
ICANN86 Seville | PF – AFRALO-AfrICANN Engagement session
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MICHELLE DESMYTER

If everyone could please take their seats, we will begin in a few minutes. Hadia, this is Michelle. Would you like to start? Thank you, Hadia. One minute, please. The session will begin now. Please start the recording. Thank you so much. Hello, and welcome, everyone, to the AFRALO-AfrICANN Engagement Session. My name is Michelle DeSmyter, and I am the Remote Participation Manager for today's session. Please note that this session is being recorded and governed by the ICANN Expected Standards of Behavior and the ICANN Community Anti-Harassment Policy. During today's session, questions or comments will only be read aloud if submitted within the Q&A pod. Interpretation for today's session will include English, French, and Arabic. If you would like to speak during the session, please raise your hand in Zoom. When called upon, virtual participants will be given permission to unmute in Zoom. On-site participants will use a physical microphone to speak. Please state your name for the record, the language you will speak if speaking a language other than English, and please speak at a reasonable pace for our interpreters today. With this, I will now hand the floor back over to Hadia Elminiawi, AFRALO Chair. Please begin, Hadia.

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HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Michelle, and welcome all to the AFRALO-AfrICANN Engagement Session. Before we begin, we would like to take a moment to honor two members of our community who have passed away, Alan Barrett and Arinola Akinyemi. Alan Barrett, a member of the ICANN Board, was a long-time member of the Internet governance community. Beginning in the early 1990s, he was involved in setting up the first Internet connection for South African universities. He is credited with creating the .co.za zone and was instrumental in the formation of AFRINIC, and was later appointed CEO of AFRINIC. Arinola Akinyemi's leadership roles included Vice Chair West Africa of the Africa ICT Alliance and National Treasurer of the Information Technology Industry Association of Nigeria. Arinola was the lead of one of AFRALO's ALSes, a member of the IPC community, and the NomCom. In their memory, I would like to invite everyone to please rise for a moment of silence.

Now we go on with our agenda. Today's session is going to discuss an analysis that AFRALO members have done with regard to ICANN transparency and accountability. They have looked at 18 past AFRALO statements on accountability and transparency. Those AFRALO statements span the time from 2014 up until this year. They will present to us their analysis, their findings, and also, in the context of the review of reviews, they will present their view on the way forward. First, we start with our guest speakers, and we welcome Jonathan Zuck, ALAC Chair. Jonathan, the floor is yours.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Thanks, Hadia. I'm sorry I'm not there in person. I'm a little under the weather today, but I've really enjoyed participating in all these meetings for a number of years because I think we need to be doing more to really open up the African market, and that's really where the future is for the DNS. I think the choice of looking into accountability and transparency as the subset of comments since 2015 was a good one, given all that's going on right now, including the review of reviews, as you mentioned, but also the next round. A lot of the rhetoric surrounding the justification for getting moving on the next round was about opening up the DNS gTLD marketplace to a broader community than it has been in the past, looking at underserved regions, expanding the Applicant Support Program, and seeing if we're doing enough to really expand the registry community beyond the small number of entities that it has persisted to this date. I think there's going to be a lot of accountability discussions around the new round if the Applicant Support Program is once again unsuccessful. So fingers crossed on that, and I think this is a very good topic for discussion. I read through the paper. I'm amazed at the analysis that was done, and I look forward to the discussion today. Thanks, everyone, and let's do what we can to get ICANN more accountable and more transparent.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Jonathan. And now I give the floor to Dr. Catherine Adeya, Board member from Africa.

CATHERINE ADEYA

I think just to echo what Jonathan has said, I continue to find these sessions extremely useful, and the topic for today from the think tank, looking at ICANN transparency and accountability, AFRALO's comments, the review of reviews work, and the proposed transition article, is also going to be very important for us as Board members who are here to hear what you have to say. Dave Lawrence is there, a Board member. Christian Kaufman is here. I don't know who else is here, but thank you very much for joining us.

I was looking at the recommendations. They are really interesting, but there are two that stuck out to me. It will be interesting to hear, as you present, when it is written that ICANN responses were often procedural rather than outcome-based, with limited mechanisms to demonstrate whether African concerns translated into measurable institutional outcomes. A heavy one, but basically what I read in an outcome like this is that you felt the responses from ICANN on some of these issues were not sufficient. So I guess the evidence is going to show that and see what's happened over the years. The second one was the issue of, despite improvements in formal accountability structures, many still feel there are issues of resource limitations, language constraints, and connectivity challenges. Particularly for African stakeholders, there are a lot of

interesting things coming out from this research, and it's interesting looking at it over more than a decade, from 2014. It will be very interesting just to see what comes out of that. Maybe I'll leave my remarks at that for now, and I am here in case there is anything else. We'll raise it. Thank you, Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Catherine, and I would like also to acknowledge and welcome Dave Lawrence and Christian Kaufman. And now I give the floor to Russ.

RUSS WEINSTEIN

Thank you, Hadia, for having me. This is Russ Weinstein, the Senior Vice President for Policy Development Support. This is a great discussion and a great set of research that was done. I find it interesting. Last time in Mumbai, we were talking about DNS abuse, which is one of the topics that I'm pretty passionate about, and then this time, we're talking about accountability and the reviews process, which is a topic I've been assigned as one of the org representatives on that review of reviews project. So another one that's in my wheelhouse in terms of familiarity.

