
ICANN86 Seville | PF – ICANN Board Welcomes Fellowship and NextGen@ICANN Programs Participants
Wednesday, June 10, 2026 – 14:45 to 16:00 CEST

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Hello, everyone. Can we start the recording, please? Recording in progress. Thank you. Good afternoon, and I'm happy to see all of you here with us, all the NextGeners and fellows joining for the session of very interesting interaction and traditional meeting with our Board. But before we start, I would like to give the floor to Fernanda to read the script. Fernanda, please.

FERNANDA IUNES

Thanks, Siranush. Hello, and welcome to our session with the ICANN Board and Fellowship Program and NextGen Program participants. My name is Fernanda Iunes, and I am participation manager for this session. Please note that the session is being recorded and is governed by the ICANN Community Participant Code of Conduct, ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior, and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. Please observe the following guidelines to participate in this session. I've also just posted them in the chat for your reference. During the session, questions will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for this session will include English, French, and Spanish. If you'd like to speak during this session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a

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physical microphone to speak. Only questions posted in the Q&A pod will be read aloud during the session as time permits and when directed by the chair of the session. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English, and speak clearly at a moderate pace. And with that, I'll hand it back over to Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Fernanda. Just to let you know, due to personal circumstances, ICANN CEO will not be able to join for today's session. He really wanted to be here, but he's not here, actually. He left. But I would like to introduce, and many of you know, I'm sure, Board Chair Tripti Sinha. Tripti, if I may give the floor to you for a welcome.

TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you, Siranush. So on behalf of the Board, I'd like to welcome all the fellows and the new NextGeners. As you know, this is a very important program that ICANN offers. And it offers it for a couple of different reasons. One is capacity building, as we have to continue to strengthen the capacity of our community and all the different constituents that are engaged in the ICANN ecosystem, and also the next generation. And the next generation is very important because as you know, we are in a technical field that is constantly evolving and innovating and growing, and it's you, the next generation, that is most in touch with what's current in technology. So we would love for you to be here, to be engaged, to share your

thoughts. And I will say that the last couple of days, I have attended your presentations. I was not able to come to the room, but I did attend them remotely from my office, and I've been very impressed. Very impressed with the topics that you've been researching and studying, the approaches you've taken, very unique approaches. And to the fellows as well, just your engagement in your respective constituents, it's important. It's important because we need the perspectives of diverse people. We need the perspectives of the global community. And that is what strengthens ICANN, and that is what keeps us moving forward. So with that, again, I welcome you. Both these programs have been longstanding. I think the Fellows goes back to 2007, the NextGen to 2014. So these are mature programs, and we look forward to your contributions and you being members of this community. So a warm welcome from me on behalf of my colleagues on the Board, and I will now turn the floor back to Siranush.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Tripti. And many of you know León Sánchez. He's a role model for me personally as a fellow at my time, but he's also a role model for many of us. For those newcomers who are coming here, they definitely see how far they can go. He's representing us, and not only us, but in particular, fellows in the Board. So León, the floor is yours.

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Thank you very much, Siranush. It's an honor to be here, and I am very honored and humbled by your words. Thank you for the way you refer to me. And now, if you don't mind, I would like to switch to Spanish to take advantage of the interpretation services, and also to be able to speak in my mother tongue, and also honoring Spain, which we are in. So please take a moment to use your headsets.

Very good. So I would like to thank you all for being here. This is my favorite session, without question. This is the session that I enjoy the most. It's the session that takes me back to my origins, the session in which I have the chance to pick your brains and your youth, and to gain energy to go on providing service to our communities. I would like to thank you for your work as fellows. I would like to thank you for your commitment towards the program, to the diversity you contribute with, and that you bring to our communities by being part of this program. And I hope that your stay and that the use you make of the program is very fruitful, both for you and for our community. As fellows, we not only have the privilege of being accompanied by the experts and guided by the experts that make coordination policies of unique identifiers, and not only domain names, but also numbers, can talk to us directly. We can discuss with them directly. We can ask them questions. Not only that, we also are lucky enough that when we introduce ourselves as part of this group, as fellows, doors open up to us. We are welcomed, and we are listened to, and there's always a will to guide us and to provide us this space of dialogue and

contribution. That is precisely where I believe you have this big chance to develop yourselves and also to go back to your communities and to give them back what you're receiving as fellows. This is a two-way commitment. We undertake this commitment to learn, but also to work and to give back to our communities and to disseminate this message, everything that we've learned, and to encourage others to join this ecosystem. So I think that this is the added value that we can provide as fellows to these communities. The areas in which we can contribute are diverse, as diverse as our community is. And I encourage you to try to find the space where you feel more comfortable within ICANN. Sometimes it will be the opposite of what you would think would be natural because of your professional or academic interest. Let me give you an example. In my case, I am a lawyer. I'm an intellectual property attorney. And even though at the beginning of my professional path, I joined the IPC, which is the house where the proprietors of IP are, I always had and still have a passion for Internet users' rights. And by becoming involved with the At-Large community, I discovered that my place within this community was there and not within my professional practice area. I think that it's where I worked the least within ICANN, I mean my professional domain area. Of course, I'm interested in that. I follow up all debates and discussions, but I think that my most meaningful contributions were related to the Internet end users and to making our organization evolve and building up our community. I've had the chance to participate, before becoming a member, being a co-leader in a working group that, in my opinion, was very important

