
ICANN86 Seville | PF – North America Space: Finding Your Path in ICANN-From First Steps to Community Leadership
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NAELA SARRAS

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening for those that are joining us remotely. Welcome to the North America Space Session. I'm really delighted to see everyone here in the room and I am online and I'm seeing people logged in. So thanks everybody for joining us today for this really different session. I think it's unique and we're trying to do something different.

So I'll give you a little bit here of background. Each of the regions at ICANN hold something called the regional session. So the LAC has a LAC session, and North America has a North America session, etc. In the North America session, we found that we've tried to do topical sessions where we pick a topic that we think is on mind for people and we want to explore it a little bit more.

So that's kind of been the driving force of how we land at what we want to discuss in North America sessions. The last two we did really explored universal acceptance but more going into digital equity and how people get online and what the barriers might be, be it economic, linguistic, what have you.

So in this one, we focused on a different topic. We're calling it the Finding Your Path in ICANN: From First Steps to Community

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Leadership and that's what we're going to focus on today. And then we'll have an update from my colleague Joe about what we're doing in North America. So just to run over what has been happening over the last fiscal year as we wrap up our fiscal year at ICANN. So next slide, please, Tracy.

A little bit about the North America team, if you're not familiar with everyone here on the team. So my name is Naela Sarras. I'm the Vice President of Stakeholder Engagement for the North America region. And I've met many of you in person, and I work with you on a regular basis, and I have dear friends in this room. So thank you all for being here. To my left is Joe Catapano. He's the Stakeholder Engagement Director for the North America region and he's also the Director for Global Academia at ICANN and so you may have worked with him in that capacity as well.

David Huberman is our Technical Engagement Director for the North America region. Unfortunately, he's not here but he's probably online, but that's the person that works with us very closely in the OCTO team that you may be familiar with that as well. Alex Dans is our Communications Director for the Americas. Alex is a superstar who supports us on our communications work and I'm seeing heads nodding. She's fantastic and we're really glad to have her.

Giose McGinty is our colleague also that works closely with Joe and myself. She's based in the DC office together with Joe. And then finally, we have Felipe Berhau and he's also on the

communications team supporting Alex for the North America engagement work. So that's the team. We will have at the end links to contact us. We're always available. If you ever have any questions, please reach out. So next slide.

How we want to take the session today. I'll make a little bit of an intro of how we're doing this session, why we're doing it today. Then we're going to run through a panel with community members where we'll talk about this ICANN journey and what we're trying to explore in today's session. I want to open the room for Q&A after that and then we'll have the North America engagement updates from Joe. So let's go ahead and get into that, the session for this morning.

So as I said at the beginning, this is an incredibly important topic for ICANN, for ICANN as an organization but also as ICANN as a community. It's not always easy to talk about and it's not always easy to see from the outside. I'm seeing people that are sitting around this room that are also leaders in the ICANN community. So how do these people find their place in the community? How do they deepen their participation from being a newcomer to becoming regular contributors and then grow into these leadership positions over time?

This is all because what really makes the multi-stakeholder model a strong model, the only reason it works, is that people come together from different backgrounds. We are from different regions, from different sectors, we bring different perspectives to

this environment and that's really the only way this is going to work. So that diversity we all bring is what makes it stronger and what makes ICANN a unique community as I'm sure you've seen in your participation with other organizations, this is quite unique.

There's different ways that people come and engage with ICANN. We have people that come in as what we call newcomers and their specific programs in ICANN. There are the newcomer programs, many of you here have participated. We have the NextGen program, we have the fellowship program, but we also we have just newcomers, people that are sent by their organizations to discover what is going on here in ICANN.

We also have people that are coming from governments, we have people that come from academia, we have people come from the business sector, we all come here, we land in this beautiful space for example, and now what? So now what kinds of conversations are we having to make to make progress?

So how people come together meaningfully, shape direction, is really important and this is what we want to talk about here. And really what we, the goal of this, what we're trying to get at is for people to see their pathways into participating in ICANN. I know it could be pretty daunting, right, to come in as a newcomer, so we want people to see their pathway, we want to share practical insights from community members that are here that have gone through this, and then we want to make help leadership within this

community feel more accessible and more achievable for those who want to get into it.

So let me start with taking a show of hands. How many people here are attending ICANN meeting for the first time? Good, okay. All right, good. How many people are here coming from the newcomer programs, like the fellowship or the -- good, okay, and the NextGen? I know NextGen, we're in the European region, so they're focused in Europe and I know there's a session scheduled against that, against the session for them, but this is recorded and we'll make sure this is shared with them as well. Okay, so great, thank you. Welcome to the space and let's see if we can make the best out of it.

And then for those of you that are regular contributors, regular attendees, thank you for being here. Whether you're here in person or you're thinking about deepening your involvement, getting into some of these pathways that we're going to talk about, we hope this conversation is helpful. And again, as I said at the beginning, flag us down, please, and ask us more questions if there's anything at all unclear.

So the way I want to run this panel this morning is first we have, I want to hear from, we have two senior executives at ICANN that we'd like to hear from. We have Sally Costerton, the Senior Advisor to President and SVP Senior Vice President for Global Stakeholder Engagement. Thank you for being here. And then we also have

Russ Weinstein. He's the Senior Vice President for Policy Development Support. Thank you for being here.

Between Russ and Sally, they head the two groups that do the most interaction with communities. These are the people that are talking to us on a daily basis about community engagement, community involvement, making this a comfortable and productive environment for everyone. So it's really important that we hear about their vision, how they're running their teams to deepen that involvement.

And then we'll get into our session for today. And the community members that are on the panel today is Tara Whalen. She's the SAC Vice Chair. Kathleen Scoggin, she's an ALAC member. Jenifer Lopez, our ccNSO Council Member. Alyssa Quinn, an Address Supporting Organization Advisory Council Member. And Alperen Eken, a fellow ICANN staff member. So welcome, all, and thank you.

And then if time allows and if I see her, I've invited Mary Wong to talk to us from the Policy perspective as the team that is involved with all the community groups of how they run their participation and elections for the community. If we have time and if she comes, I would like to hear from her as well.

Great. So let's get into this. Let's start with introductory remarks from Sally and Russ. So over to you, Sally.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Naela. And I want to thank Naela and all of you for making this happen. We've had these regional spaces at ICANN meetings for years, but not so much on the North America side, I think, because that's right, Naela, isn't it? So thank you for making that change. They're wonderful places for us to come together to talk about our regional priorities and issues and also to build regional networks and to get to know each other from the parts of the world where you actually live.

When you're at an ICANN meeting, it's a big show, dog and pony show, a big circus. It's an amazing production. And it's easy to feel that this is ICANN. And it is. Partly, don't get me wrong, we do a lot of work, especially this meeting. This is the Policy Forum. There's a clue in the name. And as many of you who are not newcomers will know, a lot of very hard work gets done on policy here and at the other ICANN meetings.

