
ICANN85 Mumbai | CF – Q&A with ICANN org Executive Team
Monday, March 9, 2026 – 15:00 to 16:00 IST

ANDREA GLANDON

Welcome to the Q&A session with ICANN's Executive Team. I am Andrea Glandon, remote participation manager for this session. This is a unique opportunity to engage directly with our executive team about the projects and initiatives at ICANN. We welcome your questions.

There are three ways to ask questions. If you're here in the room, please go to the microphone and wait your turn. If you're attending virtually, submit your question through the Zoom Q&A pod. I'll either read your question aloud or you can raise your hand to speak directly.

Simply click the raise hand icon at the bottom of your screen to join the queue and we will unmute you when it's your turn. Whether in person or remote, when it is your time to speak, please clearly state your name and affiliation and please do remember to speak at a moderate pace for our interpreters. Please do not use the chat for questions.

Real-time interpretation is available in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese, and Hindi. Select your preferred language in the Zoom application. All participants must adhere to the ICANN's Expected Standards of Behavior, Anti-Harassment Policy, and the Community Code of Conduct. Links to

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all are on the screen. Now I'll hand it over to Sally Newell Cohen, ICANN's Senior Vice President of Global Communications and Language Services to explain the session format. Over to you, Sally.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, Andrea. Good evening or good afternoon, good evening or good morning, depending on where you are, and welcome to the ICANN85 Q&A with the executive team. We hold this session twice a year and it's always a valuable exchange where we focus exclusively on your questions. It's an opportunity to talk about the work that Org is doing and to hear from you about the topics and the projects that you're most interested in learning more about.

We're going to start with a brief welcome from our President and CEO, Kurtis Lindqvist, and after his remarks, each member of the executive team will introduce themselves. Then we'll dedicate the rest of the session to your questions, whether you are here in the room or participating remotely through Zoom. So, we look forward to that dialogue. Now I'll turn it over to Kurtis.

KURTIS LINDQVIST

Thank you, Sally. I'm Kurtis Lindqvist. I'm the President and CEO of ICANN and welcome, everyone. As Sally said, this is a really valuable opportunity for us to engage with the community and to answer your questions or listen to your thoughts. So this is really a valuable hour ahead of us for us and we hope it provides value for

you as well. So, again, welcome and we look forward to this. Am I doing it? So, we'll start with the introductions with Sally.

SALLY COSTERTON

Hello, everybody. I am Sally Costerton and I am ICANN's Head of Stakeholder Engagement.

XAVIER CALVEZ

Xavier Calvez, CFO.

THERESA SWINEHART

Theresa Swinehart, I oversee Global Domains and Strategy.

JOHN JEFFREY

And I'm John Jeffrey, the General Counsel and Board Secretary.

JOHN CRANE

I am John Crane. I am ICANN's Chief Technology Officer.

SIMON GARSIDE

Simon Garside, VP of Security Operations and Interim Head of Administrative Services.

JAMIE HEDLUND

Jamie Hedlund, Global Government Engagement and Contractual Compliance.

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Russ Weinstein, I lead the Policy Development Support Team.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you all. All right. It's time to take your questions. And just as a reminder for those online, raise your hand or drop a comment or question into the Q&A pod. We will not be monitoring the chat. If you want to put a question there, we won't see it. So, please do use the Q&A pod. And then we'll rotate between people at the mic and people online. Regardless of whether you're in person or remote, when it's your time to speak, please clearly state your name and who you represent.

So now let's open the floor to your questions. And don't be shy, please.

RUPAM BARUI

Hi, my name is Rupam Barui and I'm a NexGen for ICANN85. Hi, my name is Rupam and I'm a NexGen at ICANN85. My question is that, like, it's not really a question. I'm responsible in my college for organizing some outreach activities regarding, like, inter-governance for like the students who don't know about inter-governance yet.

I'm a NexGen and there are only 11 people from all of the Asia-Pacific. And we have different conferences like APICA that is capacity building. Like, do you have any intentions of like providing outreach to more people so that more youth can come into this

ecosystem and learn about inter-governance and, like, how the policymaking works, how the technical things work, and how the internet works? Thank you.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you very much for your question. And I'm glad you were enjoying the NexGen program and APICA, which is one of our most wonderful regional partnerships here in this region, in Asia-Pacific.

Yes, we coordinate all our regional engagement through our regional offices and our regional engagement heads. And in your case, that is Samran Gupta. I don't know if he's in the room. I think he might be. And I hope you know Samran. And we make sure that each region has a comprehensive and published outreach and engagement plan. And in the APAC region, there has always been a lot of input into that from the community, from the APAC community.

So, I'm happy to take that separately with you and with Samran to make sure you've got a full copy out of data exactly what's going on and what's available. And so, thank you for the question. It's a good opportunity to raise awareness of that.

