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ICANN72 | Prep Week – ICANN72 Fellowship Program and NextGen@ICANN Program Participants Meet with the ICANN Board  
Tuesday, October 12, 2021 – 11:00 to 12:00 PDT

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you. Hello, everyone, and welcome to the joint meeting between the ICANN Board members, particularly ICANN Board chair, Board vice chair and ICANN president and CEO with ICANN 72 fellowship and NextGen@ICANN program participants. My name is Siranush Vardanyan and I'm ICANN fellowship program manager, and I'm the remote participation manager for this session as well.

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With that, let me introduce the agenda for today's session. Next slide, please. Today, we'll have several speakers. Göran Marby, ICANN president and CEO, Maarten Botterman, chair of ICANN Board, León Sanchez, vice chair of the ICANN Board. Unfortunately, Lito Ibarra was not able to join today due to some personal family issues. At the end, we will have a Q&A.

With that, I also would like to welcome all fellows and NextGen participants for this session, and particularly to those for whom this is the first ICANN meeting. Welcome. Next slide, please.

And with that, let me introduce ICANN president and CEO, Göran Marby. Göran, the floor is yours.

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**GÖRAN MARBY:** Thank you. Thank you very much. Good to see you again. That picture, I always have a problem with, because I always look so official. I'm actually traveling right now so I just want to make sure that you can see and hear me okay. I see my chairman of the Board gives me thumbs up, so I guess that's the best I can do.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Yes, we can hear you well and we can see you, Göran.

**GÖRAN MARBY:** Anyway, thank you, my friends, for joining us on this call. The fellowship program and the NextGen programs are very important for ICANN. It is a capacity building opportunity for us. But I want to talk about why we do this a little bit. Some people might think that the Internet is already done, it's working, you're going online, it's something that is ... We're using Internet to be able to connect.

I'm here to tell you that the Internet is not done. We have a lot of things to do still to be able to make this a more inclusive, better used, wider technology around the world. There's a lot of people not connected to the Internet. And the interesting thing is the model we use to accomplish that.

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What usually has been done in large corporations or in governments and other ones are actually done through an other model here. We call it a multi-stakeholder model. I claim that this is the only representative model where you can literally walk into a room and from that actually be part of a decision making process.

That's why the fellowship program and the NextGen program are so important. This is a way for us to help you, to train you, to articulate, to be part of a decision making process that makes a difference, not only for yourself and the people who are listening on this call, not only for the people in the Internet ecosystem where ICANN is a part, but also for all of the Internet users of the world.

It's a fantastically inclusive model which is different from any other models. And we welcome you and accept you and want you to be a part and want your opinions to be diverse. We want your points to be different. We want you to have different agendas walking in, because that's how we truly make the Internet work as a place for everybody to be.

Not everybody loves this model. There are corporations, governments and other ones who would like to take over the control of what we do, the identifiers of the Internet, believing that it would lead to better content regulation or they can have a

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say what's happening on the Internet. You're part of that as well. By making sure that we do our job right and we do it in the right way, we protect the interoperability of the Internet going forward.

So this is a very important session for me, and I thank you very much for inviting me. I'm looking forward to hear questions from you as well. So I would lead over to our leading moderator, Siranush.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, Göran, and thank you for joining. With that, next slide, please. Let me introduce ICANN chair of the Board, Maarten Botterman, and give the floor for Maarten to welcome everyone who is in this call. Maarten, the floor is yours.

**MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:** Thank you, Siranush, and thanks, Göran, for having well spoken on why this is so important to us. First, I want to welcome you all to this ICANN meeting, whether it's your first time or whether you were interested enough to come back and be here again, which is good in itself too.

Our mission is truly global, to make sure that the addressing system is secure and stable. And it's a critical part of the Internet, but we don't do everything on the Internet. We need to do our

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part well, though, to ensure that the world can benefit from this critical resource.

And for me, being here and working and contributing to that is truly an honor and a pleasure, because I do believe that this is what the world needs, an Internet that truly serves open, end to end, to help to make this world a place to live in a sustainable way and in a way that we want to be together as a society, as an economy, across nations.

So I truly think that what we have here is also a unique way of dealing with that, because we don't base our priorities on politics and power and things like that, but truly on what we call the bottom-up multi-stakeholder model, the people that together say, "Well, this is important for us, these are our values, these are our interests." And together, we try to come to this way forward of how to offer this service to the world.