But what really works in terms of growing ICANN's participation, and this is where Naela and my team have our primary responsibility, is pulling our participants together where you live, in your countries, in your regions. And our team, the stakeholder engagement team, our responsibility in ICANN is to work with our stakeholders where they are.

So the team, Naela is here, she has, I have another, you may be amazed to hear this because Naela is obviously special and unique, but there are another seven Naela is around the world, some of whom, some of you will know who've been in the community for a

while. And they have the same responsibility. And that responsibility is to take ICANN to you and bring you to ICANN. And then Naela's talked about newcomer, and today we're going to talk about identifying your path.

But for those of you who are established community members in this region, we, I think Naela does this a lot, but I will emphasize it. We want to support you as a staff to help you to be mentors, to build bridges, to hold out that hand as new people come on board. Because we all know joining ICANN for the first time is daunting. It just is.

Naela asked me to share a personal story quickly. I joined ICANN now, I can't believe this, nearly 14 years ago. This year it will be 14 years. But I didn't mean to do that. I joined ICANN, I'd been working in the business sector, I worked in public relations, for my career. And I'd left my corporate job, and I was taking some time off, thinking about detoxing from the corporate world. Started my own consulting business with my husband, who's an accountant. And we said, oh, okay, this is good no more commuting, no more calls at three o'clock in the morning about why you haven't hit your profit target in Estonia, I'm not making that up. And now we get to be free.

But I got a call from a man called Fadi Chehadé, who some of you will know. Anybody knew Fadi? Yes. Well, some of you did. He was the CEO of ICANN in 2012. And he said, cut a long story short, he said, hey, Steve Crocker knows you, feels like you could help me,

because I was a comms person, to have a look at, I've just become CEO, and I'm looking at stuff, and I haven't got a head of comms at the moment, and could you come and help me to have a look at my comms function? I said, "Okay," and this is Fadi. He goes, "What are you doing on Wednesday?" I live in London. "Could you get on a plane and be in LA?" This was Fadi. What's this crazy man on the plane? My husband said, "Will they pay for the ticket?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Go."

That's a different thing. That tells you more about my marriage. But anyway. So the first meeting, and which is about three weeks later, we meet, he says, okay, he signs me up for a three-month project as my client in my business, because he says, "Will you come work for me?" I said, "No, I've got my own business." "Can I be your client?" "Yeah, you can be my client." So we sign up to a project. And he says, "But to do this, you have to come to an ICANN meeting, because you have to understand how this all works." I said, "Right."

So I go to Toronto, which is the first meeting I ever go to. And you know, what is it, a week for an ICANN meeting? Firstly, I've never been to a meeting for a week. I mean, when I came into immigration, the Canadians said to me, "How long are you staying?" I said, "A week." What do you mean you're going to a meeting for a week? Like, who does that? I go to the meeting. And I promise you, for an entire week, I did not understand anything at all. Nothing.

I didn't understand the concept of a bottom-up process, because I come from the corporate world. I didn't understand, literally didn't understand what people were talking about. I didn't understand all the acronyms, the processes. I've never come across the idea of a multi-stake. I mean, it was like landing. I can tell you what I felt like at the end of the week. I felt, "I have joined a cult." These people all love each other. And they're clearly having a great time. And I have no, I don't know. It's like I've arrived on another planet. You know, these people are completely different to me. And we don't have, we have nothing. But here's what happened.

People made friends with me immediately. Tara knows this, because I've told this story before, but one of the first people I met was Patrik Fältström, who was then the chair of the SSAC. And for me, as a PR lady from London, you could hardly find a less obvious fit than the SSAC. I mean, talk about talking cheese.

And Patrik took me under his wing. To this day, I don't know why, but I'm terribly grateful. And he said, "Come to my tech dinner." And at this tech dinner, were about 20 or 25 people who I still didn't understand what anybody was talking about. But they wanted to help me. They reached out to me proactively. They said to me, I mean, literally, I don't know why. But they said, "You're part of us now. And we need to help you." And then Patrik said, "What you have to understand, Sally, is the multi-stakeholder process is like this table." And if anybody ever finds out what that means, let me

know. Because 14 years later, I still don't understand it. But that's not the point.

I thought I joined a cult. People were incredibly kind to me. I had no idea what was going on. But I also didn't know how to get out, a bit like getting to this meeting room. And you know what? I was right on both counts. I kind of had joined a cult. And I didn't know how to get out because I'm still here.

Why? Because here's what I thought was happening when I came to ICANN, such as I understood it. I thought, this is a technical organization with a technical mission. It must be about, I did know about that. I'd run the technology practice at my PR firm. I had clients like HP and Siebel Systems, I'm showing my age, and mobile phone companies and the GSM Association. I thought it was products, hardware, software. I didn't really understand the internet. But I said to myself, "I know about technology. This will be fine." Ha ha ha. How wrong I was.

But what I thought it was bits and bytes and codes and programmers and all that kind of thing. And as I got through my first year at ICANN, and then you, of course, like all of you, you begin to understand things and it makes sense and you find your place, which is what we're talking about. The place I found was this. I decided, which I still profoundly believe, that what makes ICANN and the internet work is not those things. It's us. It's actually trust. It's about people. And it's about our ability to build networks

together, to do what Patrik Fältström did for me at that meeting, to me, for me, whatever you like.

But it wasn't just Patrik. Byron was the host in Toronto. He reached out to me. I met Paul Wilson, who was the CEO of APNIC at the time. There are at least a dozen people who are still at ICANN. I met them at that meeting. And they have stayed part of my support group and my, "Hello, I don't understand this. Can you explain it to me?" People like David Conrad. Any of you know David Conrad? Yeah, of course, you do. Who was our CTO for a long time. A deeply kind man who would explain to me what I didn't need to worry about, which I'm happy to say was mostly, "I've got this, Sally. Here's my phone number."

So that was what I wanted to share with you this morning. Our function, my function, which, of course, I then, Fadi asked me to stay and build an engagement function around the world, which is where we are now. Our function is here to help you do what I did, but hopefully more smoothly. But essentially, you know what, I wouldn't really change a thing. Because you watch around the community, you see people, people find friends here. They find long lasting friendships.

Did anybody go to Bart's ccNSO? No. Anybody see Bart last night? Few people. One of our colleagues. So Bart has worked with ccNSO since before ICANN was created, I think, virtually. He's retiring after 20 years. And he supported, he was part of the foundation of the ccNSO, then he transferred to STAR. I stood in that room last night,

and I saw standing room only in the ccNSO for a member of STAR, I'm going to get emotional now, who was being, I can only say, celebrated, loved, not by his colleagues, but by his community network. And that network is, they were going back decades of their relationships, and those people are all still here. And they wanted to show him how much he meant to them. And they bought gifts. They know he loves coffee. it was so lovely.