JOHN CRANE

And specifically on technical training, within the Office of the CTO, we have a group that we call Technical Engagements. And we do a lot of training. If you're looking at sort of wanting to learn about identifiers, how they're used, be that DNS or IP addresses, et cetera,

one of the good places to get training are at the regional and national network operators' groups. Here in the region, the big one is APRICOT.

And we do send staff to be part of that training and to work with those organizations. Do come talk to me afterwards. And I'll be happy to make some introductions to some of our staff and help you find your way through that.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, John. Theresa.

THERESA SWINEHART

Yeah, it's a great, great question because there's so many different initiatives happening. And in addition to the two that have been identified within our UA and IDN work, we also do some programs in partnership with what Sally and John Crane had shared with modules for training, specifically on those narrow topics or very focused topics.

I'd also encourage to link in with the national and regional internet governance forums. We oftentimes have staff attending those and partner with them on different initiatives there. And that exposes to a wider group as well. So, a great question. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you all. The next person at the mic, please.

ALFREDO CALDERON

I'm going to speak in Spanish to take advantage of interpretation.

Hello. I am Alfredo Calderon. This year, I am a mentor. I am a NextGen mentor. And I have two questions. First, I want to ask something regarding the possibility of having different communities in the near future, different communities within ICANN, accepting interns or having an internship program in the different communities within ICANN.

In addition to the NextGen program, what I mean is I would like to know if we could have community members within the different departments at ICANN Org so that they could get hands-on experience within the organization in the same way as the SSAC is doing right now. They have an intern right now so that they become aware of how the group functions and performs the different activities so that they could engage more actively within that group or organization.

Secondly, I would like to think about the future of our regional meetings. We are aware that in October, we are going to hold a meeting in an area that is affected by conflict as we speak. So, I would like to know what is going to happen and I would like to know if the meetings team is going to take this into consideration in case we are unable to travel and that has a negative impact on the organization's budget. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you very much. So, there's two questions there and we'll start with the first one about internships.

KURTIS LINDQVIST

Yeah, thank you. Unfortunately, I respond in English. So, we do actually have interns at ICANN, not many, but we do have an intern and we do tend to advertise the intern positions. So, there is an option for them. And I think it's a good idea to see if we could somehow explore them.

Obviously, the intern programs we do tend to have very particular purposes. They tend to have very particular roles that we do this for. But I think it's something we could look at to do more often and see if there's a way to involve the community about NextGen, some way to do that. I think that's an interesting thought to explore. I don't have an answer, but I think it's a thank you for the feedback.

The other question, if I understood it correctly, is that if something, for whatever reason, we couldn't run the autumn meeting, if we could have regional meetings instead, was that correct? I think, look, if we can't run a meeting for whatever reason, we have to analyze each circumstance, what that means and how that looks like and we would have to do it on a case-by-case basis. When and if that happens, it's a little bit hard to commit to this in theory.

I know that when we had the how to meet discussion, that was one of the topics discussed. And the outcome was instead to that we

should go to a completely virtual meeting. Of course, that doesn't mean there wouldn't be hybrid options. I mean, that could certainly be an option decided by the local communities by certain aspects.

But again, it's a little bit too theoretical to answer what would happen if it were to go down that route. I think we'd have to look at the circumstance of that case, what we would do.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Oops, thanks very much. We're going to go to an online question next, please, Andrea.

ANDREA GLANDON

Thank you, Michael Palage. You may ask your question.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Michael Palage, for the record, speaking in an individual capacity. My first question is to Jamie Hedlund.

Jamie, during the Prep Week session, you and I engaged in a discussion about ICANN's recent outreach with the European Commission about online fraud. And as part of that discussion, we talked about how the importance of ICANN reaching out to all constituencies when it is about to submit comments, if you recall that discussion that we had.

The reason I use that as a pretext is I've heard some dialogue about the recent Delhi High Court decisions that have impacted domain

name registration practices, which what I find interesting is there are some people in the community that have found these decisions very favorable, particularly those in the IPC and the BC.

There are some in the contracting party house that do not necessarily embrace that same decision. So, given that there is a split between different ICANN stakeholder groups regarding the Delhi High Court decision, would you be able to commit on behalf or would ICANN be able to commit that before ICANN submits anything in connection with that publicly, that it would engage in a broad public consultation to make sure that all viewpoints are considered? So, that's my first question. Then I have a follow-up to Kurtis.

JAMIE HEDLUND

Sure, thanks. And let me note for the record that I strenuously object to your Eagles hat. As a Bears fan, I really don't feel comfortable answering your question. But to address the substance, as we said during the webinar, we make every effort to make sure that whenever we participate in common proceedings, when there are ongoing proceedings that we think that may touch on ICANN issues and our mission, we in government engagement post those. When they address certain parts of the community, we make sure to engage with those parts of the community that may be impacted.