I think the work that was done to analyze the previous statements and the previous outcomes has been really valuable and is very humbling, as Catherine just mentioned, some of the feedback. I think it's helpful to calibrate us and for us to really think about those things. I hope that your input is going into the review of

reviews group so that we can consider it as a group as well, and I'll make sure and be very familiar with it coming out of this conversation and be able to talk about it in that CCG. I hope you also continue to advocate it, not just here in AFRALO, but with the full ALAC and the full At-Large community, so that those elements can be brought forward from the ALAC, who ultimately needs to be one of the decisional participants on whether we got it good enough in the review of reviews product. I know Jonathan is listening, and he is one of the representatives for At-Large in that group, which is great. Looking forward to a really strong conversation about these important topics.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Russ, and let me tell you the reason that we tackled the topic of accountability and transparency this time. Last time, it was the first time we developed this think tank session, and AFRALO members looked at AFRALO past statements since its very beginning up until now, and they picked two topics. However, we discovered that we had 18 statements on accountability and transparency, and this discovery made us think, okay, this is actually the largest number of statements on any topic that we have. That was the initial reason why this group decided, okay, so let's look at why we have that many statements on accountability and transparency. Now I would like to welcome Sally Costerton and give her the floor. Thank you, Sally, for being with us today.

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you, Hadia. I wanted to congratulate this group. I've been coming to talk to the AFRALO group for a few years, and I was very excited by the development of the think tank concept. I think it's a very interesting new tool, if that's the right word, for a group to use in ICANN. Looking at the work you've done here on transparency and accountability, I can really see the merits of it, and I hope that you feel happy with this. I think it's a really excellent piece of work. I found it very thought-provoking.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Sally Costerton, and I lead stakeholder engagement at ICANN. As part of that, I work in very close partnership with Russ. The two teams we lead do the vast majority of stakeholder outreach and support and engagement for our community around the world, including here, obviously, in our African community. Russ is very involved hands-on in working on the review of reviews project, so he is an expert on that. It's key to ICANN, this project. I think it's a very interesting milestone for us as a community. Watching your views on this evolve, and as Russ said, I think it's so important that those get inserted into that discussion. I'm sure they will.

My personal reflections on it, just given my history with ICANN on engagement and the discussions that we've had in this forum during the years, are that I'm very interested to see the documented shift that I observe in your analysis about where our community has come from and is going. It was really helpful to see that in writing, because when you've been, like I have, about to start my 14th year at ICANN, sometimes we're so busy in the middle

of things that we don't stand back to see where we came from. We often get frustrated that we haven't gone as far as we want. But something like this really helped me to understand where we've been, as well as where we want to go, and it shows how much has been achieved.

We used to sit in these meetings and talk a great deal about participation barriers. They were often very practical discussions about newcomer programs, regional engagement activities, mentorships, these kinds of things. Now, we still have those issues, and this document is not suggesting that we don't, but I can see now you're moving to more focus on what I will call equity of participation. Just being in a group or on a list isn't enough, is what I'm hearing from this document. We need to see that participation, we being our African community members, translate into measurable outcomes. That term, outcomes, comes up a lot in this think tank document.

I just want to make one other comment, because I thought you might be interested to know this. Russ and I are very closely working together with our colleagues in ICANN on how we shift our engagement activities towards delivering measurable outcomes. Reading this phrase in this document resonated very strongly with me right now, because we're right in the middle of doing that with our teams. It's one thing to say, my goal is to have five capacity building or development sessions for this stakeholder group in this country. That's a perfectly reasonable goal that helps with participation, and it helps with bringing people to ICANN, skilling

them, upskilling them, so that they don't just know about ICANN, they actually can participate in ICANN. This is a big part of our work. But we now want to be able to say, yes, we still want to do that, but how is that going to contribute to ICANN's ability to deliver its mission? Because that's why we're all here. It's what we're all doing together. It's our common goal. Protecting our legitimacy and our mandate to continue to deliver that mission, as well as our ability to do it, is important. I see that shift towards issues like legitimacy. Transparency and accountability, of course, are a key part of being trusted as a steward of this mission around the world.

I applaud you for this work. I think it's very strategic. It's very aligned with the work and the direction of travel that we are going through inside support structures inside the organization. So I'm really excited to hear this discussion today, but also to continue to be with you on this journey. Thank you for showing us the way.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Sally. Pierre, I now give the floor to Pierre Dandjinou.

PIERRE DANDJINOU

Thank you very much. I think Sally said it all. Sally is my boss, you know it, and what do you want me to say after she just said exactly what our expectations are vis-à-vis what you did? But probably what I might be interested in here is the localization of all of this here in the region. Whatever recommendation you have for ICANN

is clear. I quite understand all of this, and of course, I congratulate you, at least for thinking about this thing, talking about accountability and all of these things.

As far as we are concerned in the region, I would say the point here is about the impact that we are having in the region. I remember last time I was saying that one of the things I would like you guys to be doing is that all of this be reflected into the countries, into your networks in countries, so that it's not just about you, it's also about the region that you are coming from and some of the themes, for instance, that you work on. We're trying to address issues from these places. When you mentioned digital divide, when you mentioned infrastructure, you know that infrastructure is not ICANN's remit, for instance. But yet, you had a recommendation for ICANN on this. My point was, okay, but please, as per the remit, stick to that remit. For instance, the African strategy is all about DNS. We are not talking about infrastructure, I mean the cable thing, we are not talking about these things. So my impression is that you will be thinking that ICANN might, of course, be interested in some of those many issues that we are facing at home, which is another thing.

The other thing, and I will stop here, is that I would like to hear more when you are going to present this thing. I like the idea of think tank. I thought you guys were coming here to start your own consultancy firm, but I think that's for good, what your recommendations are. Sally said it. We'll continue the journey with you. We are in the region. We'll be hearing from whatever your

expectations are, and definitely we will be in that journey with you.
Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Pierre, and I would say that the recommendations this time are very specific and focused on strengthening ICANN's accountability and transparency. I would say that maybe more than one of these recommendations might be already implemented, but let's wait for the discussion. Just to note, in the context of the review of reviews, the statement shows support to efforts to redesign a more focused and usable framework. However, they caution that efficiency gains must not come at the expense of transparency, inclusiveness, and traceability of outcomes. With this, I would like now to give the floor to the team who developed this statement to provide an executive summary. I don't know who wants to present. If you would like to present, please raise your hand. I see Thoko Miya. Thoko, if you're speaking, we cannot hear you.