All over the world, community, ccTLD members come into that meeting. They'd obviously coordinated. And they bought coffee beans from all over. They had to put it in a truck to bring it like a like a thing, what do you call it, like a trolley to him. I mean, he was kind of like, whoa, I need to buy a suitcase.

But I wanted these little stories to leave you with, because these are what it's really about, in my view. So your path to me, and I'm going to hand over to Russ, is about what you want. And some of that is about what your passions are, your topics. Some of our NextGeners are bringing their PhD studies, their academic background to us, which is fabulous. Like, talk about universal acceptance. Talk about internet governance. Talk about these critical issues for us, DNS abuse. This is our place. Come, be young, be fresh, be provocative. Tell us that we don't understand, that we need to do things differently. That's great. That's what the internet pioneers did. That's very much in the spirit of our world.

But also, we are here to help you. Really, truly, truly, we are. And not just for newcomers. We're here to help you do everything that

you need to do to find your place. Because once you find your place, and I know some of you in the room, I'm looking at Judith here, have really found their place. Judith is an incredible contributor to our community. She has totally found her place geographically, and At-Large. And she brings her experience, and her insight, and her care, and her patience to so many people to help us to grow.

And so, I would love all of you to see that journey for yourself, but it will be different for you. So, I want to hand over to Russ, because I don't want to steal his thunder, which I will start to do. But also, in handing over to him, Russ and I sit on the executive team of ICANN's organization, and we report to the CEO. So, just so that, in case some of you don't realize, that's the organizational structure. And I wanted to share, we have to work incredibly closely together, both Russ, particularly Russ and I. Because as Naela said, between us, we have about, I don't know, 80 staff, something along those lines, all over the world. And they do the lion's share of looking after you in the community, either through engagement or through support.

So, you have our commitment that we will continue to do that. So, if you have issues and challenges, and you bring them up through Russ's team, and we can help, we know how to do that. And we are very committed to doing that. We don't want silos and gaps. We don't want you to have to knock on lots of different doors to be heard. Russ, please.

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Thank you, Sally. And thank you for all of you guys being here today. Again, I'm Russ Weinstein, and I lead the policy development support group at ICANN. I mean, I hate going after Sally. She does such a good job of setting the table. I mean, she stole like three or four of my stories.

SALLY COSTERTON

Because you're here.

RUSS WEINSTEIN

We got a bit of an echo. So, many of you have been at ICANN and been around ICANN for a long time, and I thank you for that. And I think the reasons Sally talked about are a lot of the reasons why, and I hope you guys continue to feel that way and share that with each other and share that with people who don't have that magic or that itch yet. Because it really is a really magical thing when you step back from it and see the type of people we bring together, the diversity of experience and background and culture that we bring together, viewpoints, and then they keep coming back together.

And they keep working together in different groups and on different problems, and it keeps working. And a lot of it works because people want it to. And that's because of the trust that you build with one another. And that trust is built by really participating and by working on it and by thinking about how can we make this work and how do we work together as a group.

And so, when I think about leadership at ICANN and participation at ICANN, as Sally was saying, it's about what you want out of it. And it's what hopefully we can help you build skills here and experience and practice that don't only have to apply to ICANN, right, that are transferable to other things outside of ICANN and that you can bring some of that magic that we do here at ICANN to other parts of your life and other parts of your community. And hopefully we give you those opportunities both through, there's a number of course programs that we have either virtual or here at ICANN meetings that try and teach skills and expose you to new experiences and subject matter.

And then there's the work itself, right, and getting that learned by doing. I went to a university in California called Cal Poly University, and their slogan is learn by doing, and it's stayed with me my whole life because I'm not, I'm maybe the stereotypical male who will not read an instruction manual and will just try and learn by doing. But when I think about that ethos, I think it's really applicable to ICANN because most of what we have to do, there isn't a blueprint. There's a process, but there's not a blueprint of how this is going to work, and we get to figure it out together, and it's your creativity and your desire to do that does that.

So a little bit about the policy function. If you don't know, as Sally talked about, our teams work really closely together. What my team's sort of responsible for is, when I think about it at a macro level, it's upholding the legitimacy of the ICANN model. So my team supports each of the structures within ICANN, the community

structures. Those are the supporting organizations, the constituencies and stakeholder groups below those supporting organizations, and the advisory councils.

And so that means supporting them not only in their substantive work, but in upholding their processes of doing things in accordance with a set of rules and transparently maintaining their documentation for you all so that anyone can see how something was done, can see why someone's in that seat as the leader, why those decisions were taken, how the votes played out, what interests were at the table when that thing was discussed. All of that is part of our legitimacy and part of why this trust-based model can work, because that's what the multi-stakeholder model is. It's a trust-based model. And so it relies on that underlying legitimacy of participation in a transparent way. And so that's the stuff my team does.

It's great to see so many faces from different stakeholder groups in the room. And I'll turn it back to Naela. Looking forward to the discussion. Thanks.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, Russ. And thank you, Sally. Certainly helpful to set the scene here for what we're trying to do. And learn by doing is something that resonates very well. So that's really good to keep that in mind. All right. So I want to jump into the discussion with

our panelists today. I've rattled them off here, but we'll go to each one.

And I want to start with a common question that I want to ask to all of you. If you could take us through what your role is here at ICANN and what your group does, your ICANN group does, and why do you personally think this work matters for ICANN in terms of your group and what you're trying to do there. And really more importantly than the ICANN context is what do you do outside of ICANN, be it for fun or to earn money or whatever. But if you could tell us a little bit about what you do outside of ICANN. I have an order here that I will maintain. So we'll start with you, Tara.

TARA WHALEN

Hello. So I'm Tara Whalen, and I am the vice chair of SSAC. So that is the Security and Stability Advisory Committee. So there I work with our chair, Ram Mohan, and the rest of the leadership team really to set direction for SSAC and to help make it effective in its work. So if you don't really know where we fit, you know that ICANN has as the mission to ensure the stable and secure operation of the Internet's unique identifying systems. And our role is to advise the ICANN community and the Board on matters relating to the security and integrity of the Internet's naming and address allocation systems.

So we're a lot of technical experts. Much of our work you'll see through advisory. Not all of it is that way, but many advisory documents. The first one I ever worked on, SAC95, an advisory on

the use of emoji and domain names as an example. And why this matters to me, I'm fundamentally a privacy advocate. I came to this work through privacy. And I really want to ensure that Internet users around the world have data protection. This includes security safeguards.

And if you work with large Internet systems, the sorts of things that we work with at ICANN, that's a way for me to deploy my expertise at a global scale. So it allows me to build privacy into core infrastructures, into systems and governance. And so that's what I do at ICANN. I mean, outside of that, who has time outside of ICANN? But thankfully, because I do enjoy traveling, among other things, ICANN has allowed me to put those two things together.

NAELA SARRAS

Fantastic. Thank you, Tara. So over to you, Jenifer. Same question.