On the question on the High Court decision, it's difficult to answer because it's unclear how that may come before ICANN, except in a

very narrow context, which is in the context of an open compliance matter that MeitY is engaged with. But we've been made aware of the decision and I'm not aware of any specific ask of ICANN to do anything.

There is a portion of the decision that is where the court directs MeitY and NIXI, I believe, to collaborate with ICANN on providing access to the trademark clearinghouse. We're not really sure what that means, but we're obviously always open to collaborating on any matter that impacts ICANN. But I understand the question.

I hear where you're coming from. It's not before ICANN, except for the narrow compliance context. But if and when it does, we'll certainly take into consideration our current practice and your comments. So, thank you.

MICHAEL PALAGE

Thanks. And I'll go back in the queue to let physical participants speak. I'll just raise my hand to ask my next question to Kurtis. Thank you. You can put on a bear's hat.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, Jamie. The next person at the mic. And if I could ask a reminder, state your name, your affiliation, speak slowly for the scribes and one question at a time so that we get everybody in. Thank you.

SAMIRA ALI DANBURAM

Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Samira Ali Danburam from Nigeria, ICANN85 fellow. So here goes my question. How is the board preparing to ensure that the 2026 New gTLD round application support program that is effective, particularly for people or for the underserved region, more especially the global south? Thank you.

THERESA SWINEHART

Why don't I start? So, a major part of the program is also providing applicant support. So, we have an applicant support program that has received many applications and that support program provides a financial reduction in the fees and also additional forms of support. So, we can get you that information very easily.

The additional factor of what we're doing is ensuring that we have awareness building in all regions, information on what it means to be an applicant for a TLD in general and the different means that we can provide information in order to support community discussion. So we're happy to come back with additional information or if you want to talk to me offline, we can get you that information as well.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, Theresa. The next person in line, please.

PREETAM CHARI

Good evening, everyone. My name is Preetam and I represent Zensar Technologies, Pune. So, my question is, during the first

round in 2012 when it was introduced and there might be some challenges and some lessons learned, right? So, during this 2026 New gTLD programs, how it was ensured that all these challenges and the lessons learned were incorporated in this New gTLD program?

THERESA SWINEHART

So, there were a lot of lessons learned. There were lessons learned on the information provided to the community on how to become an applicant, awareness around it, the technical facets of what it means, the financial. And so, we've taken the experiences of the last round.

I was not around in the last round, but anybody who was and also any information and data that we had picked up during that process and really made sure that as we prepare for the opening, we are looking at ensuring that we address everything to the best extent possible. So, through our engagement team, going out with materials, making sure that that information is available.

Again, on the Applicant Support Program, making sure that there is information, providing a mechanism to bring questions into the organization and ensure responsiveness around that. And so, just a wide range of checking the boxes and trying to make sure that we've taken those lessons learned and building them out. If for some reason, you're aware of anything that hasn't been touched upon that would help, especially in the area of the stakeholder community you're working with, please do let us know because

we're continuously looking how to improve that. So, I hope that helps.

PREETAM CHARI

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. Judith?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Hi. Thanks so much. So, I guess either it's addressed to either Xavier or Russ, but I'm not sure. But my question relates to the scheduling of ICANN public meetings and specifically the recent public comment that was held for the meeting dates for 2029 through 2033.

From that meeting, we had about 80 submissions by different constituencies and commentators were emphasizing the importance of taking national religious and other widely observed holidays into account when you're scheduling the meetings.

And I know while the meetings team acknowledged that it's all difficult to do this, but they didn't seem to concern with the impact of these issues and on the ICANN Strategic Plan objective 1.1 about multi-stakeholder model and how we're going to grow the internet. And they gave new dates for these meetings that created many new conflicts than what had been before.

And so, it seems to be that it's in a direct opposition to the goals of the strategic objectives and that type of thing. And also, it intentionally excludes community members who would otherwise attend, whether in person or hybrid from attending because they have religious commitments. So, it seems to overlap with the goals of the ICANN strategic plan, especially 1.1, 1.0 about growing the diversity.

And so, and I recognize that considerable effort has gone in into planning the dates, but at the same time, avoiding major religious or national holidays as best as you can would strengthen participation and would also reinforce ICANN's commitment to the Multi-Stakeholder Model, to inclusivity and not risk harm to representation and all these risks are listed in the strategic plan.