THOKO MIYA

Hello, Hadia. Thank you so much. Thank you for the introduction. Sorry, my network is quite bad, and the computer keeps freezing. Can you hear me now?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Yes, we hear you loud and clear.

THOKO MIYA All right, thank you. I think, as it will be my first time to present, perhaps you can just let me know what I would be presenting at this point.

HADIA ELMINIAWI Thank you, Thoko. It's the statement that you have your name on it. It's just the recommendations and the statement itself. Thank you.

THOKO MIYA Thank you very much. Thank you for the floor, and thank you, everyone. As you can see, the statement above, what we worked on was really about understanding African perspectives and how AFRALO can be more influential in understanding the transparency and accountability frameworks within ICANN, as has been said. Let me just stop here quickly to ask, how long do I have?

HADIA ELMINIAWI You don't have much. You can go through the recommendations, Thoko. Thank you.

THOKO MIYA Thank you very much. In our recommendations, I would first encourage everyone to please take a moment to read the document. It's very short, but we have come up with the following recommendations. Number one is to have traceable outcome

accountability mechanisms. In this, we would like to recommend that ICANN establish a public response matrix for all major reviews and public comments, mapping each recommendation for clear disposition. Was it accepted, modified, deferred, or rejected? What was the rationale behind it, as well as the owner and timelines? We believe this will allow for greater traceability and impact measurement. It also opens a door for inclusivity, knowledge transfer, and skill sharing.

We have a second recommendation, which is implementation tracking transparency. We recommend that an implementation dashboard be created to track all review recommendations, including milestones, owners, dependencies, and evidence of completed and demonstrated impact. Our third recommendation is inclusion and accessibility metrics. That means a revised review system should be provided to publicly report KPIs on geographic diversity, stakeholder representation, gender balance, newcomer participation, accessibility measures, and multilingual participation options. Our fourth recommendation is to safeguard pauses for specific reviews. This includes and supports a time-bound pause for specific reviews, provided that safeguards are maintained. That means quarterly public reporting, a clearly defined restart schedule, and strict limits on any extension beyond the proposed timeframe.

Our fifth recommendation is transparent scoping of reviews. That ensures that reviews are fully transparent, with all proposed topics, rationales, and exclusions published publicly to ensure visibility of

priorities raised by underrepresented regions. Recommendation six is a clear distinction on ICANN remit. We believe the review system should clearly distinguish between issues within ICANN's remit and those requiring coordination from external stakeholders, with explicit follow-up mechanisms for both categories. Our seventh recommendation is user-centric accountability evaluation. ICANN should incorporate mechanisms to assess how accountability measures are perceived by end users, particularly within developing regions, focusing on trust, inclusiveness, and real-world impact. This was quite an extensive process, and this is the summary of it. The original document we have remains available for sharing, and it can be requested. Ideally, what we were looking at was which mechanisms, which metrics, and what recurring themes have consistently been asked for across the 18 documents, and how do we present those as formalized recommendations? We've condensed them into the above seven recommendations. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Thoko. I would note also that the conclusion includes the core lesson emerging from 18 statements, which is that accountability is meaningful only when community input is clearly traceable to outcomes and when participation is practically achievable for all regions. I would like now to give the floor to Godsway Kubi, because those recommendations and the statement were actually based on an analysis of these statements,

and Godsway will present this analysis to us. Godsway, the floor is yours. If we can have Annex 1 on the screen, please. Thank you.

GODSWAY KUBI

Hi, everyone. Can you hear me?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Yes, we hear you, and can we have Annex 1 on the screen, please?
Thank you.

MICHELLE DESMYTER

Godsway, while I'm pulling up that document, if you could please speak closer to your microphone and a little bit louder for the interpreters. Thank you.

GODSWAY KUBI

Okay, okay, that is true. I hope you can hear me now.

MICHELLE DESMYTER

Yes.

GODSWAY KUBI

All right, thank you so much. Once again, good day, everyone. Briefly, before I go to the main annex, I think we missed the highlights earlier, so I would just like to speak on this AFRALO-AfrICANN think tank that reviewed about 18 statements between 2010 and 2025.

HADIA ELMINIAWI Godsway, could you please raise your voice a little bit? You're not audible. You are going to go through Annex 1 and 2. Thank you.

GODSWAY KUBI Sure. Am I audible now? Is it clear?

MICHELLE DESMYTER This is Michelle, for the record. If you could please try using your computer audio versus your headphones.

GODSWAY KUBI Is it audible now?

MICHELLE DESMYTER Perfect. Yes, thank you. Please continue.

GODSWAY KUBI All right. Good day, everyone. Today, we will present our two annexes. We will speak more on the AFRALO-AfrICANN think tank statements. This speaks on transparency, accountability, and what we developed in relation to the review of reviews work stream and the proposed transition article for specific reviews. The purpose of this annex is not only to preserve AFRALO's institutional memory, but also to show how African community concerns have evolved over time, where issues remain unresolved, and what this means for the future of ICANN accountability and review mechanisms. I'll

begin with Annex 1 and provide a table overview and a timeline of AFRALO's evolving position. After that, I think David will continue with Annex 2, and I will come back again.

Briefly on this annex, this table is quite simple and captures 18 statements. I won't go into much detail because we don't have much time. I'll just give a high-level overview. This table has three columns: the year, the ICANN meeting and the topic. It is divided into four phases. The first phase talks about access, applicant support, and equity, which starts from 2010 to 2013, from ICANN 39 to ICANN 46. ICANN 39 speaks about the support for new gTLD applicants, and ICANN 43 speaks about applicant support. The first phase shows that AFRALO's transparency and accountability concerns began with access and fairness in the new gTLD program. At ICANN 39, AFRALO's concern was that without meaningful support, applicants from the African region and other developing regions would be excluded from the new gTLD round. The issue was not only the application process, but the cost, the capacity gap, and the lack of regional readiness. By ICANN 43, AFRALO became more specific, questioning whether the Applicant Support Program was sufficiently promoted, adequately funded, and objectively designed by ICANN.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Can we please scroll down? I think now he is on page number five. Yes, and we can scroll down again. Thank you. Godsway, can you please ask them to scroll down when you need them to do so?

