
ICANN70 | Prep Week – Global Stakeholder Engagement Update
Monday, March 08, 2021 – 09:00 to 10:00 EST

PATRICK JONES: Greetings everyone. Welcome to the first ICANN 70 prep week session. My name is Patrick Jones from the Global Stakeholder Engagement team and I will be taking you through today's session.

Just a reminder that this session is being recorded and will follow the ICANN standards of behavior.

If you have a question, please place it in the question-and-answer pod here in zoom and we will read that during the session today.

Magali, can you please go to the next slide?

This gives an overview of today's session. I'm going to start with introductions from Sally Costerton. Sally, please go ahead.

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you very much, Patrick. Welcome, everybody. Very good to begin the beginning of prep week, and thank you so much, so many of us, for joining us from all around the world. This is our pleasure to host you. And I hope that during the session today, we will update you on both the capacity of the engagement team in ICANN Org, we will briefly talk in a moment about strategic priorities, and then we're going to hear from three key regions of the world to update you looking at slightly different aspects, current engagement priorities and activities in their regions. And obviously then of course we will have plenty of time for

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question and answers. So, looking forward to a good discussion, and I hope that at the end of this session, you'll feel better informed and also that we've answered any particular questions that you have.

If we run out of time for Q&A, we will keep the questions. Please send them to us and we'll make sure we hang on to them. Magali will collate them and we will come back to you on e-mail.

So just a couple of comments from me. My name is Sally Costerton. For those of you that don't know me, I lead stakeholder engagement at ICANN, and that involves a wide ranging remit. We're going to talk specifically about the GSE team, the Global Stakeholder Engagement team and their work today. But I also wanted to take this opportunity at the very start of prep week to thank you all for an activity around our meetings and the major consultation that we've been through since we last saw each other at our last virtual meeting, looking at the future of ICANN meetings and what you would like us to focus on to improve the virtual experience and into the future, how we interact with each other as we come back hopefully to face-to-face engagement.

It's been a very comprehensive consultation process through direct survey responses and also a lot of extensive discussions through the SOAC leaders and the SOAC structure, including from Cheryl, who I just saw pop up in the text. So, thank you very much, everybody who's led that and participated in it.

To give you an example, we had over 400 written responses on top of the quantitative survey response, but qualitative commentary in our survey asking for comments and feedback, and we very much hope that

you will see quite a number of the problems that you raised and the initiatives that you suggested addressed as we go into ICANN 70.

And of course, this week is about preparing for ICANN 70, so welcome, and we're looking forward to a good prep week and a good virtual community forum.

In terms of engagement priorities, it's a comprehensive activity at ICANN. As some of you will know, engagement is actually in the bylaws. It is the role, it is within the bylaws that ICANN must seek to bring in as many—[inaudible] a representative group as possible of people who are affected by the work ICANN does and that we must do that all over the world and with diverse stakeholder groups. So not just geography but also the different kinds of stakeholders that have a stake in ICANN and encourage them to be aware not just of what we do but if they are interested, how they participate in work we do at ICANN and the way in which we look after these critical technical resources.

That involves us in a great deal of work. As I said earlier, we will look at three particular areas today. One of the areas that we are working on globally at the moment which hi just wanted to highlight—and you'll hear a little of this from some of my colleagues as they go through their commentary—is what Göran has christened for me making new friends.

So this is not suggesting for one moment that we lose the friends we currently have. Far from it. we've been working on this engagement model now for some six or seven years. It's quite mature. It has of course had to go virtual along with everything else at ICANN, but we are putting a particular focus at the moment on reaching out to new influences,

new voices, new people who may affect themselves or whose works may be affected by what we do even though they may never come to an ICANN meeting.

So the goal of this outreach is not so much to bring new participants to ICANN. We do a great deal of work that is focused on that. But it's really making sure that we are talking to and meeting people and influencers—in governments, yes, but not only in governments, particularly across the technical community, to make sure that we're leaving no stone unturned to protect ICANN's ability to continue to deliver its mission. So we're working with many of you globally and regionally to do that.

And without further ado, I will hand back to Patrick who'll tell you more about it. Thank you.

PATRICK JONES:

Thank you very much, Sally. Magali, if you could go to the next slide, please. I'll spend a few minutes talking about expanding on Sally's comments with the role of the stakeholder engagement team at ICANN, what we're doing, particularly at a regional level.