So, I was respectfully asking whether the proposed schedule can be reconsidered or that additional adjustments to be made so that they remain accessible and open to all. And you have a diverse and global community who wants to be able to work on this, but who then cannot. And so, they're dropping off and that's the more threat to the ICANN goals. So, that's what I want and hoping you can address this issue.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Okay, thank you. Before we go to Sally, she'll, for the answer, just for the record, I know who you are, but for the record, could you state your name and who you represent?

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

I'm sorry, Judith Hellerstein, ALAC member. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. Sally?

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Judith. So, I'll give you and the group some specific information about this. Thank you very much for the question. And I've got Xavier sitting here next to me and I think you were talking about the strategic plans. So, I want to properly answer the question. We want to properly answer the question.

So, two separate things there that, as you say, obviously are connected. Just dealing, I'm going to say, operationally with the question of setting the dates, which is the majority of your question.

In 2014, many people in this room, but perhaps not all, will know that the Board adopted the meeting strategy working group recommendations, which covered this amongst other things and provided community guidance to us in the organization about this amongst other things. And it specified goals for selecting dates. And as you rightly say, maximizing the quality, the quantity, the quality of participation through rotation of locations, remote participation, translation, outreach, newcomer onboarding. So, that's a quality question.

To your point, avoiding conflicts where possible with community events, globally recognized non-working or religious observance days. And so, I want to just remind everybody that this is a long-standing issue inside ICANN. It's a long-standing requirement about how we select locations for ICANN meetings.

There are eight, in fact, categories on the, through which we have to go, eight sets of criteria about where we go. And this is about when we go. Now, we have now posted, as you say, and we did the public comment, the forthcoming dates for the next five years and not the next five years from 2029 to 2033.

So, I wanted to just make the point that we set those dates very, very far in advance. A lot of organizations wouldn't do that, but we do. And this is mostly to give, to ensure that we can locate suitable venues, that we can put on meetings that address the requirements in the community recommendations.

In terms of dates, we appreciate the feedback about religious holidays, particularly in your comments, non-working days. So, for example, we have them from Monday to Thursday, today being the opening day, for example, as we're doing here. There will always be some conflicts. There are many different religions to take into consideration. There are many other sort of community events we have to think about, other technical community events, things like IETF events, RIR events.

There are many things we have to balance here. And we have a lot of experience in doing that. Participation, which was also your

point, we obviously want to, to the point about the strategic plan, we want to do everything we can to use ICANN meetings as a methodology, a tool to increase participation, both in person and virtually.

So, I can reassure the community that this is being given very careful thought, but I can also say, we do a lot of research before we propose the dates, but we also have to factor in this is a big complex thing, if you like, that we have to solve. And we will never manage to find sort of magic dates three times a year for five years into the future, where there are absolutely no conflicts with any of these issues, but we do our very best. But thank you for raising it, because I think it's an important discussion for us to have, but it is operationally quite challenging, especially if we're going to do it so far in advance, which we have to do. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, Sally. Anyone else? Okay. Thank you, Judith. Next person at the mic, please.

BERNHART FARRAS SUKANDAR

Hello, good afternoon, everyone. I'm Benhard Fares. I'm Sundanese-Indonesian, and I'm here with the NextGen for the ICANN85.

So, as a NextGen, I feel responsible to ask a question about next generational issues, which mean it's about the decentralized naming system in a namespace. So, I'm just thinking yesterday,

based on the discussion for the past two days, what is the current state about this current infrastructure? Should we integrate the decentralized one to the current centralized one? And also, let's say we don't want to integrate the decentralized one.

So, what is the mechanism to prevent it then? Because if it's not prevented now, then it will be a problem in the near future. And also, as a newcomer in the ICANN world, I feel like, and many people must feel like, it's not easy to grasp everything at ICANN, especially like ICANN with the posters everywhere.

There is a New gTLD and blah, blah, blah. But the thing is, to be required and to fulfill the requirement to create registrars, to be a New gTLD, it's not easy. Not easy in terms, not only in the capital capacity, but also in the knowledge capacity. So, I would like to know, as newcomers and the NextGen, what is the current state and what is the grand plan that has been planned with the current board? Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thanks very much for the questions. I think we'll start with John Crane for the first.

JOHN CRANE

Okay, so you use the term decentralized namespaces. If you're talking about things like blockchain namespaces, alternative namespaces, most of those are actually centralized elsewhere, right? So, they're not truly decentralized. Those of us who are

more of the older generation, shall we say, are used to the DNS, which has a central anchor point, but then it's distributed. I wouldn't say decentralized.

We do actually talk a lot to the folks in the technology space that are generating blockchain-based names that look like domain names. It's not DNS, so they're not actually domain names in most cases. And they actually come to these conferences.

So, we have conversations with them about what do you want to do? How are you going to use this? It's going to be interesting as we go into the Next Round to see whether or not we have suggestions on how people want to bring some of those namespaces and align them in some way. But they're not really decentralized. It's a term that I often use. I often hear, but they're not.