JENIFER LOPEZ

Thank you, Naela. Well, I'm Jenifer Lopez. I'm currently serving as a ccNSO counselor and representing Latin America and the Caribbean region within ICANN. And the ccNSO brings together country code top level domain managers from around the world. And it provides a space to exchange experiences, also to discuss common challenges and develop policy when needed, and also contribute to broader ICANN discussions. And I think it is important because different countries and Internet ecosystem can learn from

each other while working together on common goals. So it means a lot for me to work and serve for ccNSO now. Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS

Excellent. Thank you, Jenifer. Kathleen?

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Hi, everyone. I'm Kathleen Scoggin. I am one of the North American representatives to the At-Large Advisory Committee. The ALAC is a 15-member group with three people from each of the five ICANN regions that are tasked with representing a very large community, that be it the At-Large community, individual end users of the Internet.

The idea is that those who don't have a business interest or even a nonprofit interest in the operations of ICANN are oftentimes the most impacted by the priorities that ICANN takes up. And so we should attempt at least to represent them and they deserve a voice in the conversation. So outside of ICANN, I work at a research organization called the Stimson Center doing a lot of combating online scams and fraud work. So that's kind of what I've also been focused on in my ALAC term. But we've got people from everywhere working on all kinds of issues. So yeah, happy to be here.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, Kathleen. Alyssa, same question.

ALYSSA QUINN

My name is Alyssa Quinn. I'm a member of the ASO, the Address Supporting Organization Address Council. The ASO is a function of the RIR system, the Regional Internet Registries. So sometimes people forget there are two ends in ICANN. We are the second end. We are the numbers. And so I was elected via the ARIN community to the organization that's actually called the NRO, the Number Resource Organization. And then those same 15 people from the different RIRs that sit on the NRO serve the function of the ASO. So there's one of those kind of arcane functions of this whole internet governance ecosystem.

So I'm actually a stay-at-home mom. I'm not working right now. I'm doing this in a totally volunteer capacity. I've been kind of away from this ecosystem for a few years and just came back this year. And then outside of this, I'm obviously raising kids. And right now my biggest project is renovating an old Airstream trailer.

NAELA SARRAS

Interesting. Okay. And Alp.

ALPEREN EKEN

Hi, everyone. This is Alp Eken. I work within the Global Stakeholder Engagement Team at ICANN org. But my specific focus is on the strategy and operation side rather than the frontline engagement work. My role is to look at the engagement from a high level, ensuring our team and our community has the tools, data, and

strategies they need to help stakeholders navigate the ecosystem smoothly, and ensuring that we are focused on the ICANN mission, that is to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global internet.

This work matters to me. In general, the ICANN matters to me because of its scale and public service status. It is incredibly rewarding to know that the strategy I support ultimately helps maintain a single, open, and globally interoperable internet. We are quite literally helping to keep the system running that allows the entire world to talk with each other. So, that is something great.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, everybody. Great intro to where you come from and the different communities that you represent. So, let us start at the beginning here. I want to start exploring at the beginning of how each of you became involved in your current roles and in your current communities. And I'm really happy that these communities represent many different communities in ICANN. Country Code, top-level domains, definitely the second N of ICANN, and the end-user community. So, this is really good.

And obviously, as we can see here, each one of you had a different journey coming into ICANN. I am 100% sure it wasn't always a clear roadmap to get you to get to here. There's different entry points. For you, Alp, you were a fellow at ICANN at some point, and other people were perhaps employed by other sister organizations to

ICANN. So, I want to explore a little bit of how you came into the ICANN environment and what initially drew you to it.

So, let me start with you. Same order, Tara. What initially drew you to ICANN? How did you come into this community? And what did you think participation looked like coming into ICANN? Besides sitting around tables and talking. And then, what surprised you? Once you were here and you were involved, what surprised you about what's happening in this community and how they're conducting the business of ICANN?

TARA WHALEN

Well, I have to thank Sally for teeing a lot of this up. I think, in some ways, we had a similar introduction in that it was, someone came to you to bring you in. Not the same person, but a same approach. Something similar and something's different. And I was going to say that I thought I had maybe an unusual start, but I think I'm realizing we all have an unusual start. There may be no pattern.

So, I was approached at a security conference that I was attending. So, this came from my wider professional community. And it was someone there who was a member of SSAC. And he said, "We seem to need more privacy expertise in the work we're doing in SSAC. Maybe you could come and help us." And I was like, "SSAC, that sounds interesting. Sure, I'll come. But you seem like technical experts who need some expertise."

So, I went off to find out what this SSAC thing was. This was about 2016. So, I had no experience with ICANN, no experience with SSAC. It was all very much based on a particular technical expertise. And I know a lot of other people, they have different paths in SSAC. Often someone is already perhaps working at a registrar, a ccTLD. They've already are familiar with a lot of the components of ICANN or in the business. That was not me. But that doesn't matter. You know, we have many paths. You come in that way.

I had most of my experience at the IETF. So, this is, again, a technical standards group where lots of technical people come together at week-long meetings in rooms like this, hammering together documents and coming to consensus. So, there's a lot of familiarity. So, when you said participation I was informed we did technical documents. I know how to do that. Great. We can get in a room and do that. Well, it's somewhat true.

So, at IETF, it's lots of groups working on similar things on different technical topics. Here, I would say that SSAC is an anomaly in terms of the nature of the work. If you stayed inside our meetings, I could pretend I was at an IETF meeting talking on technical topics. And then I would go out on the coffee break and say, "Who are all of you and what are you doing?"

Because I don't know anything about your world. But it was good for me to, I didn't stay on the island and pretend I was just there. I always had to figure out how to get to the mainland and learn what everyone else was doing and learn about the world. And then that,

not just swim there, but to build the bridge for myself to other people. And I already had a lot of experience with acronyms at IETF. So, I was well prepared.

NAELA SARRAS

Good. You came with your own cheat sheet of acronyms. Very good. Thank you, Tara. So, Jenifer, I want to go to you. You're a country code name Supporting Organization Council member. You come into the ccNSO as a member, as an operator, a TLD operator. So, in your case, your team operates .pa for Panama, right?

And so, at some point you went from being a participant in ccNSO as a TLD operator to a council member of the ccNSO. So, I want to ask you, from going as a participant in ccNSO to a council member, what assumptions changed once you became active in that role as a council member? What did you think the work was and what did it turn out to be?

JENIFER LOPEZ

Thank you for the question, Naela. Well, initially, I assumed ICANN was mainly about technical expertise and policy discussions. What I was surprised was about how much is about people and, as Sally said before, also the trust building, the listening and understanding different perspectives and also finding common ground are the key part of it. And also the multi-stakeholder model, which is not the fastest approach, but it is also valuable because it brings together voices that otherwise might not interact at all. So, many outcomes

are shaped within every corner and in informal meetings also. So, that's why it was what surprised me about it.