The Global Stakeholder Engagement team leads our engagement and outreach around the world, trying to bring in new stakeholders and also involve our existing participants through raising awareness, highlighting the role of ICANN and its remit and mission, encouraging participation in ICANN's various policy development and technical initiatives, and ensuring that the alignment of the work of the Org and

the community is done to bring in both regional engagement and that those priorities are aligned with those set by the organization and the community together. Next slide, please.

I'm going to highlight a little bit about the regional presence of the team. We have GSE participants across our regional offices and engagement centers as you can see here. And if you go to the next slide, we have—here is your regional vice presidents across our offices, North America, Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Asia and Oceania regions, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. And we'll hear more from our Latin America and Caribbean colleagues in the session immediately after ours that's aimed at the ICANN 70 week and what it means for newcomers. Next slide, please.

This shows our current priorities while we're operating in a virtual environment. We are very focused on maintaining the relationships with our existing stakeholders while we're working in the global pandemic. As Sally mentioned, we're very focused to reach new stakeholders and get them involved in ICANN's work.

We're looking very closely at geopolitical issues and legislative developments that are related to ICANN's mission, and our team is continuing to deliver virtual trainings, engagement, ICANN readouts and other sessions, particularly in collaboration with our office of the CTO and our technical engagement colleagues located around the world.

While we're also now approaching one year in the current situation, we're very focused to support our staff and continue to work very

closely to ensure good team morale while working in this virtual environment, and we very much look forward to seeing you again in person, face-to-face, at some point in the near future.

With that, I want to go to the next slide and turn things over to my colleague, Pierre Dandjinou who is the vice president for our Africa region. Do we have Pierre online and available?

MAGALI JEAN: No, Patrick, sorry, Pierre doesn't seem to be online yet.

PATRICK JONES: All right. Can we then move to Chris Mondini, our vice president for Europe and managing director of our Brussels office? Chris, apologies that we are jumping so early to your section, but thank you for being here and available.

CHRIS MONDINI: No worries, Patrick. It's great to be here with everybody, and it's very exciting to see so many newcomers, new faces, fellows and others from across the world. I hope you're excited to start the ICANN 70 meeting, like we all are, and thank you for taking some time today to learn about the Global Stakeholder Engagement team and our work.

I wanted to jump on today's call to just share some of the updates from the European region that really illustrate how we are executing some of those Work Streams that Patrick just talked to you about.

So I'm just taking about four, five minutes to go through a few examples. Of course, we are always monitoring geopolitical events, and in multiple governments and multiple capitals around the world and in Europe. There are a number of legislative and regulatory initiatives in the digital space, and that's certainly true in Europe and also in Brussels where I'm addressing you from.

There are four, at least—and counting—initiatives that with our government engagement colleagues, we are monitoring very closely. These are the Digital Services Act, Digital Markets Act, the Network and Information System Security directive, and European Union Cybersecurity Strategy.

What's keeping us busy is that we are of course offering no opinions on whether these are good or bad or helpful or not helpful, but we are interpreting them from both a technical standpoint and operational standpoint to see if they affect ICANN's mission, ICANN's mandate, the operations of the domain name system or the way that ICANN does its work or that members of the ICANN community do their work.

And you find in many of the cases there are actual mentions of these aspects in the draft legislation. In Europe, it's the beginning of a long period of dialog, but we are trying to bridge with our community aspects of the discussion so in fact they can stay informed and shape the debate. And I'll provide a link to a webinar we had. We'll have a series of them throughout the year where you can learn more if you're interested in these topics.

As for ongoing technical engagement, we do trainings throughout the year. Largely, these are security-related trainings, for example for registries or country code top-level domain registries on things like domain name security extensions. We also have addressed network operating groups on things like universal acceptance of internationalized domain names. And what this means is that the software systems and e-mail systems that need to be adjusted in order to use new innovative domain names and addresses that use different alphabets can be put into place. And we've seen a lot of interest across the European region in these trainings.

Just a couple of days ago, we had a really well attended workshop in the Nordic region, and if you're interested in ICANN's technical and operational remit, we had a series of speakers talking about the real nuts and bolts of what ICANN does, and I think you'll find it interesting if you'd like to learn more. And again, I'll add the link into the chat.