10 years ago already. The cross-disciplinary working group for accountability in the IANA transition. This gave me the opportunity of providing a good, solid base to the foundation of the organization, because we drafted, once again, the bylaws. We introduced new mechanisms to guarantee accountability and new mechanisms to make sure that ICANN and the community were carrying out their mission according to the values and foundations and the ICANN mission. And for me, it's been one of the greatest and most satisfactory experiences and opportunities I've had to make contributions to our community. After that, I was entrusted by my community, by At-Large, and I was appointed to take seat number 15. It's been nine years this year. And this year, I will give the chance to someone else to be the successor on the Board. Justine Chew will be my successor, and I'm sure she will make a great contribution as well. What I mean is that you have plenty of opportunities to develop within ICANN. What you need to do is to find that subject that is a passion for you and that helps you to contribute to the ICANN mission. If we have the opportunity to access leadership positions, remember that these positions are to provide service to the community and are not to be for our own benefit. If we understand that these leadership positions are for the service of the community, we will give back to the community part of what we receive, and also we will be living according to the values and mission that we defend within ICANN. Thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, León. Thank you very much. Always inspirational. And this session is intended to be very interactive. We don't have any presentations, per se, but we have also almost the entire Board here, and I thank all of you for being here with us. I'm not going to introduce everyone, but we will open the floor for the questions, and from the Board, whoever is ready to respond, you can just introduce yourself and respond. And if you want to ask questions, please raise your hand. I will be looking to the auditorium, and if time allows, I hope that we will cover as many questions as possible. So, who is the first? Let's go. Maciej, go ahead.

MACIEJ PIASECKI

Okay. It's always me. Maciej Piasecki, second-time fellow. I represent EURALO, and pretty soon I will be representing ALAC. So thank you very much for this opportunity, this trust that I got thanks to fellowship. This wouldn't be possible without the fellowship. And I wish to return what I got, the caring and expert help and advice from Siranush, my mentor Glenn, and countless others in the community. But I've got limited time, limited energy. I want to commit those to where it matters, especially for the end users, whether they are human rights activists, small businessmen, people who just like to post pictures of their children on the Internet, whatever it is. So what do you say will make ICANN relevant in five to 10 years, where there are even more walled gardens of corporate apps, services based on APIs, when IPv6 will make it easier to get a static IP address instead of a domain name?

Or to put it another way, what doesn't work with ICANN yet, and how can we help to fix it with this group here?

JAMES GALVIN

So, thank you. I am James Galvin. I am the SSAC Liaison to the ICANN Board, SSAC, Security and Stability Advisory Committee. One quick answer to your question, the easy part is, how can you contribute? By being here, bringing your ideas and your energy, and guiding us in a path forward. And I mean that quite sincerely. One of the things that we do worry about is the future is uncertain. It can look daunting. I'm sure that it does to you. It does to us, too. But we're looking for fresh news and fresh ideas. On the security and stability side, we recognize that technology changes, it advances. The risks change. The needs of how to protect ourselves and to do all of the things that you talked about change over time. I know that there are many among you who have done cybersecurity and security-related presentations and topics. I've had the absolute privilege to speak with a few of you, not all of you, who have brought those things forward. But I wanted to also mention, on SSAC, you don't have to be a technologist or just a cybersecurity person to join SSAC. We have, among our membership, lawyers, human rights participants, law enforcement participants. All voices bring a perspective that is important to security. And I'd like you to be a part of that future. We're going to have new needs as we have new threats, new vulnerabilities, and new technologies that come forward. And we really do need for you to bring your energy and your ideas, and let's talk about it. And I'll

make my last pitch for the SSAC/RSSAC Open Mic tomorrow at 14:45. Please come to our open mic room and say hello and meet SSAC and RSSAC members, and feel free to come up and talk to me, and I'll be happy to introduce you to members. You can make some contacts and get to know people there. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, James. And just for everyone to know, two years ago, we started the pilot program with SSAC, Security and Stability, and during this less than two years, five new members of SSAC are fellows. So they are opening the doors for everyone who has the skills and who would like to join. So please use this opportunity. Thank you, James. Yes. Yes, please.

GREG DIBIASE

Thanks. One part of your question I think is really important is how does ICANN meet the challenges of five to 10 years as the Internet changes shape? One thing I think about a lot is making sure that the policy development process remains flexible and is meeting the challenges as they arise. So that means a couple of things: being willing to have the process itself evolve, but then also making sure that the participants are working towards compromise. Because what can stall the policymaking process is when people retreat to their specific positions and don't look to collaborate. So, one of the things I think about, and I come from the GNSO policy side, from the registrars and registries on the ICANN Board, when you're looking at this policy space, it's bringing your ideas forward, but

also listening to others and forming consensus so that policy can adapt to the changing landscape.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Greg. Yes.

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Just to round up what my colleagues have said, I think that the challenge into the future is also to keep our model going. To defend the multi-stakeholder model, to advocate for a single open Internet, to create awareness that the Internet has become what it is because it's open, because it is a single Internet, because it remains open. And for those who want to close it, to wall-garden it, to paywall it, whatever, we need to let them know that that's not the way it should be. And also, I think another challenge is to strengthen our multi-stakeholder model by also being self-critical of the model and trying to evolve it in a way that grows more efficient and more welcoming to everyone.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Yes, I see. Sam, please go ahead.

SAMWEL KINUTHIA KARIUKI

Thank you. My name is Samwel Kariuki, and I'm an ICANN fellow. My question is, how do you deal with challenges now that you lead people from different backgrounds? Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Can you repeat, please?

SAMWEL KINUTHIA KARIUKI

My question is, how do you deal with challenges, or how do you overcome challenges now that you deal with leading people from different backgrounds?