NAELA SARRAS

Very interesting, yeah. I want to tell you, I think that perspective is also shared. If you talk to other organizations, even to the staff, that's really interesting. Okay, going over to you, Kathleen. So, what was your entry point into ICANN? I'd like to hear about that. And was there a point when you felt that you were operating a different environment, whether within ICANN or the At-Large advisory committee, than what you expected it to be?

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Hi. Thanks, Naela. So, I came in relatively early, I guess, to ICANN when I was still in, oh, sorry, when I was still in university. I was able to participate in an internet governance research pilot program with the ITU that was facilitated by some Fiona Alexander, a previous US representative when ICANN was first established, among many other times and things.

That's how I first became aware that ICANN existed and what their overall general mission was. And then when I had finished my studies and I began working at the same university, I was tasked with facilitating the North American School of Internet Governance, which is one of the many kind of adjacent programs, I guess, to ICANN that does a lot of capacity building work. And

that's how I learned more about the At-Large community and what their mission was and definitely felt drawn to that.

I also was very lucky that a lot of those folks very much took me under their wing and walked me through my first ICANN, where I similarly understood absolutely nothing. But they encouraged me to apply for the fellowship program that allowed me to have a lot more context to a lot of the things that I had experienced at the DC meeting. From there, I was elected to the ALAC and have been focusing a lot on the DNS abuse work and figuring out where broader work on scams and online fraud intersects with the mission of the At-Large and interests in ICANN more generally.

I, similarly to what lots of others have said, I held the belief that ICANN was a purely technical organization and I have zero technical background. And so I think when I first entered the At-Large, I didn't know that I could contribute or I thought maybe I would be more of an observer participant and figured out there was a lot more synergies between the things that I had been working on and focusing on and the work of ICANN, so yeah.

NAELA SARRAS

That's great. Thank you, Kathleen. And then I'm going to switch to you, Alyssa. In your case, you can't claim you didn't know what this was about. You worked for a ccTLD who was extremely involved in ICANN. You had a lot of experience coming into this. So what was the specific moment in your current leadership role on the ASO AC

that you decided to pursue this role on the Advisory Council and why?

ALYSSA QUINN

Thank you. So I used to work for a ccTLD. I worked at the .ca top-level domain for a while. But before that, I worked at a network operator, one of the research and education networks in Canada. And through them, I discovered the ARIN policy-making process. And I was newly graduated from school. I had studied political science. And I knew I wanted to work in policy. I had done a lot of coursework on international relations and Canadian politics. And I ended up at this weird nonprofit internet service provider, basically.

And from there, I discovered, oh, there's this group that distributes resources on top of which the internet functions. And I was kind of this extremely online early 20-something at the time. And was just kind of blown away that this ecosystem existed. And that it was possible to just go to a meeting and participate and get up to a mic and ask a question.

And so I actually entered the whole ecosystem through the RIRs first. And then I ended up running for a position on their advisory council around 2015. And so I served on the ARIN advisory council through their policy processes for six years. And then concurrently, I ended up working for a ccTLD as well. So I was having sort of the

RIR side of policy-making as well as coming to ICANN meetings for a little while.

So my first love is numbers. And then I went to names. And now I'm back on the numbers side of house. And just this last year, they asked, I was working on a very important document that they're trying to get across the finish line called ICP2. And there was going to be a vacancy coming up. And a couple of folks had reached out to ask me, would you be interested in helping get this across the finish line with us? And I scoped it out and looked at it and looked at the workload. And I was a little trepidatious given my circumstances at home, just coming back into it. But I am glad that I did. It's been really rewarding already so far.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. And we're glad you came back to it. Alp, you, as I said earlier, you started as a fellow and then you decided to join ICANN staff. So you've kind of straddled both worlds up until this point. So as you joined, you were community, newcomer, you joined staff. As you assumed your new role, what things have become clearer to you about how ICANN works versus perhaps maybe an assumption that you had when you were outside the organization as a staff member? And are there any surprises?

ALPEREN EKEN

I actually had a bit of a head start. Even before I was a fellow, I was an intern in the Istanbul office with the Compliance team. Or I

thought I had a head start. But the multi-stakeholder model is a surprise generally. It is so complex. And when I joined as a fellow, I was the chair of a youth organization in Turkey and we were working on the issue of youth unemployment. And so digital work, the digital world, the internet, we believed that joining an ICANN structure, a community, would give us maybe a different perspective.

And I arrived as a fellow with the full enthusiasm, but again, it is very complex and felt really complex. It is beautiful, but the checks and balances felt intense for me. I think Sally also touched upon this. Based on your social, cultural background, your studies, where you grew up, I think this shapes how you look at the governance in general. So in my cultural background, the multi-stakeholder model was very new. It is still very new for lots of people in the region.

And the surprise was for me, I realized that I should listen first, listen more, be a sponge for a long time before I say something. And when I say something, I wanted to make sure that it has a positive impact on the discussion. I think that was it.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. I think your view is certainly shared by other people, whether it's in the community or staff, when you speak. So this is really great and helpful. Thank you, everyone. So I want to transition now to perhaps, I know all this work comes with complexity, we can all acknowledge. So even at senior levels, it's

not a laid-out path. Tara goes to this conference, she joins the ITF, she becomes vice chair. We're all coming at this with different experiences, different learnings, adapting over time as we figure out where do I fit?

And so the journey is different for everybody. And the experiences are different. And as you said listening more, balancing the views, absorbing a lot more before you passing an opinion or judgment is extremely important. And definitely learning processes. I'm sure the way things work in SSAC is completely different than how they work in the ASO AC and so on.

So let's talk a little bit about these moments and how we function in these different groups. So over to you, Tara. You, your group is, I know it's not an easy group. It's a difficult, it's a lot of work and complex topics that you work with. So can you describe perhaps a particularly difficult discussion that you've worked with within the SSAC and how you got at consensus building? Because you have a group of experts sitting in the room hashing out topics, and I'm sure they don't all come pre-built with consensus. So how do you get to that and how do you handle these difficult topics and what helps the topics and the discussion move forward?

TARA WHALEN

So I like that you described it as a moment. I think all of us who are doing the consensus building find that the issue of coming to

consensus is something that's a continual challenge and something that we come back to often.

So this is a muscle that we have to learn to develop. And for SSAC, where I mentioned that we get out advice, one of the challenges we had is we like to get it out in a timely fashion. So what we need to balance is we're trying to do thorough work and complete work and thoughtful work, but also the world moves quickly and people need advice. And so you need to figure out how to balance moving this forward what is the right time and finding ways of getting it unstuck.

And we have a lot of people, as you say, who have a lot of expertise and a lot of strong opinions and you're trying to move consensus forward. But there's also just sometimes the ways in which discussion runs. There's small practical things that will help discussions to move. And we have had the chairs of the work parties who develop the documents, their skills are really important as to how they apply them in the meetings to move things ahead.