Finally, in terms of reaching out to new stakeholders, making new friends, we have launched a series of webinars. We started at the beginning of the health crisis with a stakeholder assembly about the performance of the domain name system in the time of COVID. We've had a number of them since highlighting and spotlighting different teams across ICANN, and in particular, publications from our government engagement colleagues and from our office of the chief technology officer, also called OCTO. These papers are actually easy to translate into a webinar format and I'll provide a link to those as well.

And finally, in addition to all the great policy work that's been completed and the review work that's been completed over this time, we are managing to support the community in its own initiatives. The European At-Large regional organization has a speakers program that we're helping contribute to, the nonprofit operational concerns constituency has a training program that we've helped kick off, and the commercial stakeholders are also doing outreach alongside these ICANN meetings and our stakeholder engagement team supports that as well.

One way to stay informed is to sign up for a newsletter, and I will close with that. I will add a link where you can sign up to be invited to future events or learn more about these issues. So, thank you very much, and look forward to the conversation. Patrick.

PATRICK JONES:

Great. Chris, thank you very much for this update from the European region. Sally, while we're trying to identify someone to cover the Africa engagement update, I'm going to continue and turn to our colleague, Naela Sarras, our new regional engagement vice president covering the North American region. Naela, I turn it over to you.

NAELA SARRAS:

Thank you, Patrick, and thank you, everyone, for this opportunity to speak this morning. I'm going to shift a little bit and speak more specifically to the North America region here on what we're doing, but a little bit about myself first.

I am, as Patrick said, the newly minted vice president for the North America region. I am new to this role as of about four months ago, but I'm certainly not new to ICANN. I recognize many of the names on this webinar. I'm happy to be interacting with you in this capacity. Been with ICANN for a long time, mainly serving in the IANA function and now stepping into this role.

I do this function here in the North America region together with my colleague, Joe Catapano who I think is familiar to many of you as well on this call.

So today, what I wanted to do is take a few minutes to talk about what we're doing for the North America region which is creating our next iteration of the regional engagement plan for our region. As Sally said at the beginning, we're focused as a global team on serving the multi-stakeholder community, but we also have regions, and each region has its own uniqueness and its own needs and its own capacity building that is more tailored to the region. And that's really what we're focusing on here for the North America region, is, what is it that we need to create in terms of engagement activities to focus on the needs of the North America region.

A little bit on what we have here in terms of what's our regional engagement plan versus the ICANN strategic plan, which we are currently under the ICANN 2021 to 2025 strategic plan. So the strategic plan summarizes the vision for ICANN, basically, and it [inaudible] into objectives, and these are the objectives that the organization and the

ICANN as a community are focused on. It's the what, what is it that we want to achieve, where are we at now, and where do we want to be?

The regional engagement plan on the other hand drills down more specifically on the region. It looks at what are the objectives and the goals for the region and sets priorities for us to try and achieve both goals and priorities for our region as they fit our region.

So that is basically the reason why we're tailoring and creating a regional engagement plan for the North America region, and this is not new. There have been several iterations of this for the North America region in the past, and so we're renewing it and creating one that is for the current strategic plan, that's one, and then each of the other ICANN regions, for example, Chris Mondini just spoke to his region, they have a strategic engagement plan that they work under, the APAC region the same, etc. Next slide, please.

In terms of our timeline for trying to create this regional engagement plan, we did have a call for volunteers from the community to help us formulate the plan together. That was in the January-February timeframe of this year. We just put together a group. We're calling it the advisory group from the community, and indeed, we did have our first meeting last week to go over what is the scope of our work.

We're hoping to put together the regional engagement plan in the coming couple months, March, April, I think it will still extend a little bit into May. Even though we are working with the community group, we still want wider participation and wider commentary on our planning, so we'll put it out for public comment using the familiar ICANN public

comment proceedings, incorporate the public comment and have it published by the June timeframe, which is great because it's in time for the wrap up of the ICANN fiscal year and starting the next fiscal year.

Once we have a regional engagement plan in place, we will of course do periodic reporting on how well we're doing against what we set out for ourselves to do and publish those reports as well and provide them, perhaps in forums like this, where we talk to the community about what's happening with the Global Stakeholder Engagement team. Next slide, please.