TRIPTI SINHA

All right. I'll try to attempt answering your question. So challenges exist in every sphere of life, and when we're having technical discussions, we have challenges there. When we have discussions on policy, we have challenges there. And the challenges oftentimes stem from the fact the problem space might be very difficult to solve. That could present a challenge. Or when you're just articulating policy, you have participants who have strong opinions and don't budge from their opinion. So I've taken two extremes, technical solutions and policy. When it comes to policy, the purpose of policy is you've got some new service that has been released, and you want to ensure that there's a fair distribution of the service, and it operates within certain guardrails. And that's where the challenges occur with people who have entrenched opinions. So I can only speak from my own experience, but you listen to everyone, you listen to everyone's point of view, and you seek to arrive at what I call, and I borrow this term from those who lay fiber in the ground, "meet me points." You have exchange

points when you build out networks, and you have a point where everyone meets, and it's the most optimized meeting point. So it's no different for policy. You have to just be a very good moderator, if you're the chair of the session, to ensure that you arrive at those meet-me points, and it's a win-win-win solution. But it's never going to be a full win for everyone. Everyone has to give a little before we can all arrive at a solution. And with technology, it's the same thing. You just have to peel the onion and try to see what you're trying to get at and see how you can address the solution. But really, challenges can be overcome with, one, listening carefully; with collaborative solutions; and just being respectful of the process. I hope that answers your question.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Yes, please.

DAVID LAWRENCE

Hi. David Lawrence, IETF Liaison to the Board. I wanted to note two additional aspects of ICANN that can help out here. One is our leadership program actually helps train people in how to mediate discussions, deal with difficult situations, and try to reach these consensus opinions. It's a very informative program that includes interactive training sessions that can really help people in leadership positions running PDPs or working groups or so on in order to come to conclusions. And then the other is, I feel, I should mention our ombuds. Sometimes we do enter into intractable situations with other community members, and our

ombudsperson is here to try to help resolve those issues as well, coming from a professional background of how to deal with people from many different cultures and sometimes things that are inadvertently problems that really aren't when you get down to it.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, David. Raúl, please.

RAÚL ECHEBERRÍA

Thank you very much. Dave already mentioned some of the points that... Oh, sorry. I'm Raúl Echeberría, member of the Board. Dave already mentioned some of the points that I was going to mention, but besides that, I think that dealing with diversity is not a problem for us, it's one of our assets. It's one of the sources of legitimacy of this community. For other kinds of organizations or companies, maybe having big diversity could be complicated or expensive or could be considered a problem. For us, it's all the opposite. So I think that we have to welcome the complexity and the challenges that come with the complexity of the diversity, not only geographic diversity or age diversity, but diversity in terms of several different dimensions. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Omran, please, go ahead.

OMRAN ADAM

Yes, thank you. My name is Omran, and I am a NextGen. This is my first time here, and everything is new, and there are a lot of things to learn as well. My background is medical, but I'm also a data scientist and now doing my master's in AI at Kristiania University in Oslo. When we're talking about AI, and we see how things actually accelerate, what used to, like 10 years ago, for example, there are a lot of things that we achieved in 10 years, now we achieve them in one year, for example, right? And when we see the policy adoption process in ICANN, it takes up to three years. How can we be able to manage to follow up the advancements and also the progress in the technology sector, and also the challenges that we're facing, especially with the presence of AI now, together with the policy adoption process of three years, for example, plus or minus? Because things change right now very rapidly. How can we be able to adapt to that? And the second question is, what is your advice for NextGeners? Because now we're speaking from the bottom to the top, and there is a huge gap between us. What is your advice for the NextGeners? Thank you very much.

TRIPTI SINHA

So I'll try to, lots of my colleagues would like to address your question, so I'll take your first one and then the second. AI, I couldn't agree with you more, is quite the game changer. It's a disruptor, and what makes it so fascinating is not only have we been able to arrive at models that work and mimic the human brain, but they're much faster, processing speed. The speed is amazing, and they operate in parallel. Humans cannot think in

parallel. And furthermore, they don't sleep, so they're continuously operating. So yes, it poses a huge challenge for us as humans. In terms of how that applies to the policy development process, I think we can take advantage of some of the AI tools to help put together drafting templates of policies and also do some critical analysis on discussions that occur. So we could actually use AI as a tool to advance policy development. However, in the end, the ratification, the development of policy is in the hands of the people. We human beings have to ratify it. So we just have to look in earnest to see how we can actually apply the technology. Did you have a follow-up question?

OMRAN ADAM

Yes, it's just a follow-up question, very quick. Now we're having a huge discussion with the cybersecurity sector as well, in AI and cybersecurity, and instead of us dealing with challenges that we face now, what about us thinking about what challenges can actually arise in the near future? And now when we see quantum computers together with AI, I think it's better for us to start thinking about that now instead of it happening, and then we try to find solutions. Just to add that as well.

TRIPTI SINHA

Yeah, absolutely. We have to do it now. We shouldn't wait for quantum computing and quantum technologies to arrive. I couldn't agree with you more, and both spaces that you're talking about are in my professional field. And the second question that

you have is, what can you do, the next generation looking up at us old fogeys here? Well, my advice to you is to do what I did when I was younger, which is keep learning. Keep learning, don't give up. And I tell you now, it's not like 100 years ago where you learn from a textbook and you were done learning. It's a continuous learning process for the rest of your life. It does not end. Don't be afraid of challenges. Put yourself forward. Always say yes. I embraced whatever came my way. So just stay in touch because technology is moving at an amazing pace, and I know my colleagues would like to speak. David, and I saw Jim. So David?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

I will defer to Nyaki first.

CATHERINE ADEYA

I think you asked me this question yesterday again, and a number of you asked me how it is to be up there in the Board, and I told you I didn't just get here. It's a journey, and you are on the right track. I even said you're very lucky. You've got so much that you can grow. There's so much you can network. There's a lot you can learn, whether it's ICANN or elsewhere, but the opportunities are there, and we're not going to be here forever. So you can walk through it, and some of you are telling me you're so scared. Isn't it scary? And I told you even I was scared at that age, but even I was scared when I first came to the Board. But there are opportunities to learn, and you'll get there.