GODSWAY KUBI

Sure. I wanted to use the table for the high-level overview, but that is fine too. Thank you, Hadia. By ICANN 44, the concerns became even clearer. African participation in the new gTLD round was already very low. This showed that inclusion cannot be measured only by whether a process is open. It must be measured by whether affected communities can realistically participate. Then at ICANN 46, AFRALO broadened the discussion. The focus moved from individual applicant support to broader ecosystem readiness, including registrars, registries, capacity building, and also a possible development fund. What we are looking at in this first section, from ICANN 39 to ICANN 46, is that AFRALO identified very early that procedural openness does not automatically create equitable participation. That is one good thing that we did there.

In the second phase, from ICANN 51 to ICANN 57, ICANN 51 touched on the IANA transition and accountability, ICANN 52 touched on ICANN accountability and the transition coordination, and ICANN 54 touched on transition coordination. Please, let's go to ICANN 51. I think the highlights are not making it clearer. Please, can you take off the highlights in the text?

MICHELLE DESMYTER

This is Michelle, for the record. We have a lot of people in this document.

GODSWAY KUBI

Okay, no problem. I'll manage with that. This second phase reflects the major institutional accountability debate around the IANA stewardship transition. At ICANN 51, AFRALO recognized that the IANA transition was not only a technical transition, it was also a legitimacy and accountability test for ICANN. At ICANN 52, AFRALO emphasized principles such as equal footing, diversity, community empowerment, bottom-up decision-making, DNS stability, and the public interest. At ICANN 54 and ICANN 55, the discussion became more technical and institutional, where AFRALO raised concerns around coordination, community powers, thresholds, equal treatment of SOs and ACs, and the need to keep ICANN accountability mechanisms within its mission. By ICANN 56 and ICANN 57, AFRALO's concerns shifted towards implementation, from discussion to implementation. It highlighted PTI, diversity, Work Stream 2 scope, and volunteer overload as well. Please move to ICANN 56.

This is very important for the review of reviews discussion today, because AFRALO was already warning that if accountability processes became too fast or too complex, they reduce meaningful participation from underrepresented regions. This reflects that accountability mechanisms must not only exist. They must also be understandable, usable, and accessible to all regions. That is the second phase.

The third phase touches from ICANN 58 to ICANN 65, from 2017 to 2019. At ICANN 58, AFRALO focused more on the At-Large Review. The core concern was whether reforms to At-Large would

strengthen or weaken the legitimacy of end-user representation. AFRALO defended the role of ALSes, especially because in developing regions, organized local structures are often more effective than purely individual participation. Then at ICANN 60 and ICANN 62, concerns about GDPR became more of a focus for AFRALO. AFRALO recognized that privacy reforms were necessary, but also raised concerns about public interest, access to registration data, consumer protection, and Internet security. Please move to ICANN 65. At ICANN 65, AFRALO addressed the effectiveness of ICANN's multistakeholder model. This was one of the most critical statements, because AFRALO identified issues such as trust, complexity, leadership concentration, and cultural barriers. Another one was visa difficulties, which has run through some sessions during this ICANN engagement, and which is very important for us to look at.

This part of the table shows that AFRALO's accountability thinking had matured over time. One thing that we noticed was that transparency is not only about publishing information or making people aware of the information. It's also about whether communities can understand, use, question, or influence the process. When the community gets involved, it also counts as transparency.

The fourth phase looks at external laws, participation equity, and digital equity, which we looked at from ICANN 70 to ICANN 82. At ICANN 70, AFRALO looked beyond ICANN's internal structure. It warned that national legislation, privacy laws, security regulations,

and Internet fragmentation could affect ICANN's multistakeholder model as well. At ICANN 77, the focus returned strongly to African participation, where we looked at practical barriers such as visa challenges. Those same visa challenges we are looking at today have already come up before, and I think they are becoming more than we expected. Youth engagement and women's participation were also touched on, as well as accessibility and African representation. I think we have seen growth in African representation over time. At ICANN 78, AFRALO connected accountability to Internet governance in Africa, including the IXP ecosystem, infrastructure readiness, AFRINIC collaboration, and data inclusion. Finally, at ICANN 82, AFRALO returned to the new gTLD issue, but with strong policy this time. The discussion was now about African data, identity, local languages, community TLDs, and whether the next big TLD round will correct the exclusion seen in previous rounds. This final phase showed that AFRALO is moving from representation to measurable outcomes over time. Accountability must now be measured by results, because that is what we see it to be. It is about who participates, whose concerns are really reflected, what is implemented, and what outcomes change.

To close with Annex 1, the main message is that AFRALO has consistently identified structural accountability concerns early, and the challenge now is to ensure that these concerns are not only acknowledged, but tracked, implemented, and measured. I will

now leave it to David to start with Annex 2, then possibly I will come back again. Hadia, over to you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Godsway. David, if you can take the floor.

DAVID INEM

Hi, Hadia. Good afternoon.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Hello, David. Loud and clear, thank you.

DAVID INEM

Good afternoon, everyone. I will be looking at Annex 2 of our presentation. I have a slide presentation for this. I don't know if I could share.

MICHELLE DESMYTER

Hi, David. This is Michelle. Absolutely. Tech support team, can we please promote David? Thank you. David, while they're doing that, there is a lot of echo, and I have a bit of a hard time hearing you.