And in this, the community is truly leading. The organization is helping to make it possible and the modest role of the Board is to see to that whatever we decide to take forward is reasonable, is legal, is in line with the bylaws that we set up together.

So in this, it's crucial that we don't only have the people that have committed so much time already onboard, like Alfredo, like Siranush, like others, but also that we get new people all the time,

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new people that get interested in working with us, in sharing their ideas, their generation's ideas, their cultural ideas from wherever they come, and help make it work, so to make progress.

So at least for the coming week, there are a couple of priorities to look upon to. Göran already referred to more people to serve on the Internet. And then we talk about the next round of TLDs, one of the big subjects. It is indeed also about—so maybe this next billion will need to be able to communicate in their own language, in their own character sets as well on the Internet. So we also need to make sure that that works effectively.

Of course, security is an ongoing challenge, and we continue to have a keen focus on that. And please, the strategic plan is actually the key document that you can look on if you want to see what you can contribute towards the future. The more critical the Internet is, the more secure it needs to be as well.

Privacy is an issue that comes up in this world as increasingly digitized and obviously, we look at DNS abuse-related challenges, particularly those that relate to security challenges of the DNS and our mission. If we don't address these issues well, others may feel the need to do so. And I believe that together, we can do the world a big favor by offering this system in an open and neutral way for all that want to use it.

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So welcome, and just pointing out that being a NextGen or a fellow matters, but this is for Siranush to emphasize also introducing our next speaker. By the way, Siranush, you're a former fellow as well, right?

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Right. Once a fellow, always a fellow. That's how we say in our program. Thank you, Maarten, and thank you for your welcome. I would like to give the floor to our next speaker, León Sanchez, who is vice chair of the ICANN Board of Directors and León also, please, pass the message from Lito who was not able to join us. The floor is yours, León.

**LEÓN SANCHEZ:** Thank you very much, Siranush, and thank you, everyone, for joining the session. I think it's one of the sessions that I enjoy the most in every ICANN meeting. Yes, I have a message for you from my colleague, Lito Ibarra. He had a personal, family situation that prevented him from attending today's session. He happens to be the first fellow that has been appointed to the Board. So he opened the road for fellows to be part of the Board and he very much enjoys also the sessions and he would really want to be here, but the situation came unexpectedly and definitely made him not able to attend. But he asked us to convey his apologies,



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and of course, wishing you a very fruitful discussion and a very fruitful meeting in ICANN 72.

And with that, my name is León Sanchez, as Siranush was saying. I am currently the vice chair in the ICANN Board of Directors. I have been appointed by the At-Large community to occupy seat 15 in the Board of Directors.

In the same fashion as I was saying about Lito, I really enjoy this session because it gives me the opportunity to encourage you to continue building on your journey within ICANN. I started as a fellow too. My first ICANN meeting was in Mexico City in 2009. And back then, I think I was pretty much like every newcomer to the ICANN environment. I had absolutely no clue what I was hearing in the different session that I attended. I have absolutely no clue of who was who, who did what, etc.

So nevertheless, it captured me. I was always curious about ICANN, and that's why I attended my first meeting in Mexico City, being my home city. And after that, I applied for the fellowship program and I got admitted for the fellowship program for the first time in ICANN in 2012 in Prague. Back then, I started my journey as fellow.

Then I continued this fellowship journey. I completed the full cycle of the fellowship program by being selected three times as

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a fellow, and by the third time, I had found my place in the At-Large community. So I applied for an open position that was available for Latin America and the Caribbean in the NomCom and I got appointed by the NomCom back then to the ALAC.

But I think it is important for you to know that you need to explore the different communities or constituencies that form our community, because you might come in with an idea that has been preset by yourself in terms of maybe what you do on a day-by-day basis or previous interests, but then you may find out that that preconception that you have built upon yourself might not be as accurate as you thought.

That's exactly what happened to me. I am an intellectual property attorney, practicing attorney, and at the beginning, I thought that the IPC, the Intellectual Property Constituency, would be the most suitable place for me to contribute to the ICANN community. But then I found out that I was more inclined and more identified with the internet end users track, and I had been an advocate for end users' rights in my country, so I definitely switched my way of thinking and my way of looking at me contributing to the ICANN community. And as I said, I started contributing to the At-Large community by being appointed to the ALAC via the NomCom.