DAVID LAWRENCE

So one of the things that I think is really important to say, in addition to Tripti's point about just keep learning, as León had mentioned, doors open because of your participation in NextGen or Fellows, but it's still up to you to step through them. And so what you have to do is keep participating. Not just keep learning, but be actively involved in the community and contributing, because what the community really values is the contributions, right? You can show up and sit and listen, and maybe you're learning, but it doesn't really move you unless you are also contributing, and there's plenty of opportunities to contribute, whether it be on an SSAC work party or an RSSAC work party, or contributing to a PDP. This is what the community really values. I admire that you're a doctor. You are working on your AI master's, right? But when it comes down to it, there are people all throughout this community, some of whom don't have any advanced degrees, some of whom are doctors and have been involved in the industry for years. What really makes a difference is your contribution. And so that means sometimes, Tripti will say, I've said some stupid things to the Board, right? Don't be afraid of saying, "I don't understand why this is the way it is." And maybe the answer that comes back is, well, actually, that could change. Maybe the answer comes back, well, this is the way it is, and you learn that way. Keep contributing. Keep showing up. That's what's going to make the difference about being involved in the community.

JAMES GALVIN

Thank you. Jim Galvin again, for the record. One of the things that you asked about was how do we speed up the process of overcoming the fact that technology advances more quickly than we can do our thing? The observation that I make there is PDP processes, just like laws and regulations, they are by definition slow. What we get to think about is what slow really means, and you have an opportunity to help speed that up and make that something different. The reason why they're slow is because of the question that was asked earlier about what are the challenges that we face given that we have multiple cultures, multiple languages, multiple perspectives here. That's why it's slow. It takes time for everyone to have a voice and to speak and to find the consensus in that. But you're here. That's the opportunity. Which brings me to my second point about you made reference to here you are, and you spoke about yourselves being the bottom talking to the top. It sounds like a cliché, and we've said it a few times in a few different ways. Excuse me. But you should never think of yourself as being at the bottom talking to the top. When you're involved in the process, and you're here, we are all equals, and we all have a voice. I know, as others have said, it can be daunting. It's scary to be the first person to speak. It's scary to have something to say when you're afraid of whether or not it's a good thing or not. But that's the learning experience. That's part of what you have to do as wanting to contribute and to be an equal. You have to be willing to step up and say things and learn from it and be seen as someone who has

a valid opinion, okay? You have to earn that respect by being a part of the process and being here and contributing and offering your opinion. And as others have said here, it's important that you keep coming to the table, you keep contributing, and be confident. Be interested. And those of us who are here at this end and up here at the table, we want you here. We welcome you. There are others in the community who do. And for those who might think that they don't want you, you just have to move around them and move on to someone who does want to listen to you because your voice is valid, and we do want to hear it. So thank you.

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Just to add to what my colleagues have said, and as a piece of advice to not only NextGeners but also to fellows, I think it's important to understand that there are no dumb or silly questions. There are dumb people that don't ask questions, right? So you have to be smart enough to write the questions, brave enough to defend your stance and your positions if you think they are worth it, but also humble enough to recognize when you might be mistaken, and open enough to listen to others and to try to build those bridges that help us build consensus. Because that's what this community is about, building consensus to work together.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, León. We have already a big queue who wants to ask questions, so please make your question brief, short, and the

responses also, if possible, so we are able to cover as many questions as possible. Ahmed, you and then Houda.

AHMED FARAG

Thank you so much. This is Ahmed Farag for the record. I'm the former chair of the North African IGF, and I think as a member of the ICANN community and the Internet Governance Forum community, we were happy about the one million US dollar contribution announced yesterday, I think, to enhance the multi-stakeholder model. My question here is how can we get the most benefit of this contribution? How can we enhance the multi-stakeholder model, especially in the underrepresented and developing countries and regions? Thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA

So one of the modalities that ICANN is using is the Fellows Program. We're building capacity in underserved regions for exactly that reason, which is, how do we bring those voices to the table? So my advice to you is to, and I'm assuming you're a fellow, correct? Stay engaged and then help bring others into the fold so that their voices can be heard. And multi-stakeholder means exactly that, which is it's multiple voices from different parts of the world and also constituents, which is you might be from the technical community of the world, or a policymaking community of the world, or you're running technical services and so forth. So please ensure that you take a personal responsibility. If you care about the mission, then you delve right into it and let us hear your voices

here. And then ICANN as an organization, as I said, has put these different modalities in place to seek the input. I hope that answers your question. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Houda, please.

HOUDA CHIHI

Okay. Thank you so much, Siranush. So hello, everyone. Thank you so much for this opportunity. My name is Houda Chihi. I'm ICANN 86 fellow. My question is, following the great increase of technology joined with the requirement of new policies, is it possible to think about or propose new working groups at ICANN?

GREG DIBIASE

Yeah. I think that's the whole point of why we're here, to always think about new working groups. So I guess maybe there's two questions. There's working groups within the policy development context, or new constituencies. I guess those are two different questions.

HOUDA CHIHI

I will be more specific. For example, there are two initiatives. They are thinking about the AI community building their own agent DNS. But here, we need the role of ICANN to state new policies because now we need to think about new requirements. We think about

new attacks related to the use of AI. So here, we need to show new policies, and it's about new statements of new rules.

GREG DIBIASE

So yeah, I think there's a number of avenues to suggest new policy streams, new policy tracks, even looking more globally as part of the reviews that ICANN undertakes. They're even going to review the structure of ICANN. Is that being responsive? But yeah, there is a process by which people can raise concerns, communities can raise concerns, and say, "This is an issue for which new policy should be developed." And it's bottom-up, and it can come from anywhere within the ICANN structure. And ideally, that comes to a working group that develops policy and becomes a new part of ICANN policy that governs our ecosystem. Did that answer your question?