So, we have some documents out in the Office of the CTO document series about alternative namespaces or adjacent namespaces, depending on how you want to talk about them. Happy to have a long discussion about this because it's complex, but many of those people that are working on those actually do come to ICANN meetings and we have a lot of conversation. How do these work? How will they scale? What are they good for? What are they not good for, et cetera?

So, it's a fantastic area and we're very interested in it. We are very supportive as technologists in the evolution of the ecosystem. So, that is a form of evolution, if you like. So, I don't see many people

here this week, unfortunately, from that area, but I'd happily introduce you to folks and happily have a discussion off on the side about the technology.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thanks very much, John. And Theresa, do you want to talk a bit about readiness for the Next Round? Thank you. Sure.

THERESA SWINEHART

And with regards to the second part of your question, it's an important one. When one talks about being a registry or a registrar, it's an important job. You're serving a customer around that. So with that responsibility also comes a certain level of skills, technical skills, administrative skills, all of those for that role.

So, we certainly try to provide information on what is needed, the relevant materials for that. I know that many of the stakeholders also help each other to understand that. And so, those are the tools that we would use in order to have awareness on what it takes to run it. But let us know if you need some help finding the right points of contact, and we can do that. Thanks.

BERNHART FARRAS SUKANDAR All right. Thank you. It's a privilege for me. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. The next person at the mic, please.

AUNG SI KYAW

Good day, everyone. So, for the record, my name is Aung Si Kyaw from Myanmar. And I'm here with the NextGen ICANN. And thank you for the opportunity for asking the question.

So, here's my question. So, as more governments consider building their own national infrastructures and solvency networks nowadays, so how is the ICANN working to ensure that global DNS remain unified and also resilience against this fragmentation? And at the same time, what are some ICANN new strategies to further strengthen meaningful participation from underrepresented community in the global south like us? Yeah. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Okay. Thank you so much. You want to take the first, John Crane? Okay.

JOHN CRANE

So, infrastructure is always evolving. The internet is not a singular network. It is a network of networks. And it's always been the case that various areas have built their own infrastructure and had different ways of handling namespace. You know, we've always had some level of filtering, et cetera.

What we do is we go out and we advocate for the benefits of a singular namespace and try and enable people to understand the risks of when they do things like filtering or they want to separate out namespaces. But it is a network of networks. So, we don't

control what other people do on their networks, but what we do is we communicate.

So, we spend a lot of time going out and talking to people. We've got a couple of publications about the risks of fragmentation, et cetera. So, it is a hot topic. And we have a lot of dialogue around the world as people look at these issues. Often, they will be related to abuse online. They will be related to threats against local ecosystem. Or they could be related to local laws. You know, there are many reasons why people in their own infrastructure make different decisions about how they accept and don't accept traffic.

So, we spend a lot of our time just trying to educate and being a proponent of a global single internet. I hope that answers. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

And there was another part to your question, but I did want to check if anyone wanted to talk about some of the work that we do around the Plenipot and the IGF. Theresa or Jamie? No? Okay. So, Sally, let's go to you on engagement.

SALLY COSTERTON

So, the other part of your question was about engaging in the global south. Yes? Yeah. So, you're part of our NextGen program. So welcome, firstly, to ICANN. We're very happy to have you. And one of the reasons, a key benefit, a key reason for us to do the

NextGen program is to bring people like you into ICANN for the first time and to expose you to everything that's going on here.

And then as you come out of the program, my colleagues, many of whom are in the room, and Samarang just there, put his hand up, who's in your region, just behind you, we will have a process to take you through to the regional engagement activities, of which there are many. And I spoke a little more about them earlier when my colleague over here asked a very similar question.

And we will make sure inside our staff team that we will have, if you like, a handover for you and your other colleagues from this region and other regions to all our engagement leads so that it helps you into that much larger group of the whole APAC ICANN community.

And so, it's partly us reaching out and helping you and doing the engagement activities, but a lot of it is led also by building our community in Africa, in Asia-Pacific, in the Middle East, and in Latin America, so that we make sure that the community is diverse and strengthened. And I really look forward to seeing you. I hope you'll participate in that over the coming months and years. So, thank you so much for your question.

AUNG SI KYAW

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you very much. We're going to get two more people at the mic and then we'll go to the online hands. The next person, please.

VALERIIA FILINOVYCH

Hi, my name is Valeriia Filinovych. I'm from Ukraine, Kyiv Aviation Institute. I'm an ICANN85 fellow.

So my question is, how can academic scientific researchers working on the issues of Internet Governance engage more closely with ICANN? And does ICANN support this type of research through some grants or partnership with universities? For example, I am a university professor and a scientist, have just started my scientific project, which is devoted to the development of a legal model of ensuring the DNS resilience and the participation of Ukraine in the global Internet Governance in the conditions of hybrid threats. So, it's very relevant for my country.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Yes, please.

