a third of the global events organized, which I think is an amazing number. I believe through continuous action, we can increase that number as well. Next slide, please.

In terms of global participants, over time from 2023 to 2024, the global share has risen from thirteen percent to thirty-three percent. One thing I mainly want to highlight as an action to the different ALSs is to get engaged. Actually, the keyword is actively engaged in universal acceptance for us to be able to have the results and the

impact that we need to see on our continent. If you could go back two slides. One slide back, please.

The next steps for ICANN, we request ICANN to continue supporting universal acceptance initiatives because clearly the need is huge and it is still there. In terms of governments, hinging back on my previous submission about digital public services, if most digital public services are able to be UA-ready, then it would be a huge step towards the right direction. As I sum up, I would like to appreciate all the support that we have received over time, the funding for the different activities for the different ALSs. I'm pretty much done with my presentation, and if you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Mutageki. We will keep the questions until the end until we conclude all the presentations, but thank you so much for this presentation and thank you for the figures that you actually showed us. It shows how our African participation has increased over the past two years. And now we turn to our second presenter, Asteway Negash, and the discussion is about DNS abuse and security.

ASTEWAY NEGASH

Thank you very much. I'm very excited to be speaking in front of the ICANN Board Policy Director, Russ Weinstein. Special thanks to the fellowship program manager, Siranush, who's sitting next to me,

and the AFRALO team that has actually made this happen. I'm happy to be speaking about DNS abuse, which is actually one of the hottest and most enticing topics this week.

In my report, I have looked at deliberations on DNS abuse since ICANN 67, that is March 2020, and there have been many requests regarding resource allocation. Some of these requests have been directed through email correspondence; others have been forwarded through official statements regarding resource allocation, raising public awareness, and more data and research, especially requesting for integration with universities and technicalities towards reporting mechanisms. We also requested clearance on DNS abuse reporting mechanisms and technicalities regarding the DNSSEC platform. Next slide, please.

The responses to these requests have been multifaceted. The OCTO wing of ICANN org has been assigning more specialists as a response to these requests. Reporting mechanisms have advanced pretty much from DAR to Domain Metrica, which allows registrars as well as registries to submit their report mechanisms and which also includes search mechanisms. There is the informal study that has been developed in integration with the university. There have been contractual amendments over a long time that have actually responded to the security aspect regarding DNS abuse, DNSSEC, and other security aspects related to the contracted wing of the ICANN community.

On the other hand, the African GSE team, particularly through the program called Coalition for Digital Africa, they have been taking care of the DNSSEC roadshow aspect, which is a training and development program offered through allowing ccTLD managers to sign the root server key systems and integrate DNSSEC into their platforms. On the other hand, the ICANN community has been very active. Two PDPs have already been initiated, one already kicked off at ICANN 85 and going very well. The GAC has had the Public Safety Working Group for a long time. ALAC and ccNSO have working groups, and the GNSO has the DNS Abuse Small Team. Also, SSAC has already initiated the DNS Abuse and AI Work Party that has actually been kicked off Sunday last week and is going very well. More work is already on the pipeline. Next slide, please.

Over the years, we have a guiding definition of DNS abuse which addresses phishing, malware, botnets, pharming, and spam, particularly used as a delivery of other forms of abuse. It's also a guiding principle from ICANN for this definition to remain narrow in scope and technology-agnostic and business-model-agnostic, which I think is rightful. Next slide, please.

At the same time, I would like to forward the following considerations that might actually lead us to see how we look at the DNS abuse phenomenon and probably consider a few adjustments regarding the leading definition that we have. The first one is leading developments. For example, the phishing attack used to be delivered via email and not anymore. Now phishing attacks actually happen via SMS platforms and a lot of simple

message distribution platforms like WhatsApp. Phishing used to be seasonal and not anymore. At the same time, what we actually call malware has actually advanced to be tunneling attacks through DNS attacks and other related attacks like the SAT DNS, which are a kind of cache poisoning attack. So a lot of things can actually be considered within the realm of DNS abuse.