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After that, I had the trust of the ALAC chair back then and I was designated as ALAC vice chair, and I also was appointed to different working groups in the community, being the most relevant at that time the CCWG on Accountability, which was in charge of overseeing and guiding the process during what we call the IANA transition. We were in charge of pretty much building the new ICANN bylaws in terms of accountability and accountability mechanisms, setting up the empowered community. These may all be concepts that you are not familiar with already, but soon enough, I think you will become more familiar with these terms.

After that, I saw the opportunity to join the Board when the then Board member appointed by the At-Large community, Rinalia Abdul Rahim, decided not to continue serving as a Board member and the call for candidates was open and I put my name up to run for this position on the Board. I got the votes and the trust from the At-Large RALO representatives and the ALAC members, and I was assigned to the Board to occupy, again, seat 15.

After that, I was reappointed by the same constituency, the At-Large community and the ALAC, and some time ago I also had the trust and confidence of my colleagues to be selected as vice chair of the Board. I'm currently serving along with Maarten as chair in this team we make with our colleagues, and proud to serve not only the Board but our community in this leadership role.

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Because this is also something very important that you need to understand. Leadership roles are opportunities for us to serve the community and to serve the different constituencies and to be able to contribute meaningfully in this leadership role.

So if you want to be in a leadership position, my advice would be to work hard, to contribute meaningfully, to engage with the different parts of the community, to understand the scope and the extent to which our contributions may impact the global community, because we may well contribute in a way that we may impact the global community.

So as long as you do that, I think it will come naturally that you will be identified by other community members as a leader in your group and they will continue thrusting you and pushing you towards exercising different leadership roles. But as long as you keep in mind that these leadership roles are mainly a service opportunity towards our community and towards the global Internet community, I think you will be right on track.

And of course, as Siranush said, I was once a fellow and I continue to be a fellow, and I'm a proud waver of the fellowship flag and the fellowship banner in every chance I have. So I of course thank you for this opportunity to talk to you, and happy to remain here and talk to you and answer any questions that you may have. Back to you, Siranush.

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**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, León. It's always a pleasure to hear your inspiring experience, how you get involved with ICANN, and now you're serving as vice chair of the Board. One of the real prides of the fellowship program. And I'm really happy to see so many community members who came to ICANN through the fellowship program and now serve as community leaders. And I also welcome all our community members who joined this session.

I see there are a lot of questions coming. So without further ado, I would like to start asking the questions. And once again, if you would like to ask your question, just raise your hand and I will give the floor to you, but don't forget to state your name before asking the question.

And with that, I will start with the first question which was posted in the chat. The question is from Andrey Shcherbovich who is an ICANN 72 fellow from Russia but now lives in Canada. The question is, what would be the reaction of the community for the sovereign Internet and alternative DNS system the government tries to establish in Russia? Who would like to take that question?

**GÖRAN MARBY:** I guess the other Board members will look at me and say, "Oh , that's Göran." So I don't want to answer questions—as you can

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understand—from the perspective of what individual countries do, because in a way, that's very much up to them and we are a nonpolitical organization whose main job is to provide everybody with the opportunity to have an Internet, which is the identifiers. Because without the identifiers, there is no Internet. People sometimes call it alternative Internet or other type of internet or the [non-best-effort Internet.] Let's just agree, let's call a duck a duck, it's not the Internet. If you use other identifiers, if you use other distribution mechanism, if you use other DNS, it's not the Internet. It's something completely different.

And with that said, I'm the first one—I think we all who are on this call believe in the importance of the interoperability of the Internet itself, because it provides the opportunity to people all over the world to be able to go on one network and actually communicate with each other. Yes, there are commercial businesses, there are many occasions to do things on this, but a basic assumption is that people [inaudible] communicate, like they did with the vaccine, a lot of the information sharing around the world [between researchers was done on the Internet.]

So what happens is that—first of all, recognize that if a country or region decides to go off the Internet, that doesn't mean that you will not go on the Internet. Because of the intelligence of the system, if a region goes off and does something alternative, it

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won't affect your ability to go to the Internet or do something where it works.