DAVID LAWRENCE

One quick note that I'd like to add on that is that it also, though, does have to be in ICANN's remit, right? Like you mentioned AI, for example. And AI governance is a very hot topic and very relevant to what is going to go on in the Internet governance space. However, there might be some small piece of it that fits within ICANN's remit to the extent that it relates to identifiers on the Internet somehow, for example. But general issues of AI governance would be scope creep for ICANN to start to get involved in. So part of it is finding the right forum, perhaps the IGF, or there might be some other place

that is better suited to some types of policy discussions than ICANN would be.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Greg and David. Tinuade, please go ahead.

TINUADE OGUNTUYI

Okay. Thank you, everyone. Tinuade Oguntuyi, ICANN 86 fellow from Nigeria. Thank you for the opportunity, and I want to first sympathize with the Board for the loss of one of your colleagues and, of course, a leader in the Internet space. I think Omran has seen into my books, and what I wanted to ask was actually about AI readiness and post-quantum computing. At ICANN 84, I asked the CTO of ICANN during one of the meetings like this about ICANN's readiness for this, and I was really happy partly, but I feel it was still reactive, if you ask me. When we had the session on Monday and this whole room was full online, we had over 100 people joining for that session, the coming and the current impact of AI on DNS abuse. I just want to know from the Board, do we even have any framework for this so that we don't get to react? That's why I said, I think Omran had seen into my books. So that we are able to see this ahead and work towards it, not reacting. That's just what I wanted to say. Thank you so much.

TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you for the question. We are indeed quite focused on, as I said earlier, these disruptive technologies that are pretty much

here now and pushing us in various and sundry directions. The Board is already talking about AI. I know our CEO, who was not able to join us today because of personal reasons, inside the organization, has the CTO's office looking at how AI is impacting not just the work of the community, but also internally from an organizational perspective. How could it be embraced to bring about efficiencies and so forth? And coming to post-quantum, basically quantum technologies, I'm glad you brought it up. Quantum technologies are probably a few years away. However, it is time for us to start looking at PQC, post-quantum cryptography, because once quantum computers are here, Shor's algorithm will be able to break RSA encryption. So I am aware that the CTO, John Crain's office, is looking at that as well. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Raúl?

RAÚL ECHEBERRÍA

Just very little to add to what Tripti already said. But we are exactly aligned with what you said over there, trying not to be reactive, but trying to anticipate this and prepare not only ourselves as a Board, but also the organization. And we are looking at different impacts that are possible, as Tripti said. But we also have to keep in mind that it's not just the responsibility of ICANN. This is a myriad of organizations and forums that are dealing with the same issues, the IETF and others. We are working on being coordinated, learning what others are doing, and trying to provide also our concerns and

reach each other. So I think that we are exactly at the point that you asked, to not be reactive and to try to anticipate the impacts of the new technologies. That, of course, is a challenge for us, but not just for us. The evolution of new technologies at this moment is the big challenge for every organization and company in the world.

TRIPTI SINHA

And just to add one more comment here, if you look at the ICANN schedule, you will see there were many sessions dedicated to DNS abuse and AI and its impact. So it's impacting everybody, right? In every form, including our industry, the DNS ecosystem. So it's on the radar of the SSAC, of the RSSAC, and all these different constituencies. The PDP development processes are employing tools to see how they can expedite their process. So yes, we're responding to the disruptor.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you very much. The next. David?

DAVID LAWRENCE

I just wanted to add one comment because I realized, I thought this would be a redundant comment until Raúl mentioned it, actually. Some of you may not fully be aware of the entire technology ecosystem around the Internet. And so the Internet Engineering Task Force is the technology developer on which ICANN and other Internet organizations build their protocols for interacting with each other. So, ICANN itself would not be involved in developing

post-quantum cryptography. It does send members of its technical staff to participate in the IETF, but the emergent standards on how to deal with this on the Internet would actually emerge from the IETF, and ICANN would then take that under advisement into how to integrate it into its operations and processes. So, ICANN plays an extremely important role here, but it's not developing most of the technology on which the Internet runs. It's just helping manage it as it emerges.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. The next question from Filimoni. Please go ahead.

FILIMONI PELENATO

Greetings, everyone. Greetings to the Board, and thank you, Siranush, for the opportunity. This is Filimoni Pelenato, for the record, from Samoa. And I'm very honored to be here on my first Policy Forum. I'm a returning fellow. I've been in public forums, but this one's been a very interesting one for me. I've been very overwhelmed with a lot of PDP processes happening, and I've been in some of the sessions for working groups, and I commend all working groups for the work that's been done, but it's been very overwhelming. So I'd like to take the opportunity to ask a PDP question to the Board. Given the significant volume of policy work already produced, how does the Board balance investing in new policy development versus evaluating existing policies? And my follow-up question is, how does the Board currently assess

whether adopted policies are achieving their intended outcomes?

Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Yes, Greg, please.

GREG DIBIASE

Great questions. So I think there's two answers. After a policy is created, it is set for review after a certain cadence, and the GNSO will prioritize that review. So some policies are generally viewed as effective. For example, the UDRP was one of the first policies. It's been slated to be reviewed for a little while. That's been pushed, I think, a little bit compared to other ones because there's general acknowledgement it's functioning well. But every policy that is created is reviewed subsequently. So just this last Board meeting, the ICANN Board adopted an updated policy on the transfer policy, the policy by which domains transfer from one registrar to another. That was an original, a very early policy. In the last couple of years, the community came together to review that, make sure that the security, for example, was up to current standards, and they updated security involved in transferring domains between two registrars. So there is that mechanism built into it. I think the other part of your question that is a really interesting challenge that the Board and the community have is balancing the need for new policy development with the bandwidth of volunteers. There is a set amount of volunteers and ICANN staff that can have streams of policy development running at the same time. So it's a little bit of a

delicate balance involving listening to the community to, A, identify the problems that need to be addressed through policy. But on the other side, getting an understanding, are we putting too much on the community? In certain circumstances, we've heard community members pushing back saying, "We're at our capacity." So, no set answer. I think it's really about listening and adapting based on the community feedback.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Greg. Ankita.