AI has actually augmented the work of the attackers, but have we been able to say the same about the mitigation end of DNS abuse? I leave that to the team. I'd like to mention other unique challenges within Africa, one of which is rapid growth in the number of Internet users and fast-paced mobile money penetration. I'd like to give some context on this fact. For example, in Ethiopia, the number of mobile money users has advanced from 60 million to 136 million just in 2025, and that's a 126 percent growth just on the number of mobile money users. This means a lot more growing financial fraud and misuse of technology is happening.

Another aspect is the case of IDNs where I came from, that is Ethiopia. A lot of people do not converse in English; they do not write and read the English script. They are only familiar with their local Ethiopic script, which has actually been part of the LGR program up to version five, but has not been issued because a single IDN has not been issued in the Ethiopic script to date. Localization is one of the things that I would like us to consider. The other is we follow diversified approaches. The model of Internet governance that we follow is very diversified. Some of the ccTLDs are managed by a multi-stakeholder organization, others are

managed by government organizations. The way we adopt policy is very diversified. That is unlike other regions like Europe that happen to be very simultaneous in the way policies are adopted. The last one is reporting a need for data, which is: are we going to follow an evidence-first approach, evidence-governed, proactive, or a reactive defense mechanism? That's all, thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Asteway. Indeed, a very interesting presentation, and maybe one of the topics that you discussed here could be a topic for further research and discussion. And now we move to our next presenter, Godsway. And the discussion is about data security and DNS integrity.

GODSWAY KUBI

Thank you so much. Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I'm Godsway Kubi, an ICANN fellow. Today, we'll be looking at data security and DNS integrity evolution from ICANN 72 to ICANN 83. Let's look at why it matters. We realized a global DNS surge because of the rise in DNS abuse like phishing, malware, and fraud escalation during the COVID-19 pandemic especially. Another reason why this matters is the digital dependencies, where we saw an increase in online activities that create higher cyber threats exposure because more people get online and it really increases the rate that cyber attacks happen. We also look at privacy versus security tension. This actually matters because of the GDPR reform challenges, data security

access requirements, and also gTLD expansion concerns where new domains are facing security safeguards. Please, let's move to the next slide.

Let's look at the evolution of AFRALO's position on this particular issue from ICANN 71 to 83. From ICANN 71 to 72, the statement emphasizes DNS abuse mitigation and DNSSEC development more, where we were trying to find issues around how we can mitigate that and also solve that issue. ICANN 72 emphasizes more on a balance between registrants' privacy and end users, where we look at the role registrants are playing and also how end users are being affected or impacted. ICANN 73 focuses more on capacity development for end users, that is more of awareness and reporting. You realize there is a shift there; from ICANN 73 to 75 was more of other discussions, but from ICANN 76, we again look at best practices of what happened in ICANN 71 and 72. We look at DNSSEC acceleration where we have to form local partnerships, and I realize that DNSSEC has really accelerated. We'll look at that in the future slide. From ICANN 79 to ICANN 83, we also focused on AI in DNS and also the African-wide DNS Abuse Mitigation Initiative. Please move to the next slide.

Within the last five years, this is how the shift has been: 2021 was DNS abuse mitigation and data security; 2022 was more of end-user capacity development; 2023 did more of DNS operational best practices; 2024 focuses more on AI-enabled DNS management; and

2025 where we spoke on the African-side DNS Abuse Mitigation Initiative. Please listen to the next slide.

Why does it still matter? Why do we still have to look at the data security and DNS integrity issues? We noticed that there has been persistence in DNS abuse where there have been increases in sophisticated and widespread issues around DNS abuse, which I think ICANN is currently taking up to form the policy development process. I'm happy to be part of this initiative as a participant for the NPOC. National data protection assessment frameworks are actually expanding across Africa, and Africans are beginning to realize the importance of data protection and privacy, which is why the country needs to take that seriously and educate their people.