So many of you are probably familiar with the ICANN strategic plan creation process. Each year, ICANN creates what's called a strategic outlook process where we sit down and look at trends of what's happening in terms of in the wider Internet space, what challenges do we see and what opportunities do those challenges present.

In fact, ICANN is in the process of doing more of these sessions right now, and perhaps some of you have participated or will be participating in some of those, because what ICANN does is it does them with ICANN staff, the Board, and then the community. And so it's more or less, if you're familiar with it, it's like a SWOT analysis, strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. And we all get to just say what pops up for ourselves in terms of what we see as challenges and opportunities, and then there's a team inside the ICANN planning team that takes all these things that pop up from the sessions and they collate them. And they typically tend to converge around several topics, mainly ICANN's governance, the security, the unique identifier systems, geopolitics and

financials. These have become basically the pillars or the objectives of the ICANN strategic plan.

And those are going to be then—next slide, please—naturally the areas of focus that we are focusing on here when we’re creating the regional engagement plan for the North America region. We’ll take each of these goals that the ICANN strategic plan sets out and we’ll say, looking at each of these goals, the definition of what the goal is looking at, and then what are the trends that basically led to creating this as a goal for the engagement plan, and how do we look at that locally for us here in North America, what applies in terms of trends that are happening globally, and what are more specific trends for us here in the region?

And once we understand that, if we indeed have different trends, different challenges or opportunities that we need to look at, then we’ll start defining a little bit more of the engagement activities that we want to focus on. And these can range from several things. My colleague, Chris, talked about technical papers that come out of the office of the CTO where they discuss a specific topic. So perhaps we’ll take a technical paper and turn it into a webinar and do more education on that. It could be additional webinars or papers about things that are happening in the geopolitical arena. It could also be one-on-one meetings where we target having specific one-on-one meetings with specific stakeholder groups.

So that’s basically the type of things, once we understand how does that goal impact our region and apply to our region, we’ll start tailoring the regional engagement for that.

So just to go a little bit on the different aspects here that are listed which, if you go review the ICANN strategic plan, those are exactly the five strategic objectives that are listed and that ICANN as an organization and community work on.

So in a security arena, of course, we're looking at strengthening the security of the domain name system and the DNS root server system. Some of the trends around there are the cybersecurity risks, perhaps also continuing to mitigate against threats against the root server system, the reliability and resilience of the root server system as well, concerns about DNS abuse, that's been a topic that's been talked about in the last year or so very highly, and there have been things that are COVID-related that even popped up around DNS abuse. So, which of these, again, are relevant to our region, and how do we want to tailor engagement to address that objective?

In the ICANN governance, of course, [inaudible] looking at the multi-stakeholder model, effectiveness, the efficiency of the model and to ensure that it continues to work. Again, also here, I imagine the trends and what will be important to the community is transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, openness that are basically obligations under this model, as well as pressure on us all to continue to work efficiently and effectively using the ICANN resources.

In the unique identifier systems, we will be looking at the issues such as what Chris spoke to earlier, the introduction of the new top-level domains, what that means in terms of ensuring that all these top-level domains continue to work and that there is recognition by the different

software and e-mail platforms to make sure those are working, the delivery of the IANA services flawlessly, that's a goal for ICANN that always has been there for many years, external technology advancements, how those impact the unique identifier system. Those are also things that we'll be looking at, and how do we want to tailor engagement in the community to address those issues.

Firstly, we have the geopolitical issues. Again, this is legislation and regulation that has impact on ICANN operations, on ICANN as a community, on the Internet's unique identifier systems and ICANN's mission. So that needs to be monitored, and what do we need to do as a region to monitor that and to be ahead of it.

And finally, on the financials, it's ensuring that ICANN has a long-term financial stability, it's looking at things such as stabilization of funding and things that look at costs and demands for costs and making sure that all of those are met responsibly.

So those are the things that we will be looking at, basically, here in the priorities, and how do we want to tailor engagement to meet those priorities or those objectives? Once we have that, we'll be formulating basically a plan that responds to each one of those goals. Next slide, please.

And as we create those engagement priorities and goals, what's really important is to make them achievable and to create what we call key performance indicators associated with each of these goals so that they're easily measurable and we can determine, yes or no, that we succeeded at achieving these goals.