ANKITA RATHI

Hello, good afternoon, everyone. Ankita Rathi for the record. I'm ICANN 86 fellow. I've been closely following the RDRS and SSAD supplemental recommendations discussions. And for background, RDRS was developed with the input from GNSO on systems design and implemented at the direction of the ICANN Board to help inform policy decisions related to a system for standardized access and disclosure to non-public gTLD registration data. My question is, from the Board's perspective, what has been the most significant insight from the pilot so far, and how might that shape the future discussions on timely access to registration data to mitigate DNS abuse? Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Greg? Yes.

GREG DIBIASE

So interesting, and what is most important? I think I'll share, this might be my opinion, others on the Board may vary, but when we first looked at the original SSAD recommendations, they had a very high cost, and we needed to measure, is there enough utility to warrant this cost? And is there a way we can set up the system to reduce costs? And so I think we learned there is still utility with a slightly different model. The first model that was envisioned was every user that requested data would go through this accreditation process, which is very expensive. And I think we found that for some user groups, that's necessary, but maybe not for all, and that user groups can develop in the future. So I think we were able to determine that there is utility in having this centralized system. I think requesters appreciate that there could be a central place to request data as opposed to trying to find where to request it at each individual registrar, and that we can be flexible and make modifications where we can lower the price of the system, the cost to operate, and still preserve some of the utility of making sure requests for data are routed to the right place.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Songo, I know you have your hand raised. Please go ahead.

SONGO NORE

Yeah. Thank you. My name is Songo. I'm from the Pacific Islands. I don't know whether my question will be in context with the discussions here, but I felt it strongly that I should raise this concern. I'm one of those ICANN 86 fellows. I've faced so many obstacles coming into the Schengen Area, and I believe that other colleagues who have not made it here have faced the same obstacles. But what I'm trying to ask here is, will there be some leniency or some consideration given to those fellows who did not get their visas to come to attend the ICANN 86 conference? Because, for my case here, I should not have come here, but because I got another call from Estonia, I was able to come here because they processed my visa, an Estonian Schengen visa. So please, I'm just making an appeal, if the Board can give consideration to those ICANN 86 fellows that have not made it to this ICANN 86 forum. Can they consider them for the next ICANN fellowship program? Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Songo, and I'm really happy that you made it, that you are here. I see Miriam. Miriam.

MIRIAM SAPIRO

Hi. I hope you can hear me. Miriam Sapiro, member of the ICANN Board. And I'm really glad you raised this today, because we are all so excited by the fellows in the NextGen program. But access is critical. You can't apply, we can't select you, and make it a meaningful experience if you can't join us in person, as we hope.

So, we have heard, Catherine and I in particular have been very focused on this issue lately. We have heard of people unable to be here, in addition to the examples that you cited. So if you can provide us, or the ICANN staff, with details, we will collect this information. We actually set up an informal visa task force on the Board about a year ago when we first heard of problems again, and it may be time to resuscitate that effort. And again, try to have a situation where we cannot say it's never going to happen, it's up to the host government in the end, but at least we can do everything as part of our community to minimize the chance of this happening if we're proactive about it. So thank you for raising it, and Catherine may have more to add. Thank you.

CATHERINE ADEYA

I think you've spoken. This issue came up as well in the Africa space this morning, and a number of you raised the issue. I can see you nodding, saying that quite a few of you didn't get your visas, and you would not like to be penalized, and I'm glad you've raised it as well. And I think the reassurance that I give is the Board is also aware about the situation. And we are going to see what we can do about it. I think that's the best commitment I can make. I don't want to go into finer details, but when I say the Board is aware, we are going to address it. Thank you.

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Thank you for raising this, and I can only echo what my colleagues have said. But I would also invite us to think that if you were able to

get your visa through the intervention of Estonia, as you said, and you didn't get it through the intervention of ICANN, then there is something that's left there for us to do. We can do better. Right? If you were able to get it through one channel, you should be able to get it through our channel. And I would be interested to learn what you did that we can do better.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Yeah, indeed, for this round, we had five fellows who didn't get their visas, and four of them were from Africa. Yes. So, I'm happy to provide additional information to the Board, definitely. Okay. Let's move forward. I have Mariana here, and I'll come back to you.

MARIANA PALMA VIDOTTI DE
ANDRADE

Hello. I'm Mariana. I'm from Brazil. I'm a fellow. Sorry. My question is for León or anyone on the Board. We have heard a lot during the ICANN meeting about the risks of AI being used by malicious actors to facilitate DNS abuse. I would like to ask, how does the Board view the use of AI as a tool to protect intellectual property rights in the DNS ecosystem?

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Thank you very much for your question. I will try to answer in the best of my capacity and knowledge because I'm not a technical guy. But then maybe any of my colleagues might want to chime in as well. And I am confident that I can share this, speaking as a Board

member, and also, I think that this is the sentiment in the Board, that AI is a very powerful tool, and as any other tool, it can be used for good or for bad. Right? It depends on many things or on people whether to use it for good or for bad. And in terms of protecting IP, I think, again, it's a good tool to try to enhance the way that registrations may come in, but I can't see a scenario in which it would ultimately substitute the intervention of the registrars and the registries. We already have some mechanisms that help protect intellectual property in the domain name space. And if at all, what I have learned is that there are always false positives in protecting IP. So if we leave that task to artificial intelligence, at least at this stage, we might be facing a problem bigger than what we are solving. So again, I think it's a powerful tool. Depends on which side you stand to use it, for good or bad. But we should definitely be keeping an eye on that. And I don't know, Jim, do you want to say something about it?