Another reason why it still matters is ongoing security practices. We look at issues around DNSSEC and also domain locks, looking at secure registrar standards needed. Domain locks basically just do not allow the domain owners to be able to make transfers or malicious activities on their own. Cybersecurity dependencies are another reason why this matters, where we look at policy, infrastructure, and security as increasingly connected. Next slide. Trust in Africa's DNS security depends on us. I also looked at strategic analysis, which is where we have to move from a reactive way to be proactive.

Act before it happens. We need to be proactive when it comes to security concerns in our works; you don't always wait for an issue before we take action. We can identify what potential issues are

available and also be able to find solutions before they even approach. Ecosystem solutions trying to provide a structured approach for our works will make us more proactive so that as the issue comes in, we already have something to approach it. We need to emphasize more on the multi-stakeholder engagement where we build more capacity on why we need to involve everybody, let everybody's voice be heard and considered.

The ICANN African Regional Plan alignment is in alignment with DNS resilience focus, and we have to treat security and privacy as complementary objectives. Also look at the regional policy bridge where our fellows fit into ICANN positioning. We should be proactive enough so that we fit into what is existing. Next slide.

Let's look at the next step. These are some actionable recommendations that we can follow. One is scale capacity programs. That is currently going on within the African community where more focus has been around DNSSEC. Yazid has done a very great job in that area, and I was a beneficiary of such trainings within the African community. A DNS Abuse Training Initiative is one thing I haven't seen particularly focusing on DNS abuse, but some communities have started that. We should build more capacity in that area to educate ourselves and find experts that can easily find proactive solutions.

The second point talks about aligning our legal frameworks. We need to promote consistency between African data protection laws and DNS security practices. Again, on the data protection laws, I'm

so happy that Africans are beginning to realize that their privacy is actually their total responsibility and they are beginning to take action, leveraging on what Ghana and other African countries are doing. Data protection laws have been implemented across Africa, which is a good deal, but I think we can do more.

Point three is to strengthen the registrar standard. We need to surely encourage the domain lock, where domain owners are not able to inappropriately transfer their domains, and also to do more of DNSSEC and encourage ourselves to activate or validate our sites. Also, abuse reporting adoption is a point that the DNS abuse PDP team is actually considering, which is something that we can also do to encourage how we should report DNS abuse.

Point four talks about expanding collaboration. We can't do it alone; we need hands. So we need to engage CEBs, engage ISPs, and engage AU or regional regulators. Let them get involved because when they get involved, they feel belonging and that their voices are adding up on the global level. Fifth point is institutionalizing the think tank method. I like this method so much that it is actually going to go a long way to help the African community and possibly the other communities. Every time we are able to review what has been done, we should know the position we are at and know what to do next.

This particular think tank model is something that I'm so happy about; if we continue like that, we should be able to track our progress and at least make great progress within the system.

Please add another slide. These are some of the references that informed my analysis. Thank you so much for your attention.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Godsway, and now we move to our last presenter, Millennium, and she's going to be talking about bridging the digital divide.

MILLENNIUM ANTHONY

Thank you so much. My name is Millennium, and I will be discussing bridging the digital divide topic as how it has evolved within the AFRALO meetings and statements at ICANN. Digital divide has been one of the topics that emerged in many statements; while to some it was directly stated, to others it was indirectly stated. In this presentation today, I'll briefly talk about the evolution and the shift that happened from ICANN 80 to ICANN 84. During ICANN 80 in Kigali, it focused mostly on bridging the digital divide through the multilingual Internet infrastructure, where it highlighted that the digital divide in Africa is not only about connectivity, but also about language barriers and lack of locally relevant content. The shift here is that the digital divide was framed as access to linguistic and cultural inclusion in the Internet ecosystem.