And we started to recognize that some chairs had more expertise than others, more experience or less experience. And so we were trying to help them to build that muscle, particularly, again, if you're new to SSAC, new to being a chair, there are things you need to learn. So because this is so vital for success of a work party, well, definitely people in the room recognize perhaps when a chair is

struggling, people in the room will sometimes learn then to collectively help things to move forward.

You'll learn things like, oh, people are going off on a tangent. That never happens in a technical discussion. And so you will do things like, okay, maybe we'll have a short discussion of no more than this much time. Oh, that's an interesting idea for another document or meeting. Let's make a parking lot and write that down. But giving them tools to work with to unstick things. So they'll support them.

And we're trying to put together a chair's training guide for SSAC to help have these documented for people. And we had a panel at an earlier session in one of our groups where we brought in some experienced chairs to talk about their experiences. And then we'll build from that and present those as a guidance for people who are coming in who want to learn those things.

NAELA SARRAS

That's really fascinating, Tara, because to an outsider, it could easily seem like this is a group of experts. I'll have it down. This is all figured out. Yeah, there's nothing I can add to this. So this is really helpful that you shared to us. It's a continuous learning process. It's a learn by doing, as Russ said earlier. Thank you.

I want to switch to Jenifer. Jenifer, you're in the ccNSO and that by default comes with everybody in the world included. So how did you learn to make your voice effective and heard in that group

that's large and diverse by as the way it's built in? So if you could tell us a little bit about that. Thank you.

JENIFER LOPEZ

Thank you, Naela. At the beginning, I thought that effectiveness comes or mainly speaking up frequently. But over time, I learned that effectiveness comes from understanding the issues and listening carefully and contributing when you can genuinely add value. So I spent a lot of time learning from more experienced members and participating in working groups, asking questions, a lot of questions, and trying to understand only the positions people held, but also why they held that position. And one lesson that stayed with me is that credibility is built through consistency. So when people know that you are prepared and constructive and willing to collaborate, your voice naturally becomes like more with more weight.

NAELA SARRAS

Indeed. Thank you. Thank you. Kathleen, I'll switch to you. What part of participating in ALAC took you the most adjustment to make in order to be able to participate fruitfully in the ALAC?

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Yeah. Thanks, Naela. I think that one of the both advantages and challenges about the At-Large community is that our scope and the issues that are relevant to the At-Large is long. That list of issues that impacts the individual end user community is seemingly never

ending sometimes, and that can be very intimidating coming into a leadership position. But I think for a group of all volunteers, none of us do this for our jobs, people have been very generous with their time and their knowledge for newer members.

And because we don't have the same scoped remit, it's important to be a champion within the ICANN community for a lot of different issues while also trying to balance becoming an expert in something to be able to contribute in a more substantive way. So that's still figuring it out as we go for sure, but people have been very generous and similarly to what Jenifer said in asking many questions and relying on the folks that came before you to give advice and help move forward.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. Thank you, Kathleen. Alyssa, you made several references that you're renovating and you're a mom at home, and you certainly are voicing that many of us are balancing many, many different priorities in our participation in this community. And as everybody is managing these demands of their time, being family, being career, can you talk a little bit more about your experience and what it taught you to manage this? And then you said you stepped out and then you came back in. So could you talk a little bit to us about that?

ALYSSA QUINN

Sure. So there was a time I had mentioned I was attending the ARIN meetings for their advisory council and I was coming to all the ICANN meetings for my day job. And then there was some intra-Canadian travel for my day job on top of doing my day job. And it felt like I was all consumed by my career. I was very career driven. And then I met my husband also through this ecosystem. And so there was just tons of travel. This was our large, large part of our lives.

And then the pandemic hit and everything kind of changed and put stuff in perspective for us. And it was a huge alteration to kind of our way of life and helped us reprioritize. And at that same time, I was immigrating to the United States, which was a nightmarish process, if you ever want to talk about it, during the pandemic. And then we decided to have a baby. And it was very important to us to have me be able to stay at home, especially for the first three years.

And it was a little strange for me to set aside all the work that I had done in this community. And at the same time, the pandemic was kind of coming to a close. But it was the right decision for us. And I'm really happy that we did that. And it's like I never missed a beat to come back. And of course, with the power of the internet, I maintained a lot of my friendships through those years. And it's good to come back in a way that is much more narrowly scoped, that I've been able to sort of shift my focus, but still do a bit of the work that I really like to do and keep my mind working in that way.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. I think a lot of people identify with that. And I think having gone through that, it really makes you focus on what's important and what's not and really give the energy to what's important and be able to forget the noise, right? Or like skip the noise. Thank you. This is really helpful.

Alp, I want to come to you. You talked about focusing on listening, absorbing more than necessarily contributing right away. So what helped you gain confidence in becoming a contributor in your meetings as a newcomer to ICANN and then as a staff member?

ALPEREN EKEN

Thanks, Naela. I think listening is also a good contribution most of the time. So that started, but the truly feeling like you are able to speak up, I think that happens when I found that my focus of topic, I selected one that I'm interested in, and it feels like we coordinated our answers, but it didn't happen. So everyone basically said similar things.

But I felt like contributing when I found that topic. And I also used programs that is available to us, the capacity development program. So fellowship was a great one. Also we have ICANN Learn that is always there, and you can always sign up and learn things. And also the Policy Accelerator program, which was not available at that time, but now it is available and it gives you a short policy lifecycle, and you can learn the topics. These programs were like a GPS, so they helped me to focus and understand. And then once I

understand that, I started to be able to speak, and then I realized that people are listening more. So that was the time, I guess.

NAELA SARRAS

Yeah, thank you. Thank you. This is good. I have many questions. The panel that I have are prepared with even, I think at least two sets of questions. But I want to be aware of the time. So if there are other questions from this room or online that anybody wants to ask the panelists, please put your hand up. I'll keep going, but if there's other questions that need to be asked, please let us know. So that's an invitation for those of you online, please put your hand up. And I have Joe here watching the room, so we'll make sure they get asked.

I want to take the time with our panelists to switch. Perhaps we talked about, we want to transition to, the way we built this panel is we said we're going to provide advice and kind of help people see their pathways into ICANN. So let's talk a little bit about that, some practical advice that you as different leaders in the community with your different groups that you could share with the attendees here, with those of us online.

So starting with you, Tara, I know that the SSAC has done a lot of work recently, and it's been noticed in the community, definitely by me, on inviting new members. I told you a couple days ago, I had somebody stop me and say, I want to apply to SSAC, how do I become a member of SSAC? So could you tell us a little bit about what SSAC is doing to help promote SSAC as for the organization

that it is and to attract people to join SSAC? And why did SSAC take on that work? Why was it important to expand the membership?

TARA WHALEN

I'm very happy to talk about this. You won't be able to stop me. So we've been fortunate in SSAC over decades now to have a lot of really excellent security experts who are willing to dedicate their knowledge and their time to improving security and stability issues, which has been wonderful.