DAVID INEM

Okay, sorry. Let me check.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

David, can you go ahead and talk without the slides or the annex?
Please go ahead, and we can hear you.

DAVID INEM

Okay. I'm still yet to share the slide, but I will proceed. Hi, everyone. My name is David, and I recently joined as an AFRALO individual member. I've also participated in ICANN meetings, from the Consolidated Policy Working Group down. Given the opportunity to sit on the think tank and have a review of reviews is really amazing to me. I will talk about the 12 years of participation with the 18 ICANN statements. My presentation covers who AFRALO is and why it matters to ICANN, our participation in 2010 to 2016, which has to do with access and equity, 2016 to 2019, which has to do with governance depth, 2021 to 2025, which has to do with structural gaps, the proposed document and cross-cutting themes, and I will give a lesson for reform.

AFRALO is the African region, and we know the countries that it widely represents. Looking through the documents and across the meetings held from 2010 to 2015, looking through access and equity, we had topics going to the new gTLD, applicant support, down to ICANN's accountability. Going through the statements, I noticed some unresolved gaps, like no outcome-based equity targets. If you look at the 2010 meeting, ICANN 39, on new gTLD applicant support, where the documented outcome was that ASP logic was adopted and underrepresentation persisted. So we pushed for underrepresentation, but there were no outcome-

based equity targets for that. In 2015, at ICANN 52, on the topic of ICANN accountability, the documented outcome was that the CCWG Accountability process followed, and the unresolved gaps seemed to be more like the new powers being unevenly usable.

When we looked at other meetings from 2014 to 2016, that was the IANA transition and accountability. In the 2014 meeting, AFRALO demanded a bottom-up process for African inclusion and capacity building. In 2015, ICANN 54 and ICANN 55, for governance coordination, balanced thresholds, and SO and AC parity. The key lesson learned was that the IANA transition was formally inclusive, but AFRALO's statements confirmed that formal inclusion did not translate into equal influence over outcomes. Phase two is the governance depth. The meetings were held between 2016 and 2019. In 2016, the CCWG final proposal, the documented outcome was that the Work Stream 1 accountability architecture was completed. The unresolved gap had to do with accessibility of accountability to me. In 2019, at ICANN 65, with multistakeholder model effectiveness, am I still audible?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Yes, go ahead. You have one minute more.

DAVID INEM

Okay, let me just try and wrap up. In 2019, we had multistakeholder model effectiveness, and multistakeholder model effectiveness became a strategic objective. The unresolved gaps were that power

asymmetry remained. GDPR is a case study in unresolved tension. AFRALO asked in 2017 and 2018 for universal awareness of GDPR implications, compliance guidance, and the African context presentation.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

If we can stop here, maybe, in order to have more time for discussion. Godsway, do you have something in 30 seconds or a minute?

GODSWAY KUBI

We are going to wrap up with the consolidated aspect of AFRALO's position.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

You have to raise your voice. You're not audible.

GODSWAY KUBI

Can you hear me now?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

If you could raise your voice a little bit more, thank you.

GODSWAY KUBI

Can you hear me? Am I audible?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Yes, but just raise your voice a little bit. Maybe we can now move to the discussion. Yes, go ahead.

GODSWAY KUBI

The recommendation aspect of this part, where we highlighted four recommendations, the first recommendation touches on the public response matrix. This should apply to major reviews and also public comment processes. For every community input or recommendation, at least the matrix should show the source of the recommendation, whether it was accepted, modified, deferred, or rejected. It should also show the rationale behind it and the implementation owner, where we also expect the expected timeline and the next milestone.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

We presented the recommendations at the very beginning, so if you have something else you would like to add now, yes, if you would like to show us the table. We presented all of the recommendations at the very beginning.

GODSWAY KUBI

Okay. Let me just give the keynotes. AFRALO supports this reform of ICANN's review system, but reforms must make accountability more visible, more inclusive, more measurable, and meaningful to regions. The core lesson that we take from these 18 statements is that accountability is meaningful only when community inputs can be traced to institutional outcomes and when participation is

practically achievable for all regions, especially underrepresented regions such as Africa. Thank you all for listening to us, and we are ready to take your input.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Godsway, and thank you so much, David. I'm sorry that maybe the connection was not great. We have a question from Chris. Chris, please go ahead.

CHRISTIAN KAUFMAN

Thank you. Now she will regret that she invited me. Christian Kaufman, Board member. I have a couple of questions. First of all, thanks a lot for all your volunteer work, the recommendations, and all the contributions. That's a lot of work, which I have seen here. What I don't understand is what happens with them. How do they go either into org or the Board? I believe I have never seen AFRALO-specific recommendations. At-Large ones, for sure, we get them all the time. Also, how does that compare with the other RALOs, the other four or five? Can anyone enlighten me? Sorry for the ignorance.

CATHERINE ADEYA

Before anybody enlightens Christian, I actually encouraged him to ask the question and to just come and hear some of the work that's being done here. First of all, I don't want to answer, but I just want to commend the team, because I looked at this, it's like 24 pages, and the amount of material you went into. If somebody is a scholar

here, I would actually award you a master's. It's a lot of work, so just appreciating you. Of course, somebody still has to answer Christian.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

This is a very good question. What do we do with this? The intention actually is that the output of this would go into a statement that could feed into what's happening with the review of reviews. That was the intended output out of this. Whether this statement as is could feed into this or not, it's still to be discussed. This entire think tank session or AFRALO-AfrICANN engagement is very new, and we're still exploring how to do things. We can't say this is how we will always operate. We are just testing and trying. I see now a hand from Kiiza Patrick.

KIIZA PATRICK

For the record, Patrick Kiiza. Confirm that you can hear me, Chair?

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Yes, we can hear you.