KURTIS LINDQVIST

So, it's quite a lot to your point. I'll start with a more generic. Yes, we do partner with universities. So, the CTO team does a lot of work together with technical universities. Our government engagement team has in the past helped and supported research and questions. We have all participated, Theresa and me, to

answer questions, to take part of studies, depending on what the engagement is that has been sought after.

There is a grant program that we have just completed around, well, just in just, but one is running, that is available. There were some grants there of research, but they're close to research. I think they would fall in that same category. So, all of that is available. If there is more particular topics that you believe is of relevance to ICANN, that what we do and that you think you would engage with us or work together with either the government engagement team or the CTO team, they're more than happy to work with you.

We get a lot of these requests from universities and we do work with them and support them with data, with insights, with the knowledge we have or contacts. And as I said, there is a grant program as well where you can apply when the Next Round opens for funding as well. So, we do absolutely do that. So, please come and see one of us after and we can talk more about that. Thank you.

VALERIIA FILINOVYCH

Thank you.

ANDREA GLANDON

Thank you, everyone. Just to let you know, the queue has closed now. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. Sébastien?

SÉBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Thank you very much. After all this youth here, I come a little bit older. Gentlemen, one remark on the meetings. What Sally said earlier, wearing the hat of the meeting strategy head, you said that it started on Monday, but we actually started on Saturday.

It is clear that things are organized by pieces so that people don't necessarily come to the entire meeting. They can choose the piece that they come to, they can come to everything or not. So, of course, many people are surprised. I've been here since Thursday.

So, yes, you have the Working Group, you have the work that is done internally during the meeting, and then you have the plenaries that start on Monday. I just wanted to add that to the explanation of how it really works. Now, with the question of Alfredo, to be quite direct, the question really was, what about the fall meeting that we are all thinking about? It is supposed to be in Oman, and we are in a situation that is difficult. And so, what will ICANN do about that?

And now the last thing I wanted to do about the meetings is that I understand that ICANN is concerned about the people that it helps with travel. In a global situation, when you have such an important situation with the start of a war in the region, it would be good to hear that ICANN is able to help people who come if they need to. It's not just those that are taken into account by us that are

supported. And I should have said that I am Sébastien Bachollet, I am Internet Society France, and I do not have any position of responsibility at ICANN at this point anymore. Thank you.

KURTIS LINDQVIST

Merci, Sébastien. I'm going to stop my French speaking there, because I think Sébastien might be the only one who understands me.

So, I'm going to answer the last question first about Oman. So, I mean, obviously, we are aware of what's going on. We monitor this closely. It's still quite far away to have an opinion on what the situation will look like in October. We're still many months out, and this can change.

At this moment, we're planning for the Oman meeting to go ahead, but of course, we're following this very closely. We'll evaluate what happens. We'll work with the host in Oman to understand the situation there on an ongoing basis. So, at the moment, we have nothing else to say on this. If that changes or there will be some other information available, we'll, of course, inform the community.

I want to come to the last question. I understood you correctly. You were asking could ICANN support all the attendees if they had issues with travel. Was that the question? That's a lot of attendees to support, and it's very hard for us to do that. We will keep the attendees informed on what we know.

But when it comes to travel and rebooking, it's the funded travels we have responsibility for because we have organized the travel. But rebooking 1,700 people would be too much work for us. We don't have the resources to do that. We are dealing with the staff, with the people we have responsibility for, the funded travels we support. I don't know if I forgot what the first question was.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you, Kurtis. Andrea, could we go to the online, please?

ANDREA GLANDON

Yes, thank you. Olabimpe Adoloro, you may ask your question.

OLABIMPE ADELORO

Thank you very much for this opportunity. Olabimpe Adoloro is my name for the record. I am standing in an individual capacity.

I would like to ask about Universal Acceptance. I know that ICANN is doing a lot in promoting organizations to adopt Universal Acceptance. But from the little I know, I think compliance is still not as much as one would expect. So, it's depriving, in my opinion, is depriving some region of fully participating on the internet. So, may I know, please, what is ICANN doing when it comes to those organizations that are not UA compliance? So, is there anything they are doing, I mean ICANN is doing other than just to encourage them so in case an organization refuses to. So, what next? Thank you.

THERESA SWINEHART

So, it's a very good question. Let me start first with that there is no formal policy on Universal Acceptance. So, it's not something that's within the contractual provisions or for my colleagues, Jamie down there, to have to deal with in the context of compliance. However, we have a tremendous amount of curriculum out and can point you to the colleagues and I'll ask the colleagues to put the information into the Zoom chat as well.