Traditionally, what would happen, though, is people would reach out to their professional networks. And again, as someone approached me, then there's lots of people available there who are right there, who are available, that you can bring in. But that doesn't necessarily mean that's the best strongest way to build a group, is simply to look around the groups of the people that you already know. Because there are certainly going to be a large number of other experts that are not known to you personally who could also be contributing, who were in different communities, who have complementary skill sets, who can deepen what we know and add to it.

So we need to change the way in which we connected with people. And we made a concerted effort to look more on outreach and changed a lot of the ways in which we connected with people to find pathways and to encourage people to join. And it's very important for us, we prioritize specifically this as one of the leadership goals, in fact, over this past term. And I'm very

heartened to hear you say that. I mean, we have experienced it internally with the people who've been brought in, we're absolutely thrilled. And I'm glad to hear that you're hearing it in the community.

You know, personally, for example I didn't find we had great representation for women in SSAC. And I really want to ensure that the technical women who I know exist, find their way to SSAC, and that we ensure that there are ways that they thrive in their contributions when they come. So that's something that again, I really want to encourage in SSAC. And that's just one of the ways in which we could diversify. And then as we bring people in, they also bring in their networks. And so that builds our connections as well, and we grow and grow.

And if you want advice on how to join, I can give -- okay, so first of all, the 30th of June, the windows, that's the closing for this year. So please, please, if you want to apply, there is the app, it's on the SSAC site on the ICANN on the page, you'll find us on how to become involved. Because we have open meetings. So people want to know what we do. We have many open meetings, please come meet us there. We're happy to connect with you. If you want to hear the kind of work and see if you'd find it interesting. We love seeing people's talks. So a lot of us you'll find at the NextGen presentations and seeing the really exciting technical work. So it's a great place to make a connection.

And I know it's hard to know, like, when am I ready? When am I ready? Because I can't deny we are a technical group, you kind of need a core baseline of technical skills. But you might be ready earlier than you think. And you may have skills that are more or less developed at a certain a certain point and you can talk to people.

I advise that people look at the documents, look at what we've created and sort of ask yourself, how might I have contributed to this document? If you can read it, not all of them, you don't have to have 100%, but a substantial number, you say, I understand what's happening here. I could have contributed this piece, or I could have maybe deepened this piece, or I could have added this piece, then you're in a position where you could have been doing that kind of work. And that's maybe how you calibrate yourself.

And please try. We also we know people try more than once, this is fine. Sometimes you might not match because of the year and the skill sets. But it's never a mark against you to come and not work the first time. Come on back. And we'd be glad to see you come back in future and to come back as you grow. We're very happy to see you.

NAELA SARRAS

Great advice. Thank you. Thank you. Jenifer, I do see, sorry, one more, one more thing. I do see a hand up in the room. So let me just do one round of question for advice from each of the panelists.

And then I'll come to you. I see Olabimpe Adoloro. I see your hand and I will come back to you.

So Jenifer, as a ccNSO member, and advice to the room and to those of us online, what makes someone an effective ccNSO counselor? And if someone joins the ccNSO council tomorrow, or however the cycle works, what habits help someone become effectively effective and quickly up to speed on how to be a contributor?

JENIFER LOPEZ

Thank you for the question, Naela. An effective counselor is someone who is curious, prepared, collaborative, and willing to listen. Technical knowledge is a must. It's important. But also is the ability to understand different perspectives and help move conversations forward. And for someone joining the council tomorrow, my advice will be simple.

Be present, read the materials, ask questions, reach out to people, learn from those who have been involved since a long time, but also don't underestimate the value of bringing a fresh perspective to the conversations. And I think one common mistake is feeling that you need to know everything before contributing. And ICANN seem complex sometimes, but everyone starts somewhere. So your mission is important here. That's what I want to say. Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. Kathleen, for someone who wants to become part of ALAC, the At-Large Advisory Committee, what's a realistic first step? And what should they not do? What should they not try to do too early?

KATHLEEN SCOGGIN

Yeah, thanks. I think because of the breadth of the At-Large, our participation is wide-ranging, and that also means that we need expertise from people that are technical, from people that are lawyers, because we have all of these issues that we need to address. So I guess my first point is not necessarily a piece of advice, but rather just to say that everyone's kind of useful and needed in the At-Large, and we're happy to have you.

So from there, we have two big open working groups that meet once a week, more or less, and we're able to participate in their open calls, and we're always asking for volunteers, and it's a great way to start on a specific public comment of interest or a specific topic of interest. You don't necessarily have to take on a big leadership role. All of us are in leadership, but you could just focus on that narrow issue, and if that's what you're interested in, participate, and then from there, you can grow and do more if you would like, but that there are always opportunities for volunteers. Yeah.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, Kathleen. Alyssa, if someone feels very overwhelmed by ICANN, specifically the processes, what would you tell them? I know the processes are big, and sometimes what you explained, coming into ICP2, that was a long undertaking that that community took, so what experiences best prepare someone to take on future work like this, to allow, to be able to contribute without being overwhelmed by it necessarily?

ALYSSA QUINN

What has really helped me is just a deep sense of curiosity, whether it's about the processes that exist, or the people themselves who are going to help you understand the processes that exist. It's building that network of colleagues who can tell you, like, how did this come to be, and have kind of that deep institutional knowledge, and being curious about their experiences with it, and drawing from as wide a range as possible as you can, because different people are going to have different opinions, and you're never going to get the full picture by just talking to a narrow set of people. So that's been the really big one for me, and how I've been able to navigate this ecosystem across the different groups.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, and Alp, as a staff member, if someone here is in their first ICANN meeting, whether it's in this room or this large meeting that we're having, what's one specific thing they should do this

week to accelerate their learning, or their ability to contribute, that you can think of?

ALPEREN EKEN

I think that, basically, second Alyssa, they should find people, they should start talking with them, and I think, if they started to find people that feel more close, they are always so helpful. That was another shopping thing to me. Everyone was so helpful, and they are happy to help, and they are always open to giving advice, and help you understand the topics. And I remember one practical advice I was given, it was my first meeting, that was open a brand new email address for ICANN, and that really helped initially.

NAELA SARRAS

Because they can easily overwhelm your mailbox, very good, that's great advice. Thank you, everyone, for that great advice. I know we have one question online, which I'm going to go to that question online. I'm going to go to the question period right now. So, let's start with online, and if anyone else thinks of a question, please raise your hand. So, over to you, Khalil, I don't know if we can have people speak, they can take the mic. So, to Olabimpe Adoloro, the mic is yours.

OLABIMPE ADELORO

Okay, yeah, I can omit now. Excuse me. Can you hear me, please? Hello?

NAELA SARRAS

Oh, I'm sorry. I think we can hear you. Go ahead, please, yes, state your question.