Some of these KPIs could be of course [inaudible] engage with the community on various topics, whether as a community group or a one-on-one session, producing documents and literature and content as requested and as needed. There's also events and workshops. That could also be a measurable that we will try to measure and then report against.

And what's important when we create KPIs is that we automate as much as possible on those KPIs so that they're easy to measure and report against. Next slide, please.

And because I mentioned reporting, it's very important that we report against the goals that we set out for ourselves. We will endeavor to report at least twice annually on how we're doing to achieve the goals via different reporting mechanisms. Perhaps there'll be presentations again like this to see how we're doing against our goals.

Another thing will be as we progress and go forward with this plan, naturally, things will evolve and we'll need to perhaps do some updates to the [plan, so we'll be running] community consultations to help update the plan and refresh it as strategic objectives evolve and change. Next slide, please.

So this is just an example here of previous reporting that my colleagues before me did where they reported on progress against goals that they've set out for themselves in the region. This is an example of engagement events with the different stakeholders broken down by the different stakeholder groups. And this is the type of event recording we'll be making available on the ICANN website for the community.

I believe this is it in terms of slides. Thank you. So before we go to questions, I did want to plug in that I want to thank you for your time but I also wanted to say that while we do have an advisory panel, currently with about 12 different community members on the advisory panel, there's always room for more, and it's not too late to join. So if this is of interest to any of you, please reach out to me because I'd love to hear from you as well. Thank you, and I'll turn it back to you, Patrick. Thank you.

PATRICK JONES:

Thank you, Naela. So now we're going to go backwards in the slide sets. Our colleague, Baher Esmat, the vice president for the Middle East and adjoining countries and also the managing director for our Istanbul office, is going to cover this update on the coalition for Africa's digital empowerment. Baher.

BAHER ESMAT:

Okay. Thank you, Patrick. Good day, everyone. My name is Baher Esmat and I'm the GSE VP for Middle East and I'm also the managing director for the MEA regional office. I'm actually stepping in for my colleague, Pierre Dandjinou who's actually lead on this project but unfortunately couldn't join due to connectivity issue.

So this is a new project, coalition for digital Africa, and I'm going to just provide a quick overview with regards to what the project is about, why are we doing it, and what are we currently working on in order to get it off the ground? Next slide, please.

So, as many of you know, Africa is a huge continent, population of almost 1.6 billion, and it's a young population. It also brings a lot of potential in terms of youth, in terms of using technology, in terms of access and providing access to the whole population. Right now, it's below 50%, the penetration rate in Africa, and of course, it varies across the continent and in some countries, it can go as high as 68%, as in Kenya, but in others, it could be far below that. Next slide, please.

So this project, the coalition for digital Africa, aims to join forces with other regional and international players to further support the growth of Africa's digital economy, and given the strong focus on the local Internet and the fact that the Internet both in terms of access and also in terms of applications, services, can drive the digital economy forward. This coalition will address a set of very specific challenges in that regard in Africa. Next slide, please.

So, why are we doing this? In the past few years, we've seen significant investments made by governments and the private sector in Africa, and those investments aim at offering more broadband connectivity across the continent, building more infrastructure, and also offering a wide range of online services from ecommerce to online banking and so on.

So we believe that this is the right time for investors to focus on Africa as there is clearly increasing demand for new services as well as increasing supply of new infrastructures. But it's also the right time for ICANN to further drive its engagement efforts in Africa and continue to build capacities and promote adoption of key technologies related to our remit, such as DNSSEC and universal acceptance. So we believe that

the coalition is an opportunity for ICANN to partner with other players, both from within Africa and also at the global level so that the whole coalition can achieve their collective goals with regards to the development of Internet in Africa and the digital economy in Africa. Next slide, please.

So right now, we are in the process of identifying potential partners or members of this coalition. The ITU-D, the development sector of the ITU, is one of those potential partners due to their role in supporting the development of infrastructures particularly in developing and least developed economies like in Africa and also due to their role in the cybersecurity space. And this is an area where we had collaborated with the ITU and particularly ITU-D in the past.

The World Bank is another potential player due to their role in many of the developmental projects across the continent. At a regional level, there's of course the African union and other agencies like Nepad and PRIDA. There's also the Smart Africa Initiative and other regional players who are very active in the Internet space like the African Telecommunication Union, the AFRINIC and the country code operators who play a major role in making the Internet available at the national level. Next slide, please.