KIIZA PATRICK

Thank you to the presenters and the team members who were critical in having this whole big document put out. Maybe I was also trying to allude to what Hadia was just saying. We perhaps shouldn't stop here. We see here we have quite engaging and influential teams, those who sit on the Board. Maybe we could

explore further the best possible way to see some of these recommendations put into practice, so that we see a better and well-engaging process as per the recommendations put out by the drafting team. Thank you. Over.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Kiiza. I would just note that many of the previous statements were presented to the Board. All of them were presented to the Board, but many of them were actually acknowledged and got a reply from the Board, which means that those statements were taken into account somehow by the ICANN Board and thus also, I assume, by ICANN org as well. We have another hand, and I can't see the name, so if you can state your name first. Thanks.

ABDUL KARIM

Thank you very much. My name is Abdul Karim, for the record. I want to first of all commend those that worked on this document. It comes across to me like a very good document that said a lot. It has shown a kind of way, like the founding fathers sat down and had a long-term plan to bring all these things together, but I want to be a little bit skeptical, especially in the time of AI. Because I feel those documents, at that time, when all these statements were being made, the intentions were not really, especially coming from the newer generation, in such a way that some of the things we're coming across, like there is a long-term plan, whereas probably it was just a coincidence or something that was happening around

that time. My own thinking is it would be good, before these things go out, if people like Aziz can sit down, look at these recommendations, look at all those things that have happened, and work on it, and be able to look at some of those things that are practical, and be able to come up with some recommendations. I think that's my advice on this document. Thank you very much.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, AK. Thank you, Dr. Karim. But I would ask you here, why does it matter if those were in response to maybe incidents or something that was happening at that point in time or not? Why does it matter? It's still an evolution. This thing that led to the statement is still a way of evolution from what was before.

ABDUL KARIM

What I'm saying is, when those statements were written, the intentions behind them might not be the same as the intentions we have now. So bringing those statements, giving them meanings, and trying to have something like a long-term plan, for example, the evolving things, whereas at that time, I do not think it was more or less like a long-term plan for some of those things. It was just what was happening at that time, and the statement was addressing those things, and not really the long-term story behind it.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Noted. Thank you, Abdul Karim. We have a hand from David Inem.

DAVID INEM

Thank you, Hadia. I'll drop a quick comment and a response. There is a question from the Board about how it affects the RALOs, so I will try to address the question from my own perspective. From my perspective, I would say how it addresses the RALOs is that it shows the amount of work being done individually from each of the RALOs. We have five RALOs in the ICANN system, and engaging in the Internet is quite complex. You have ISPs, you have IEEE engineering teams, so having all that and the actors independently working to fit into the systems, and in Africa, we are fitting into the systems, whereas we are having our ISPs improving on this. Most of them, if it is a seek for support and ICANN can grant support, that's good, and we appreciate it. I saw news of the \$1 million that was given as a support. It helps to encourage young ones like us trying to build the system.

The system is already established, and looking at GDPR compliance, why we raised that is within our structures we have our own data privacy issues, and we want to stay protected while we engage. As there is a quote on the Internet saying, first do no harm, and everything will be fine. We are looking at putting back traceability to the point of, we know our engagement, we know how far we've gone in building up African membership into the ICANN ecosystem. We have our leadership that are here supporting. Today I called in a leader, and I was like, oh, I'm nervous for this presentation, and he was like, oh, calm down. Our leaders are supporting. Even our president, Hadia, is also

supporting. You reach out, they give you feedback, we have all this in documents. Based on the RALOs, if we can have a public dashboard and we can say, so far so good, based on this RALO, this RALO, this RALO, and the ICANN system, you can implicitly say how much impact you've done or how much impact you're safeguarding the ICANN ecosystem. That would be my contribution. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, David. Thank you, Godsway. Now we open the floor. We can start by the room. Professor Aziz, the floor is yours. Thank you.

AZIZ HILALI

Thank you. Please take your headphones, because I will speak in French. Abdul Karim asked me a question. I would like to say that at the beginning of the years when we started this type of meeting, we called on all Africans present at the ICANN meeting. So this is a tradition that has continued until today. It is a very important tradition. Earlier, Christian asked the question about whether there were responses. It is true that there have been responses, but not all the time, unfortunately. Every time there is an important topic within ICANN, we discuss it, first of all by selecting the topic. Then there is a drafting group that drafts the statement so that we can submit it to the Board. We do not always receive responses, to be frank, to the questions that are asked, but there is often a positive impact on African positions. I think that is very important, and it is a tradition that must be kept and maintained, because it is

somewhat the voice of the continent within ICANN, and it is very important.

Another thing that we also do is a lot of training within the community. We did a lot of capacity building. Unfortunately, that has also decreased, and I appeal to the leadership to maintain this training, because it is very important for the future. We also did courses in French on Internet governance, on ICANN, and on all the constituencies, where we explain the importance of ICANN in everything related to policy development within ICANN. Thank you very much.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Professor Aziz. Now the floor is for Henrietta Ampofo.

HENRIETTA AMPOFO

Hello, can you hear me?

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Yes.

HENRIETTA AMPOFO

Great. Hello, everyone. I'm Henrietta Ampofo from Ghana, and I would like to give great appreciation to those who did this work. It was quite comprehensive. I am an alumna of the ICANN Policy Development Accelerator program, and during that program, I challenged myself to make a public comment. Of course, it was affiliated with AFRALO. I'm saying this because of the question that

was asked: how do we track how AFRALO is doing in comparison to other regional organizations? I think this is one of the ways that we can track public comments that are made, to be easier to track on the back end depending on who the affiliation is with.