OLABIMPE ADELORO

Okay, all right. So, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak. Olabimpe Adoloro is my name from Nigeria, and I'm a fellow of the ISOC Early Career Fellowship. Thank you very much for the opportunity. I just wanted to ask the panel, is it possible to recommend a more direct pathway for someone starting out in ICANN? Maybe I should tell you a little bit about where I'm coming from so that you will better understand.

I lead a community, a global community of about 300 plus women and a few men that are allies in a community called Global Women for Digital Governance Initiative. So, sometimes it's difficult for me to assist an individual because I'm from the tech background, and we have women in that community that do not have tech background. So, how do I, without imposing my own interest in them, how do I assist them with, okay, this is where to start from, these are the courses to take, this is what to do at every point.

I mean, maybe to some point where they can continue the journey all by themselves. Like, some could not join this meeting because, for one thing, even though, yes, they were encouraged to, but they were still scared of, oh, it's a global meeting, how do they participate, how do they learn the acronyms and all. So, can you

please recommend a more straightforward pathway for a beginner? Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you. I think you're asking, if I heard this, if I understood this correctly, I think you're saying the most straightforward pathway. And please, any of the panelists, please let me know if you want to add to something here. I don't know that there is necessarily an advice that's a straightforward pathway to all communities, like a recipe for every community. What we're trying to show here in this panel that we're a diverse community and everybody has a different pathway to come into their organizations within ICANN.

So, if you could, please, I would recommend that maybe we should talk a little bit offline to, if I could understand a little bit more what you're looking for specifically. And then we, as Sally said when we opened this topic, it's just like this is the North America team here and we work with our teams within, with our stakeholders in North America. There are similar teams of the same as us in the rest of the world and we can certainly point you in the right direction depending on where you're looking to get involved.

So, I think the best, most straightforward way is to please email us and our information is included in this presentation so we can help direct the question a little bit. I don't know if any other panelists want to add anything, no? Okay, thank you. Do we have any

questions in the room or anything else online? Please go ahead and please state your name and your affiliation if you have one.

GANON BROWN

Good afternoon, my name is Ganon [ph] Brown. I am from Los Angeles, California, but I spent a lot of time in Nigeria and this is my second ICANN. I was in Mumbai and I'm learning to not say last year. I was in Mumbai last year. So, I want to, number one, say that this is an amazing community for those that are starting out or if this is your first meeting. I think Sally and so many of the panelists have said it best in regards to the friendliness and the openness, the ability to ask questions that you might think is not smart.

And so, the question that I have is the community is great. Now, I need to sign up online and now I might want to sign up for a follow or I might want to sign up and I'm finding that that process online is a little dated or challenging and I'm not sure if that's the case for all the organizations, but it's like you have to download a PDF and then you have to download a PDF filler and then you have to manually email someone to get approval and I'm thinking 2026 Google form or if there's an easier process to help newcomers like myself sign up.

NAELA SARRAS

That's a fantastic question and I'm glad you're here and you're asking it and I see Russ nodding his head. So, I think you mentioned AFRALO specifically, right? I see you, Judith. Okay. So, the RALOs,

so we have the North American one in North America and then AFRALO'S staff as us here and I don't know if anyone here represents any of the RALOs.

We don't affect those processes. I think they're built jointly with the policy staff. So, we could take this as input and this is really valuable input, but I don't know if you wanted to add anything to that, Russ. I have certainly talked to staff members in our team that these processes need to be modernized. For sure, it's something we recognize. I don't know if you want to add anything to that, Russ.

JUDITH HELLERSTEIN

Hi, it's Judith Hellerstein from North America ALAC. So, there's two different, because At-Large has five different RALOs, you could join either as an individual member or as an At-Large structure, which is what I can, the best thing that represents an ALS outside is a chapter. So, if you're part of a larger group, having four or five people, you can join as an ALS, but otherwise you can join as an individual.

And when I think the processes more are confusing in that sense, is that it was set up more, except for NARALO, for ALSs, and they've only added individuals in the different RALOs in the last few years, while in NARALO, which is the North American one, we've had individual members since very much the beginning.

And so, there's different processes, so that there was an approved, for an organization, there's an approval process, which is similar to chapters and other different groups. But individuals, there's basically three questions that they ask, is, are you based in the U.S.? Are you an individual? Do you agree to be signed up to the mailing list? That's really it. But staff handle, and At-Large staff handle that issue, and I'm happy to talk to you about that.

My other question that I wanted to bring up for the other ones, is that, also wanted to educate people, Kathleen talked about our two working groups, which is the Consolidated Policy Working Group, there's also the OFB, which is misnamed, thinking that it's finance and budget, but it's actually the other policy group that handles operational policies, that anything like questions about travel, questions about the multi-stakeholder model, anything operational issues that ICANN deal to, as opposed to the ICANN policy PDPs that are in another group.

So, some may call that soft, but it's like governance policies, operations policies, which is an easier way to come in on policy areas. There's also the ACES Outreach Committee, so there's a lot of different other committees, and happy to talk to people offline about that. Thanks.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you, Judith. Thank you. And I want to connect with you afterwards, because we're fellow Angelenos here. Are there any

other questions, whether here in the room or online? Yes, please go ahead, state your name for the recording, please.

TIM SMITH

Hi, my name's Tim Smith, I'm from Canada, and I'm with the business constituency, which is not represented here, so I just wanted to voice that. I think this has been a good session for explaining a lot of the work of ICANN, but it doesn't represent the full scope of all the constituencies. So, if you run a business and use the internet to operate your business, becoming a member of the business constituency would be a positive thing as well, and there are other constituencies as well. Thank you.

NAELA SARRAS

Thank you for that reminder, and we were certainly cognizant of that as we were making up the panel, but there's a lot of them, but thank you, this is really important.

Anything else online, anything in the room? Okay, what would you like to do, Joe? I don't think we have time to give the update that you wanted to give. We have five minutes. Yeah, this is an excellent conversation. So, just so you know, we did plan an update on what we've been doing in North America and our activities, but it makes for a certain, for a great update online, so we will make that available online.

I will take any other questions if there are any. This has certainly been a very great session. I'm really happy we had these

discussions. You're right, we haven't heard from the GNSO, any of the GNSO side or the business constituency as you bring up in this case here, but as you can see, there's many pathways coming into ICANN. We've heard from SSAC, ccNSO, ALAC, ASO Address Council, and certainly ICANN staff, and there are many more, so please keep that in mind. For those of you online, for those of you here in the room, there are many ways to get involved, and the relationships that you grow here in this community help you charter that path and find your ways to contribute.

So any words of wisdom, anything that you want to tell anybody else before we leave, because I will go ahead and close that session, and we'll do the update online as I said. Anything else? Let me just make sure there's no questions in the room.

We're good. Okay, no questions, just some comments. I want to thank the panelists. You've been great. Thank you so much. It's been a great process to prepare this review. Great. Thank you all, and please keep those questions coming. Please stop the recording.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]