During the ICANN 81 in Istanbul, the conversation shifted to another angle where it further described integrating artificial intelligence into the multilingual Internet discussions. The key focus here was the use of AI such as Natural Language Processing,

the digitalization of the African languages—considering that many African countries already have many languages that they speak—and the creation of language datasets for AI development. Between ICANN 80 and ICANN 81, the evolution that happened here is that the digital divide topic expanded from language access to the technological solutions that scale the linguistic inclusion. Next slide, please.

In ICANN 82 in Seattle, the discussion shifted toward Africa's representation and participation in the domain name system, particularly through the next round of the new gTLDs. Where the digital divide wasn't directly highlighted here, from the analysis, we see the statement highlighted that the majority of disparity in terms of the new gTLDs is that out of the applications that were submitted, 1,930 were from other countries, while only seventeen were from Africa. This actually demonstrated that Africa remains still underrepresented in the Internet infrastructure, ownership, and governance. The shift between ICANN 81 and ICANN 82 is that the digital divide was reframed as a participation and representation issue in the global Internet governance and infrastructure.

Now, coming to ICANN 83 in Prague, the focus again expanded to address DNS abuse mitigation and cybersecurity, as Godsway also highlighted. The statement recognized the cyber threats that undermine the trust in digital systems, which discourage adoption and slows digital transformation. The shift between the previous meeting to this meeting is that digital divide evolves towards

building a secure and trusted digital environment. Next slide, please.

Lastly, in the ICANN 84 in Dublin, the discussion focused on linking the digital divide with the growing risks of Internet fragmentation. It showcased that there are a lot of challenges that are currently existing, including limited infrastructure, affordability barriers, spectrum allocation issues, and digital literacy, which continue to leave a lot of Africans behind and not being able to participate in the global digital economy. The shift from the previous meeting is that here again, digital divide was rephrased as not only an issue of access and participation, but as one of global Internet stability and interoperability. Next slide, please.

Concerning the current perspective of AFRALO and why this discussion still matters now, first, there is digital inclusion beyond connectivity. Bridging the digital divide requires affordable access and digital literacy, which is where we see a large number of Africans that are still left behind in terms of digital access and access to the multilingual Internet content. Building a secure and trusted Internet environment is necessary in building trust and supporting sustainable digital growth. Preserving a unified and interoperable Internet is key because Internet fragmentation is going to deepen the inequalities and isolate African users from the global digital ecosystem.

Lastly, we need stronger African participation in the DNS ecosystem. We should have a greater African involvement in the

ICANN processes and the gTLD programs, which is essential for digital representation and ownership. Next slide, please. I have highlighted some of the recommendations or next steps that AFRALO could consider on the topic of bridging the digital divide. The first is strengthening Africans' role in the Internet governance, where we need to ensure that there is more encouragement for Africans to participate in Internet governance discussions. The second one is investing in sustainable digital infrastructure and skills through long-term investment in connectivity, in IXPs, in DNS, and so many others to make sure that no one is left behind.

The last one is addressing emerging technologies and fragmentation risks, where we need to promote more dialogues for Africans on different topics so that we make sure they're not only capacitated on certain types of skills, but also in technical skills and they are able to understand the global Internet ecosystem discussions. That's it for my presentation. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Millennium, and now we open the floor for our discussion. So, are there any who would like to start? Yes, please go ahead, Wisdom.

WISDOM DONKOR

Thank you very much. All their presentations are kind of leading to one thing: we need to do more. We need to build capacity. We need to bring Africa together. I think we have to begin to decentralize

most of the things that we do. Africa is large; we have about fifty-five countries. AFRALO cannot go to every country, so we need to start either zoning the continent or look at the five regions within Africa and find a way, if possible, to come up with coordinators that would champion some of the activities of AFRALO within certain zones so that we can move very fast. Because the rate at which the world is going, we need to also start. IPv4 in Africa now is limited, and most African countries have not even started engaging with IP version 6. We need to look at it and restructure the way we do our things and move at a faster reach. That is what all of them are trying to speak on.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Wisdom, but I think also there were more specifics in the presentations pointing towards more specific titles and subjects that we can actually start working on. Whether it's related to participation or engagement, or when we talked about DNS, DNSSEC, and the security privacy, in the beginning, our statements were focusing only on the security aspect and then it evolved and we started looking at both security and privacy, which go hand in hand.