A lot of curricula on UA awareness and training. We are working very closely with platform providers on the technical capacity around that. On the curriculum, everything from training with students to modules to bring into the universities so that software engineers and others can start being trained in the capacity around that.

Then we also have the work with the large tech companies and about three years ago, we began what we're referring to as UA Day which is coming up very soon in several regional events around the world. I think it's close to 50 this year again and in that we are going to also be providing information on how to operationalize Universal Acceptance so not just awareness anymore but actually the hands-on aspect of it.

So, it's a great question. It's all of our responsibility to work towards this and to make sure that it's a feasible option because only that way can anybody use any script that they choose to and know it'll be fully resolved globally but also anything that is larger

than two to three letters to the right of the dot or in Arabic to the left of the dot, of course.

So, it's a great question. Thank you very much. And right now, it's not something that compliance is in a position to enforce in any way due to no policy. Thank you.

JOHN CRANE

And for ICANN's own systems, we're over 90% compliant. So, obviously one of the things we can do is when we are purchasing and things that you can do if you have a purchasing department in your organization is when we want an application or a piece of software, we ask about these things and we try and buy or code everything that we do to be compliant and to be able to accept other scripts.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you both. Next person, please.

ROHAN SACHDEVA

Thank you. My name is Rohan Sachdeva and I am an exchange fellow as well. My question is very similar to the previous one but I'm more, I want to ask you about how ICANN strategy would look like for the New gTLD round in relation to the Universal Acceptance.

Will we change something? Or one particular thing I'm interested in is with the emerging technologies like AI, I had personal experience in developing a website of my own and then having a

form on it and entering a script other than English and it was not accepting my answer. So, my understanding is this is going to increase the use of AI website builders. So, how will that impact our Universal Acceptance strategy and initiative? Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

It's an interesting question.

KURTIS LINDQVIST

I can start on the Next Round. We do expect non-Latin scripts to be prevalent. Below there's a lot of interest around having non-Latin script domains so we hope there will be, and we have done a lot of outreach and engagement around this topic so we do hope to see a lot of applications for that, exactly for that reason.

So, that would enable it. We do support all the character sets and scripts that is currently encoded in the Next Round as well. For the web forms, we agree with you, it is a challenge that web forms might be slightly out of our scope but the general purpose of supporting Universal Acceptance, raising awareness, we had a lot of agreeable, both John's and Teresa's team has done a lot of outreach and work with the various, I was going to say software houses but in that area, it's a bit of a bold picture but to raise the awareness of Universal Acceptance and as far as we're doing that in our remit when it comes to email and domain names, we're of course making the point that it shouldn't just be about this, this should be the more Universal Acceptance about the entire form of

input if you want or processing that we support all languages and that's a lot of work we do although it's slightly out of our remit.

There are other groups by the way who are very more active in the content side than we are but making sure that content is available in a lot of other scripts.

JOHN CRANE

And this is something that we've seen in pretty much every new technology that comes to the internet, it takes time for the acceptance to actually take place. As people use these and there is a business case for it, we will see more and more but we've been through this with pretty much every new technology we've bought into the internet. So, I wouldn't despair too much, it will come.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. Thank you. I noticed we have four people standing in line and only eight minutes left so if I could ask the questions to be quick and the responses.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Thank you. Yes. Thank you so much. I'm Ihita Gangavarapu. I'm the coordinator of Youth IGF, former NextGen Ambassador but here my question is with respect to the work I do in the space of cyber security and threat intelligence. One area of concern and work is around DNS abuse, particularly monitoring threat actors in the dark web on phishing and malware.

And my question is, you know, with respect to the efforts that ICANN is already putting in with the DNS Abuse mitigation program and also the different tools that we have to monitor different trends but I noticed that not every registry or a registrar is part of the discussions that are happening at the ICANN event.

So from a board's perspective and from the leadership's perspective, how does ICANN ensure that mitigation efforts across the registrars and registries are actually taking place? They're effective and coordinated globally and how can we as community members gain a better visibility and be transparent into the actions that are being taken care of by the registries and registrars could be in silos within their own operational context when it comes to reducing the various abuse on DNS. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you very much. Jamie Hedlund, do you want to start or Russ?

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Okay, thank you. Thank you for your question. So I think one of the beauties of the ICANN model is that any policy that comes into effect from the GNSO applies to all registries and registrars and so it's a way policy development when it's approved by the Board and finalized essentially acts as a contractual amendment that affects all registries and registrars in the gTLD space. And so, we don't need and particularly we don't want necessarily every single

registry and registrar participating in that conversation to make policy.

We want them to be believing in the system and willing to take on any of the obligations that come through the policymaking process and they are represented. And so, right now there is policymaking that's just kicked off at this meeting about DNS mitigation, DNS Abuse mitigation. And so, I think hopefully that answers your question.