I am so glad that one of the recommendations was to ensure that people get feedback on their public comments, whether it was modified, whether it was added, whether it was rejected. As of now, I don't know if my public comment was added or rejected, or if it was included in the document. I still don't know. It's been three years, actually, and I still don't know what happened to my public comments. The next thing I would like to add was to the speaker who mentioned earlier about the context and how things are put in. I think we can also learn from the Accelerator program, where before any decision was made, the context was given before the decision was made. It's good to contextualize things. It's not an easy thing to do, but it's good to contextualize so that people understand the reason for which the decision was made. We can learn from the Accelerator program. I think the history of the Accelerator program was written in everybody's position, and the reason for the position was made. Those are the two comments I would like to make, and once again, thank you very much to the presenters. You did a very fantastic job. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Henrietta. Now we move on to Fatimata, and then Thoko Miya. Fatimata Seye Sylla, please, you have the floor.

FATIMATA SEYE SYLLA

Thank you, Hervé. I would really like to congratulate and thank the working group that worked and reviewed the statements over several years. I sincerely congratulate them. I would also like to return to the think tank concept, which had been put forward at ICANN 84, and which consists precisely of perhaps trying to give us a reference point in relation to what Pierre Dandjinou said earlier, namely that we make many statements, we ask ICANN for many things, and we expect very concrete results in relation to them. That is why we said that we wanted to create a real think tank group, precisely to reflect on the problems and also to try to find solutions that are our own, and to see how ICANN can collaborate with us, perhaps, to reach promising results for us and for Africa.

What I see is very, very good. I admit that it is really good to compile, to see where we have been, what we have done, what it produced, and so on. But what have we done at our level? And what do we really want to obtain? We know ICANN's mission, we know what ICANN can do, and we also know what we can do when we talk about the digital divide and other things at our level. I do not think ICANN can really help us with everything. That is why we said we were going to think about it. Now, regarding what has been developed here, it will be up to us to make concrete proposals that come from us and to discuss them with ICANN to see how to implement them. So the work has only just begun. The work has

only just begun, and as was said, we will also need to contextualize things. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Fatimata. Now we'll move on to Thoko Miya.

THOKO MIYA

Hello, everyone. Thoko Miya for the record. Thank you so much. I just want to bring to the meeting's attention that when we started this initiative, our first instance was not either with a thematic point. The topic of transparency and accountability has been the most recurring theme among our analysis. As part of our work, we did a contextual analysis of what the statement was about in reference and in context to the meeting that it emanated from. What we found is that these recommendations were not only coming out of the statements, but were the lived experiences of ICANN stakeholders today. It comes to a point of, as one of the previous speakers mentioned, making a public comment. Was it accepted? Was it modified? Was it rejected? What happened, and what was implemented thereafter? That's a huge part of what influenced our policy recommendations.

Also beyond that was acknowledging, across the different RALOs, the language barriers, policy complexities, resource barriers, connectivity challenges, and the already existing principles and policies for inclusion. We wanted to highlight that inclusion is not just meant to be a formal process or a policy process, but what

actually causes actual influence, and where that implementation distinction lies. What we wanted, of course, as a think tank, is to ensure that there is a measured, tangible outcome that leads to inclusion, equal influence, and translates within decision-making. But that translation of decision-making is also publicly accessible, publicly understandable, and allows for greater participation of various people, stakeholders, members, constituencies, and end users, because they know what those processes are. Because there is transparency in the process and allocation itself, there is then an increase in participation levels and awareness. Once a policy has been placed and once public reporting has been done, it also shows that there should be clear timelines and transparent mechanisms so that especially underrepresented regions can begin to not only trust, but be a part of the processes and be a part of the mechanisms.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thoko, please wrap up.

THOKO MIYA

Yes, Hervé. Just one moment. I also wanted to say that, with a question asked earlier, we are still open to how this process goes. Of course, there is the open process of what we have discussed, which is that we would like to coordinate these into public comments. We want to coordinate with the ALAC, NCSG, GAC, ccNSO, and other GNSO participants to ensure that these recommendations are pushed through those channels. That's also

part of why our recommendations are tangible outcomes. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Thoko. Now I will give the floor to Sébastien Bachollet.

SEBASTIEN BACHOLLET

Hello. Sébastien Bachollet. I will allow myself to speak in French, and secondly to say that I am speaking here as a member of two African organizations. I wanted to say two things. The first is that I hope the work being done here will be taken forward within At-Large. This is a very important subject in the discussions on the review of reviews, because it is one of the important topics, and input from AFRALO and the African community is very important. I am not sure that it is yet at the level needed for ICANN. The second thing I would like to say is that I saw that a proposal was sent to members of the At-Large working group on policy and organization as an alternative to the one made by the working group. I am an observer. I do not know where that proposal is going, but these are things that must be taken into account. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Sébastien. Sorry, I don't know your name, so you can have the floor, please. Thank you.

SAMUEL KARIUKI

For the record, my name is Samuel Kariuki, and I am an ICANN 86 fellow and part of the think tank that participated in writing these statements. I have also contributed to many other statements for a couple of years. I think what I'm getting here is that we need an actual, actionable step for the Board. I think that's what is coming out clearly. For the statements that we were reviewing, I saw that there were statements that were overlapping. Therefore, there is a need for us to ensure that we come up with a tool to keep tracking the statements that we forward, and also the achievements that we have made in each and every statement, to ensure that probably in the near future, and for other RALOs, there is no repetition of the same statements over and over. I have seen some of the statements that we have been proposing were also proposed some time back. That's my contribution. Thank you.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, sir. Now I can give you the floor, Hadia.

HADIA ELMINIAMI

Thank you, Hervé. One common theme I've been hearing here, starting with Fatimata and others, is how do we translate our outcome here into actions on the ground? When we, for example, talk about universal acceptance or IDNs and get some recommendations in that regard, how do we translate those recommendations into actions on the ground? Maybe this is something we need also to think about.

Also having a tool. I think earlier today in the RALO leadership meeting, this is one of the things we were discussing, tools for collaboration. We certainly do need more tools for collaboration. I would also note that during the process of the development of this statement and the analysis of the previous statements, this did include a column that stated the outcomes, what happened afterwards, the response, and then the gap. Of course, we were not able to present all of this, but the documents do include outcomes, then implementation, if you will, and the gaps. I will stop here and give the floor back to Hervé.