We also see how when talking about a multilingual Internet, how this also ties with the issue of security. Digital inclusion also ties with the issue of security and the presentation that was focusing on DNSSEC. I think all of the topics tie together in one way or another, even what you're talking about and the resiliency of the Internet

itself. We had one or two statements about the resilience of the Internet, so it all ties together.

Were you suggesting that we form focus groups within the AFRALO? But this is a different thing than what we're doing here at the AFRALO African session. At the AFRALO African session, I heard several people like Godsway, Asteway, and maybe also Millennium, and they were saying that we would like to continue having such sessions where we focus on one topic and research what we did and what we can do in the future. Now that we have those outcomes, what is the next step? What do we do with them? We don't have to take them all; we can pick one outcome from each of the topics, and then what do we do next?

CATHERINE ADEYA

I decided that as I was listening to the presentations, I focused on what we were told we're doing today, which is analyzing AFRALO's position on the selected topic, how it's evolved over time, analyzing AFRALO's current perspective on the topic, and providing perspectives on possible next steps. First of all, I would like to congratulate all of you. That's a lot of work. For some of them, I thought I was very knowledgeable, but honestly, I looked at the way you carried the summary.

Looking at some of the things we're even discussing in the boardroom, looking at our current strategy, there was an analysis of who did data security and DNS integrity, looking at ICANN from ICANN 72 to 83, looking at the statements, discussing the strategic

shift and strategic progression. I'm just saying things I could easily pick up. Then, doing a strategic analysis and actionable recommendations. Russ, I think you're getting a lot of assistance here.

When we then take a step back, I'm really taking a step back and saying, "Okay, there are recommendations here. Where are the gaps? What else can you do? Is it about more statements? What are we learning from these statements?" Then I look at Negash. I mean, all of you, but Negash, you also did a detailed analysis. I think what I just would have liked to see a little bit more on is just the progression of the various things in the AFRALO statements. You spoke very well about the recommendations; I could pick them.

But I wanted to pick here, as we've been talking a lot about the DNS abuse, and all these are very topical issues even right in the boardroom, looking at our strategy ahead. I don't know what other people feel, but I feel there's a lot of nuggets we can take here, and I'm so curious to continue to hear what more beyond this room. This is an excellent approach to just finding out what else.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Dr. Catherine. We are at the bottom of the hour; we are at the end of our session. With this, Russ, do you want to have some final words?

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Sorry, I just wanted to say thank you. Each of the presenters was fantastic. I think it was a really great idea of a session format to have you analyze the past statements and then summarize and think about what was consistent, what's evolved, and what's next. It was really powerful for me to watch the convergence and the relevance of these statements over the years and how they've evolved, and ICANN's conversation has evolved with them.

I think you guys have been really helping inform the dialogue that's happening not just here, but in the entirety of ICANN. It's really on point. As we talked about, these are the same issues Catherine was talking about that are going on in the boardroom, that are going on in the executive level, and going on in the community as a whole. I think you guys are doing really great work here, and kudos to each of the presenters. That was a really great way to sort of download the last five years of AFRALO's work really succinctly. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you again for all your effort and all the work, and we continue our AFRALO African Think Tank sessions. Thank you, and this session is adjourned.

CATHERINE ADEYA

So there's going to be a recap in the newsletter tomorrow. I'm going to take some photos with the group. It should be in tomorrow's ICANN 85 newsletter. Okay?

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]