Okay, so in front of the role that we envisage for ICANN in this coalition, we believe that our role will primarily be a facilitating role to bring everyone together to have some dialog about what we aim to achieve out of this project and also to align our objectives with objectives of our partners.

And the ICANN could primarily play a role with regards to issues related to the domain name system and DNS security. I did mention earlier that promoting the adoption of key technologies like DNSSEC and universal acceptance would be a priority for us to achieve. Next slide, please.

Okay. So in terms of the outcomes we would like to see coming out of this coalition, one is enhanced Internet infrastructure security and resiliency. This of course touches upon the broader space of the infrastructure, including access, including IXPs, but also in relation to DNS, like root server instances, like ensuring more DNS security by having more DNS zones signed by DNSSEC and more ISPs offering DNSSEC validation and so forth.

Another desired outcome is increased number of connected people. We believe that with the involvement of other players in this coalition, we can see further development at the infrastructure and access level which ultimately contributes to the increase in the number of connected people and devices.

And both areas, whether the infrastructure part or the security part, could also contribute to promote further collaboration at the policy level and spurring more multi-stakeholder collaboration across different players, both at the regional and the national level. Next slide, please.

Okay, so in terms of the governance of the coalition, just very briefly, we envisage that we will have a steering committee comprised of members of the coalition. This steering committee will focus on setting the

strategic objectives of the coalition, and provide more clarity on the desired outcomes and metrics to measure those outcomes.

And then at a secondary level, we believe that we'll have a secretariat that will follow up on the implementation and the day-to-day implementation of the different projects that will hopefully spin off this coalition, and ICANN is willing to support the secretariat through our presence in Africa through the engagement center that we have in Nairobi. Next slide, please.

Okay, so right now we're working on the project and basically, as I just briefed you on the different objectives and desired outcomes, potential partners, so this is where we are right now. Very soon, we'll be reaching out to our partners. In fact, [we're in] conversation with some of them about the idea. We also did reach out to some of the ICANN community members from Africa to share with them this idea and the feedback we got so far has been very positive.

Next step would be to get the ball rolling in terms of putting together the steering committee and taking things forward from there. Next slide, please.

Okay, so on the long term, I think we are going to see more specified projects identified and here, of course, the input or the contribution will not solely be ICANN's contribution but rather will be from all the coalition members. So for some projects, we'll see for example ICANN taking lead, particularly projects that fall under our remit, whereas in other projects, other players or partners will be taking leads, and based on the specific project of course, certain objectives matrix would be

identified and then a separate or independent kind of project plan will be developed. Next slide, please.

I think I covered that. I don't need to go into details. Next slide, please. Okay, so I think that was my last slide, so thank you very much for your attention. I'll be happy to take any questions. Back to you, Patrick.

PATRICK JONES: Thank you, Baher, for jumping in. So if there are questions for the Africa regional engagement team about this new initiative, please reach out to your stakeholder engagement representatives. They'll be happy to provide more information about this new initiative. We have about 12 minutes remaining in the session. Magali, are there any questions so far that have come in? And can you also move the slide to the very last in the set?

MAGALI JEAN: Yes. Sure. There are no questions, Patrick, so far.

PATRICK JONES: Sally, do you have additional remarks?

SALLY COSTERTON: Thank you. No questions means either we've been incredibly clear or so unclear that we've gone completely the other way. So I'm going to hope it's the first. Thank you to my colleagues and thank you, Baher, for stepping in. It's a very important new initiative in Africa. We've been

working—it's early stages. It is a big idea. By big, I mean strategic, ambitious. We don't know exactly how this will take place, but we'll keep you posted. Göran's been very involved, as have I, and Mandy Carver who many of you know, my opposite number on the government engagement team, and we want to embrace the opportunity, in a way thinking about that making new friends point, how do we leverage the opportunity that ICANN has, particularly around the development of local content, when we're looking at universal acceptance, looking at IDNs? How do we help Africa bring more people online? What's our role that we can play, both as a contributor but also as an enabler, a facilitator? And how do we partner well to do that effectively?

So if those of you on the call are intrigued, have ideas—don't have to be from the Africa region—let me know and we'd love to talk to you more about it. It's in an early stage, but I'm very excited about it.