JAMES GALVIN

So, thank you for the question. To add to what León was saying, there are really two parts to this, and I want to frame it slightly differently than what he said, but equally. I think that on the question of, as a tool being used for bad, it's important to keep in mind that DNS abuse and what it means has a definition in this community at this time. Right? And the notion of IP rights and that kind of thing are not part of that definition in terms of what is explicitly within our remit at this time. So as a tool that might exploit those kinds of things, well, that's what bad guys do. They

find a way in, and they do things. That said, there are certainly parties that do pay attention to the opportunity to deal with that abuse directly. Even though ICANN may not compel them to, they take it upon themselves to do things. And there are certainly players and actors within this community who do take that role. The other thing is, in terms of using AI for positive reasons, we're all exploring that. We're all trying to figure out what that is. I really just wanted to put out there to add to the discussion that the Board is elevating its own knowledge and opportunity. Org is doing its part, as has been said before, with OCTO having their range, and SSAC has a work party. They were part sponsor of the plenary session that was held this week about AI and abuse. But we have a work party looking specifically at AI and abuse and the role that it could and could not play in all of that. So, look for additional advice to add to the discussion, and we'll figure it out as we go. Hopefully, you'll be there to help us. Thank you.

GREG DIBIASE

I'd add one thing in the intellectual property space, that as a development, the next round is opening up for new gTLDs. We expect that brands will be applying for .brand TLDs, and there could be some interesting new applications there. .brand TLDs are unique in that the IP rights holder has more control over how names in those TLDs work, and arguably there's less surface area for attack in certain degrees. So if you're interested in that subject, that could be another space to watch as the next round proceeds.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you. Jim, go ahead.

JIA WEI CHUI

Hello, everybody. I'm Jia Wei Chui from Taiwan, and I'm a TWNIC fellow, also honorably Siranush-adopted fellow for ICANN. And this is my second time to participate in an ICANN meeting. My first time was at ICANN 85 in Mumbai, and it has also brought me into the world of domain names and all kinds of Internet governance issues. And I have a question, and I want to ask the Board members, is that during these kinds of policy discussions, I think one very critical part is how to decide whether to stick to your own decision or your own value or to compromise, because it is like a multi-stakeholder group. Everybody has their own stances. However, if you don't compromise, you cannot move on. But if you compromise, you just may be undermining the stances you have. So I want to see how Board members see these issues and how it can direct me to participate in the further discussions on policy.

GREG DIBIASE

So it's a great question and a central dynamic of ICANN, right? How do you get to compromise? Maybe my short answer is hard work. You have to keep coming at the problem from different angles, right? Maybe at first it seems like these are two diametrically opposed positions, but as people flesh out possible compromise language, well, what if we phrase it like this? What if there's a new

mechanism that could address that concern? And so you have to work towards compromise is how I'd frame it, as opposed to giving up the principle you have, and think of other ways of meeting your objective that could align with the other person's objective.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Raúl, please.

RAÚL ECHEBERRÍA

Yes. Thank you. Just a brief comment that this is a very good comment from our colleague from Taiwan. This is exactly what is one of the pillars of the multi-stakeholder model that we have built and developed for almost 30 years. And this is one of the biggest differences with regard to the traditional governance models. Traditional governance models, what we see all around the world in Congress, in the governments of countries, are based on building majorities. And all the Internet governance system is based on developing consensus, maximizing the opportunities of consensus. So this spirit of compromise, which really needs the willingness of all the participants, is crucial. So I'm really glad that you appreciated that when you got in touch with this model. And it's probably one of the main lessons that we expect people who are newcomers to take away from this experience. Thank you.

LEÓN SÁNCHEZ

Thank you for your question, which is a great one. And I think we have a very good compass in our bylaws, which are our principles

and our core values. So to me, it all boils down to going to that fundamental layer. You have to separate your interests, whether commercial or personal, from your values, from your core values, from your principles, from your fundamentals. If you are able to find a formula in which your interests might be compromised in a way that you don't compromise those fundamentals, those core values, those principles, then I think that is the sweet spot for you to know whether you can find that compromise with your counterparty or if you should stand strong on your stance.

TRIPTI SINHA

Miriam, please.

MIRIAM SAPIRO

Thank you. It's a great question as well. I sometimes teach a class on the art of negotiations, and what I would offer is what we talk about there. First of all, listen. Listen really carefully. There's a reason why we have one mouth but two ears. Number two, be creative. In listening, you will learn a lot about what someone's core interest or objective might really be. It might not be what they're telling you or even what they think it is at first, but you may be able to discern other underlying issues that might be addressed. Which leads me to my third and final suggestion, which is, having listened and thought creatively, try to come up with a win-win scenario. It's not impossible. Often there's a solution. It may not be what people walked in wanting or thought they wanted, but it's something that can move the issue forward, make people

reasonably happy and confident that it's a step in the right direction, even if it's not everything that you or others may have first thought of. So I hope that's helpful, and we'll look forward to hearing how that goes. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Ashish? Yes, please go ahead.

ASHISH AGARWAL

Yeah. Good afternoon to the house. Myself, Ashish Agarwal from the technical user community in India. This question is in continuation with the AI threat, which was raised by one of the fellows. So, there is a company called Anthropic, most of you might know. They seem to have total control of the vulnerability database of even the BIND server and all. So while we take assurance from the fact that we have got an Anycast setup for the root servers, there are so many instances. A real threat might not be as far as we imagine because they have been working on it for the past 20 years, and the attack could be coming much sooner than we think. So, is the Board going to do something towards that?

TRIPTI SINHA

I can take it. So, if I understand your question, you're saying that in spite of the root service system being Anycasted, with AI now here, are we able to keep up with potential new threats? Am I right? Did I understand?

ASHISH AGARWAL

That's right. This company has got a real database of the vulnerabilities, and I am from a government sector, and we face a real threat from them, and we are working hard on it. So this could be, means time might be running out if we think of an all-around distributed attack on the DNS servers. It may not be all of them, but most of them at a single go.