HERVE HOUNZANDJI

Thank you, Hadia. Now we are on the last item of the session. I will give you the floor again to conclude.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Hervé. I would like to pass the mic to our speakers and guests, starting with Dr. Catherine.

CATHERINE ADEYA

Next steps. Honestly, I still go back to the fact that there's a lot of work being done. Even with my fellow Board colleagues, I was talking to Christian on the side, and I'm sure David will also be very interested in wondering what else are you going to do with this material. These are volunteers. The amount of work that's going into this, yes, maybe things have changed and all that, but to some extent you're also doing a bit of my work for me, because it's

making me ask a lot of questions. I'm looking at some of the recommendations. There's a lot to think about. Please don't feel in any way that the work is in vain. Hadia, you said this is exploratory, but even the last one, where you did quite some background study, I found it very useful. As you continue to explore, please credit yourselves. This is really, really good work. We continue to learn from it. Thank you.

PIERRE DANDJINOU

There is not much to add here. As we said, we are in the journey with you, and we are hearing. We are having questions, which is good, which for me is a work in progress, actually. Maybe the other thing I'm seeing here is the knowledge base that you are creating, because for you to screen all the statements that you had and then really think about those, it's quite a good job that you are doing here. Of course, one of the discussions and questions was whether this can just be formalized as a kind of endeavor not only from Africa, but from the other regions, for instance, because I'm seeing the knowledge base here, which is quite important. So yes, we are in the journey with you. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you. I was wondering if Dave would like to take the mic and make a comment.

DAVE LAWRENCE

I wish I had something tremendously insightful to say other than, you know, the African continent has been very much underrepresented on the Internet for years now, and I look forward to increased cooperation between the different nations in Africa, that you bring this back to your own telecommunications companies, ISPs, policymakers, and governments, to further facilitate the development of the Internet in Africa. I realize you have a very challenging environment to work with. It is very interesting looking at how those of you who have looked at the telecommunications maps of Africa see how they basically ring the continent rather than providing those interconnections all across the continent, and that does impact a bit of how it's developed. This international cooperation is tremendously important, and I really hope that we can be a part of continuing this development for Africa.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Dave. Christian, do you have something to add?

CHRISTIAN KAUFMAN

Well, I will see what Catherine says. I think, to a degree, there's a little bit of homework for us to actually figure out how your work gets funneled into the rest so that it doesn't go to waste. You did say that it is new and experimental, so that's fair. Probably now is also the right time to look at that, so that your views and comments are also heard and not just written somewhere down. I'm sure

there's some process, and I'm just not aware of it. But Catherine and I will have a look at it. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Chris. Sally?

SALLY COSTERTON

Thank you. Thank you all. I want to echo what my colleagues on the Board have said, and I would like to offer our help from the staff perspective wherever you think you need it to forward this work, because you're probably better at assessing that than I am. Specifically to Christian and Catherine's point, I think we, speaking personally, I would really want to help AFRALO work out how you want this to progress.

I think it's tempting to look at the recommendations and jump right in and get really tactical. I'm talking about me. I'm looking at all these things, and I'm thinking, we could do this, we could do that. I could feel it. When I read the document initially, I had that feeling, and being in this meeting I feel that even more. I feel like jumping up with a flip chart and saying, let's do this. I mean, I'm serious. There's a lot of very actionable insight in here, and I congratulate you on that, because that is not new at ICANN, but I think, as I said in my earlier comments, we have historically focused quite a lot on activity because we didn't feel we had enough of it, with a view that having that activity is kind of an outcome. What you're showing to me, and this is my biggest takeaway, is that it's not an outcome. We

need to work out how to get these insights into the work of our day-to-day work. Whether that's with the Board, with my teams, or in our communication strategies, I think there are lots of different areas where I feel a lot of insight here. But like Christian says, I also don't want to rush you. There is a balance. What I think I'm saying, and I think I'm hearing it from others, is encouraging you but not wanting to overwhelm you, because we could unintentionally slow you down by kind of jumping all over you and saying, this is great, let's start one of these and do one of that. I get that. But on the other hand, I wouldn't want to see it not move forward. I hope that's helpful, Hadia. I'm trying to be helpful. Thank you all. I feel like this is the beginning of something, actually, rather than the end of it, and I hope that it is. Thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you so much, Sally, and thank you for the support that you're offering. I say also, one of the main benefits of those engagement sessions or think tank sessions is actually engaging newcomers. As you can see, most of those who have participated are new members to the ICANN community, whether they are fellows or NextGen coming from Africa and not even AFRALO members yet. Some of them are new members. This is, I think, one of the ways in which those newcomers get engaged and involved with the ICANN community and with AFRALO.

I think we are almost at the end of the session, so unless anyone else has a comment or something to add, I will go ahead and thank

you all and close the session. I do have a hand from Jonathan. Jonathan, thank you for being with us, and please go ahead.

JONATHAN ZUCK

Sorry, I didn't mean to wait until the last minute. I didn't know if you were going back around your list again, but I just wanted to echo what Sébastien said, that we'll take these things up in the OFB working group, where we're evaluating the review of reviews, and then bring them into the discussion about what our reaction will be. I think, in particular, some of the issues about implementation are particularly critical. Getting to what Sally said, activity does not equate to an outcome. We need to really get to something measurable so that we know if the things that we're proposing are actually having the effect that we intend. Implementation is going to be a big part of the final plan that comes out of the review of reviews, although it's only just begun to be tackled within that group. I look forward to taking these recommendations and incorporating them into our internal discussions about the review of reviews. Great work all, and thank you.

HADIA ELMINIAWI

Thank you, Jonathan. With this, I thank you all for being with us today, and we thank, of course, our interpreters. This session is now closed.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]