IHITA GANGAVARAPU

Okay, thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thanks very much. The next person at the end. Mike, please.

TARUNA KAUR BAMRAH

I'm Taruna Kaur Bamrah, NextGen from India. And first of all, thank you for the opportunity. I'm truly honored to join the IG space. So, my question is a follow-up from Rohan's question which was on UA. My question is that ICANN's UASG tools exist but mostly I've seen that coming from a technical background as well from computer applications. I've seen that AI developers ignore them. So, what contractual leverage or incentives will the New gTLD agreements include to mandate UA compliance for registries serving non-English centric communities? Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Theresa.

THERESA SWINEHART

So, what we have as explained, there's no formal policy on UA, on readiness. And so, it's not in the contractual provision. However, the Applicant Guidebook has guidelines in there that encourages registry operators to be utilizing and to take a look at that. And I think the best mechanism is to continue the awareness around it and to really encourage businesses to do it.

As my colleague, John Crane said, we ourselves are ensuring that we are also UA ready and looking at our different systems around it. I would encourage looking at not only the materials in the applicant guidebook, but what we've also seen in the context of other entities when they request to contract with a vendor, asking the vendor whether they are using and ready for UA readiness. We've seen it sometimes in government contracts, things of that sort.

So, I think over time and awareness, hopefully it'll catch on, but all of the help that you can take in promoting it and awareness too. And certainly, my colleagues are in the room who are working on the technical and the trainings. I'm happy to put you in contact with them too. Thank you.

TARUNA KAUR BAMRAH

Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

The next person, please.

ALTANGEREL ALTANKHUYAG

Hello. My name is Altangerel from Mongolia. I'm an ICANN85 fellow. My question is, even though there are more root instances today, some developing regions still depend on service outside the region. How can ICANN help improve the distribution of the root server infrastructure to make DNS more resilient?

JOHN CRANE

So, coincidentally, ICANN itself is an operator. We are in 140 locations around the globe. I don't think there are many regions that don't have servers, but we can certainly get them closer to the endpoints.

So, we are doing some research in OCTO to actually look at distribution of the servers and looking at it both topologically and from a latency standpoint to see if there are places that we need to focus on. If you think you've found places or you have research that helps with that, please come talk to me because it's something we're actively interested in.

There are now hundreds of instances. I mean, we ourselves have 140 locations and we're one of the 13. So, absolutely an important matter. We're doing some research on that area. And if you have data, just come talk to me because I'd love to know. Thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Thank you. And the last person at the mic, please.

RICHA SINHA

Hello, my name is Richa Sinha. I am a NIXI fellow for the record. I wanted to learn about your views on climate change because I have realized that disaster recovery group is already working in towards the internet disruption due to any climatic disaster occurring in any region.

So, in future, there may be a possibility due to climate change becoming a bigger issue. There will be much more disruption and internet shutdown-like conditions in future. So, how ICANN is planning to work towards this? And if some people like us want to contribute in this area, how can we contribute?

KURTIS LINDQVIST

So, I mean, we have as ICANN, we look at infrastructure resilience in general. I mean, climate change and the effects of that and any other national disasters, earthquakes, et cetera is very much part of that. And something we follow across the board of how do we make the infrastructure, we are responsible for more resilience. I mean, it goes back to what John just talked about. And that's part of that work. We cover all of that resilience and John will add to it.

JOHN CRANE

Yeah, there is a lot of discussion going on in the world at the moment about resilience of the technical infrastructure. If you were here earlier today, there was a discussion hosted by Ram Mohan and there's some other folks talking about that. But I participated in many of those discussions. You may have heard mention of the Marconi Institute that's doing some studies. We actually hosted their last meetings.

Obviously, everything we do, which is about the identifiers and making sure that the identifiers remain resilient and the ability to, in the DNS case, resolve them, relies on all the other infrastructure. I mean, one of the gentlemen said something that routing relies on electricity and electricity relies on routing. So, it's something that we actively follow, but it's not really core within our mission sense.

Obviously, climate change affects us like it affects everybody else, but it's not a core element of where we look at. It's one of the elements of resilience or things that affect resilience and happy to talk further later.

RICHA SINHA

Thank you so much.

XAVIER CALVEZ

So, not directly to the last question, but I just want to thank all the fellows and everyone for coming up because it's such a fabulous thing to see that energy and new faces at the microphones and we just really, we love that. So, thank you.

SALLY NEWELL COHEN

Couldn't agree more. Thank you all. So, this is the close of our session. Thank you to those who came up and asked questions. Thank you to my colleagues for answering and to language services for the translations and interpretation. Thank you all. Have a great rest of your day.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]