And that's very important because sometimes people think if a country or region creates their own Internet, that will affect your ability. It will not. But it will not give the opportunity for that country's people or government to actually connect to the fuller Internet. So they will not be a part of this big family of Internet connectivity that exists.

And I personally think that in the end of all of those discussions, the importance of the Internet today, how ingrained it is in all societies around the world, makes it very hard to do something without speaking of any countries specifically to move away from the one collective Internet that exists. I hope that has answered at least a part of your question.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:

Let me just add a little bit to that. As Göran said, we're not about how countries will deal within their borders with the Internet or anything. What we are determined is to offer the best Internet possible and keep it working.

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**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thanks, Göran and Maarten. I will read the next question. Meri Baghdasaryan who is a NextGen for ICANN 72, her question is, what do you consider the most challenging and exciting aspects of serving on ICANN Board? I assume this is for Maarten and León to respond.

**MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:** León, if you want to go first, please.

**LEÓN SANCHEZ:** Thank you very much, Siranush, and thank you for your question. The most challenging issue or aspect of being in the Board, I think it is trying to reflect the different input or the different point of view that were received when making a decision.

So as a Board, we are mandated to take into account the public comments, the advice that we will receive from advisory committees, etc. when making a decision. So, many times, that input is confronted or comes in opposite ways, so to speak. So we need to try to find that balance between interests, between positions, between views. And in the end, we need to make our decisions in the best interest of ICANN as an organization and take into account the global public interest.



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So trying to balance those elements, I think, is the most challenging part of serving in the Board. The most exciting part is getting to know colleagues from different cultures, from different educational backgrounds, from different professional backgrounds, and also to start being in touch with different parts of the community which if you remain in the constituency in which you originally contribute to, you might miss the chance to interact with. So being in the Board gives you that opportunity to blend with the full community as opposed to with a specific constituency or part of our community. So I think that's definitely exciting.

And we live in exciting times, so that's also exciting, to address the challenges that this pandemic has posed on the community, the organization and the Board. It's something that I really value and I think that we've learned a lot during these trying times for everyone.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thanks, León. Maarten, would you like to add?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Very well said, I think, León. The unique position of the Board is that we've got all these constituencies that work very hard to make sure that they understand each other, and then the talk

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across constituencies is where it gets difficult. As a Board, we are above all the constituencies, not in the matter of authority but in the matter that we look across the domains. And that is a challenge. That is to weigh different factors in the light of our mission, in the light of what we set out to do. So [that model is easy.]

The other big challenge is that what we do today has an impact on the future. So we need to be very well aware of where things are moving and think ahead. And for that reason, one of the most recent developments that we did is that we actually also set up strategic planning committee in the Board which helps us to keep even closer track to what we do and how it relates to the strategic plan. This is important for all of us at ICANN.

So the exciting part is this is a mission that matters, and many people in the Board, in the community, around the world that we meet with, they care. It's in their hearts. And this is where we meet, and I love that part very much. That keeps me going.

And by the way, Göran is a Board member too, in a unique position as CEO and president.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Göran, would you like to add something?

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**GÖRAN MARBY:** There is nothing I can add to the chairman of the Board and the highly esteemed member of the Board, León. I think they said it all.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you. Before I move to the next question, I would like to let everyone know who joined today’s session that we had 38 fellows selected for ICANN 72 and six NextGeners, and out of that group, 28 fellows are first timers. So this is their first ever ICANN meeting, and it is unfortunately virtual. And for those six NextGeners, it’s also the first virtual ICANN meeting.

I also would like to introduce my colleague, Deborah Escalera—my apologies, I was not able to do it at the beginning—who is managing the NextGen program. So the questions from newcomers are really appreciated, and I again welcome all of you and I hope you will enjoy ICANN 72 as your first ICANN meeting.

I will move to the next question, from Nicolas Fiumarelli from Uruguay. “I have two questions. Firstly from ICANN Board perspective, what are the challenges that you see regarding the Domain Name System, above all and not only thinking about universal acceptance but from the point of view of decentralization and resilience of the DNS on popular platforms

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like Facebook? Any lessons learned or mechanisms to avoid this type of incident that incorporate technologies such as DNS and BGP when it comes to massive platforms and looking to the future?”

The second question is, “There were a lot of discussions lately about the redesign of Internet base protocols such as the new IP proposal presented by the Chinese community to the ITU, in addition to the IETF's efforts for interplanetary protocols, where the TCP / IP protocol and DNS are not so ideal in those scenarios. What is ICANN's position on the matter looking towards the future of the core of the Internet?”