TRIPTI SINHA

Yeah. So today, we have probably one of the most resilient systems that exists today that scales and does well is the DNS root system. It is well over 1,000 instances, but I understand what you're saying is that now with these new modalities, how do we counteract them? So I don't know if you're aware of the work that's going on, which is called Hyperlocal Root, which is bringing the root down to the very endpoint. And I really honestly believe this is time for us to take that seriously, and there's work that's been going on in the IETF. One of my Board colleagues is an author on that paper as well, and there are lots of tests and experiments that have been conducted in that space. But I think one way to counteract that is to ensure that resolution can occur just right at your endpoint, and that's one way to counteract the attacks. But certainly, there's work in this area.

ASHISH AGARWAL

Okay. Thank you.

TRIPTI SINHA Thank you. Hugo?

DAVID LAWRENCE Can I add just a quick note on that?

TRIPTI SINHA Oh, yes, David.

DAVID LAWRENCE Which is also, yes, Anthropic had a pretty big headline number about all the thousands of vulnerabilities that it found and reported. I happen to know the Internet Software Consortium staff who were working on BIND, and they've been vetting through most of them. And while a few of them turned out to be actual issues that they needed to address, there also are a large number of vulnerabilities reported that turn out to not be meaningful vulnerabilities. So there is an important distinction to make between what the headlines say and what's actually happening under the hood. And as Tripti has pointed out, as a former root server operator, the system as a whole is very resilient, even to the extent that you might be able to compromise individual instances. The root zone itself is DNSSEC secure, so validating resolvers would still notice any tampering with data. The system as a whole is still pretty stable.

HUGO RAMIREZ

Hello? Yep. Hi, my name is Hugo. I'm a NextGen participant. So first of all, I would like to thank the Board for the opportunity of being part of this program. Not just for myself, but for all of my colleagues. Up to this point, we have all presented, given our talks, and do we feel our voices are being heard? And this also serves you and the community as well. So first of all, thank you. Second, do keep the NextGen program, because it brings fresh ideas, and part of the next steps we would like to take is to keep in touch in the ICANN community and to see this work being implemented in the next months, years. So thank you very much.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Thank you, Hugo. And I think we might take the last question, but I want to comment on what Hugo says. The importance of fellowship and NextGen programs is not only in the opportunity it provides, but also in the opportunity of bringing diverse voices into the ICANN community. And on behalf of all of you, I also would like to thank the Board for supporting those two programs to strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement and to make truly the policy development here match the needs of the global community. So thank you very much from all of us. We have two minutes left, and probably Ignacio is there, probably will be the last one. So, please.

IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ GONZÁLEZ

Okay, thank you very much to the Board for your time and for being willing to be here. My name is Ignacio, an ICANN fellow, and my question is not about participation itself, but to better understand

some reasons of the model. I know that the direct answer to my question would be because of the bylaws, but my question is, as I understand, the GAC doesn't have a vote on the Board decisions. So to what extent is it really a multi-stakeholder model when the public sector doesn't have a binding voice? Even though I know it's because of the bylaws, I would like to better understand the reasons behind that construction of the model. Thank you very much.

TRIPTI SINHA

Thank you for the question. You've asked a very complex and critical... I'm sorry, are you the one who asked the question? I want to make sure I'm looking at you. It's a good question, very complex and very critical. First, yes, the GAC does not have a voice, but it's represented by 184 countries. So as you can imagine, it would be very difficult for countries to be able to vote or speak with a single voice because they are all bound to their national laws and public policy and so forth. However, every time a policy recommendation comes forward, the GAC then has bilateral meetings with the Board, and they oftentimes issue advice. And according to our bylaws, we have to take a pause before we actually ratify that particular policy. We have to take a pause and consider the advice very seriously, which we do. So we go through our due process, and we consider the advice and then issue a statement to the GAC. So it is indeed still multi-stakeholder. They get to present their opinions. We have bilateral meetings with them at every ICANN meeting, and

we have intersessional meetings as well. And their chair sits on our Board as liaison. So I hope that answers your question.

IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ GONZÁLEZ Yes.

TRIPTI SINHA Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Yes, Catherine, please.

CATHERINE ADEYA Actually, I don't want to add something, but there's somebody who has been putting her hand like this shyly. Could you just allow her? I'm saying she's been putting up her hand and very shy.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN Yes, please. Go ahead. We don't want to miss the opportunity to give you the chance to ask the question.

SHEILA KAKOZA Thank you. My question is really brief. Thank you so much, Catherine, for the opportunity. I am Sheila Kakoza from the Uganda DNS Forum. Mine is the question, since the fellowship brings together, it combines both the people in the fellowship program and the NextGen, and ICANN's work, there's two broad categories.

There's the policy side, and then there's the technical side. But the NextGen participants are students, which is more of a research-based. And since, positively, we are involving fellows in the PDPs, is there something similarly being done for the fellows that have a technical background to support their work, let's say, in ICANN's technical side, the DNS and the root server work and the peering? Is there a way we can support these technical fellows, especially in their research through knowledge sharing and the like? Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN

Actually, I would respond this in this way, that it doesn't matter if it's the technical side or the policy side. The engagement is important on every level, and the opportunity is given to everyone. We have examples of fellows who are now working in the technical team of ICANN itself, and we have a lot of fellows who are now part of the community working for the technical activity, like technical questions, and cover them. As León said, we have lawyers, we have civil society representatives, we have technical people. They are in every sphere of this multi-stakeholder model. So it all depends on the passion, on the level of engagement and the commitment, the willingness to be a part of it, and this community only welcomes the participation. That's how I can respond. And with that, I would like to thank the Board for being here with us from all of us. Fellows and NextGeners always enjoy this interaction with you, and thank you for being with us. Thank you very much. The meeting is adjourned.

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