The final comment I wanted to make was about Naela's presentation. One of the strange things about being at ICANN—I've now been at ICANN around eight years, and it does seem like it is extraordinary how much our world has changed in that time, and ICANN's world, and how much has stayed the same. And of course, our central mission hasn't changed at all, and in that sense, we are just as focused now on delivering on our core technical mission as we always have been.

One of the things that can happen in North America if we're not careful is that we can get a little bit mixed up between things that happen because our headquarters is there and things that need to happen

because North America is a very distinct region and has specific requirements. So just as we have global engagement priorities, which I hope we successfully shared with you today, or some of them anyway, each region, as Naela said, has distinctly different needs. and that goes to North America as much as it goes for the countries in the Pacific or the countries in Southeast Asia or LAC or any other part of the world.

So our day-to-day challenge, if you like, both as an Org team and working hand in hand with you and the community is, how do we make sure we keep that strategic focus, that global focus consistent and clear?

Naela talked about measurable goals—very important—where we can do better with that. There's more to go and we are committed to doing that over the next months with new programs which I will announce hopefully [inaudible] in the summer.

But also, how do we localize? How do we get as bespoke and specific, and in a way narrow, if you like, for things that we need to do that are just for our specific region or country? And a lot of the work we've been doing—and many of you have seen—for example with Internet governance fora in individual countries as well as in regions. it's designed to do precisely that. So, how do we maximize and make sure that we deliver very effectively for you at a local level in a country, or even in a stakeholder group in a country, like a RALO for example, but how do we also make sure that as we do that, those activities combine to play up to those strategic goals that are in our operating and strategic plan which of course are the product of a major community

consultation. That is our collective plan and our collective commitment to the way we're prioritizing our resources to deliver on our mission.

So I want to thank you, because you're busy people, you're volunteering, you're up in the morning, you're up at night, you've got families at home, many of you are working as well. Facing another virtual meeting, I absolutely get it. I think that it can be quite daunting. And I know we're not having to get on planes, but the time zones can be very challenging, and balancing those personal needs with your work is not easy. And for some people, it is more stressful than being at an ICANN meeting where at least we're all in a bubble and we're all in one time zone. And I'm very aware—and we continue to really double down on how we minimize the disruption.

But my final comment is, how do we also keep the good stuff? Because there have been some amazing advances that we have seen. For example, this may sound crazy because we're speaking in English, but I've just been watching the transcript, just out of curiosity—it's the first time we've used it this time—to see how accurate it is, what does it feel like to watch that transcript moving during the session. Would I be getting a good understanding and good experience?

So share that kind of feedback with us. Tell us what you think. When you click on the translations here in Zoom which we're going to use this time with our partners and our many translators that you see on this cool, when we use tools like the virtual transcripts, tell us what you think. Does it help? Does it make any difference? And does it help if you're a newcomer—and I hope there will be some people on this call who are

newcomers. We'll see many more during the week. Help us to understand, how did it feel to be part of this wonderful family that we are all so privileged to be part of?

So with that, I really do want to extend to you my great thanks for everything you do, not just today. I feel I need to recognize it too, it's International Women's Day today. And for all of us, men and women on this call, thank you for everything we do as a community to celebrate diversity and inclusion, to set, I think, some astonishingly high standards about how to do what we do. The standards we have at ICANN, our multi-stakeholder community, even after eight years, I still haven't come across anything like it. I'm so proud of it, and I think we're breaking barriers and we're also creating new ways of working which not just we can benefit from now we're marrying these human skills with these virtual tools, but I think we can share much more broadly with the world, and many people can benefit from what we've learned.

So we want to hold on to all the really good things as well as, not going to lie, look forward to seeing you all face-to-face. That first meeting—as we register for an ICANN meeting, we go in and see each other for the first time is going to be very exciting.

And thank you all. Patrick, did you have any final comments before we close?

PATRICK JONES:

So we're at the end, and I wanted to thank our interpreters for assisting with the session. I also put in a reminder for those who are interested in

joining our next session 30 minutes after this one at 15:30 UTC, we will have a session on what to expect at ICANN 70 from our colleagues from the Latin America and Caribbean region, and thank you very much for participating. Have a great prep week and a great ICANN 70.

SALLY COSTERTON: Great ICANN 70, everybody. Stay safe. See you during the week. Bye.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]