Two big questions.

GÖRAN MARBY:

Actually, I would say it's like six different questions. We could do a small seminar about this. And this is not saying the questions are—they're really good and high quality, but let's make one thing clear. The unfortunate event that happened in Facebook had nothing to do with us. It's always easy to blame someone or say someone did something. Facebook has had an incident and most of us know about it because most of us were affected, but it had nothing to do with the DNS. My understanding is that they have

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gone out and said it was a faulty configuration of something. And unfortunately, those things happen.

So there's not very much a lesson to learn from us, but I think it's a lesson for ICANN as an institution. I think it's a lesson for all of us who have internal networks to make sure that we build redundancy into the networks and it works from there. So more of a general thing.

Going over to what I said before, I love words like “New IP” or “Alternative Internet.” Let's just face it: it's not the Internet. It's something completely different. It's not even alternative Internet because the Internet as we define it are the identifiers that come from ICANN—and all identifiers come from ICANN, not only the names, also the numbers, and the addresses come from ICANN.

We have different distributing system, we have the numbers community that distributes IP addresses, we have the IETF who do the standardization. We all work together, and that's important. We are the ones who, together, build what is called the Internet. And we shouldn't shy away from that.

So what happens is when someone—today, we have 5 billion Internet users who all use the same identification system. And the possibility for them to interact is because of those identifiers and protocols.

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So then someone comes [inaudible] they don't like this model. New IP is a little bit hard to understand what it actually means. For me, it was very old. It looks to me from a technical description something called ATM, which is nothing to do with bank systems by the way, it's an old protocol for data communication that preexisted by IP really became something.

And the interesting thing is because it's not so much about the technology of connecting devices, it's more about the structure, how to control it, which Huawei, the company behind it, openly said this is about the governance model rather than the technology itself.

So, how threatening is it? I always think we should take things like this seriously. We see suggestions from the standardization perspective in 5G where there are proposals that will make [non-use of IP and higher control of the end users' traffic] different from how it works today. We have seen previous suggestions called DOA. And I'm not allowed to make the joke that DOA stands for dead on arrival, so I'm not going to make that joke today, because [inaudible].

There's always something. Behind it all is not about improving the technology itself, it's creating something that is not the Internet. The same goes with alternative domain names. Alternative domain names are not domain names. I know that

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someone now will react and say, “Oh, it’s alternative what you do, ICANN.”

It’s not a domain name. It’s not going to be resolved technically inside what we together produce, which is the Internet. We should always take that seriously, and that’s why a couple of years ago, we actually invented a new term for the things you ask for which we called technical Internet governance. Because we see a lot of this discussion now coming out for standardization fora, in the ITU, even in the UN itself.

And we as an institution, together with all the countries and all of you, have to be [inaudible] to defend the Internet. A lot of us become—we now accept the Internet and we accept it like it’s always going to be there. One of the things I always think, we have to develop it, we always have to make it better, but we also have to defend what we already have.

So I can speak at length about those different things, and I know that [I didn't specifically answer your question,] because I can get really nerdy and go down the stack. We should remember the positive things. ICANN is a voluntary organization, a not-for-profit organization. We provide, together with our partners, the ability for you to connect on the Internet. If you take that away, you won't be able to connect to the Internet. Your device, when it

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connects to the best broadband in the world, will have nowhere to go.

That's why we built the system together with the root server operators, the numbering community, together with the IETF and the others, so every time you go online, you can actually connect to something. All alternatives don't give you that opportunity. We have to fight for that together.

Now I can really get engaged in this one, and I think I'm going to stop there.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, Göran. The next question is from Yilin Sun from Beijing, China. "Considering the principle of ICANN is to provide Internet to most people in the world, how could ICANN help the people in countries like Afghanistan which lost the Internet governance yet the new government is still in turbulence?" I think it's a hard question. Who would like to take it?

**LEÓN SANCHEZ:** I can give it a try. However unfortunate this incident may be, it is not within ICANN's remit or within ICANN's reach to provide this access. We are of course an organization who strives to provide the technical infrastructure, the security, stability and resiliency



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of the domain name system, which is part of the Internet, but it's not the only part of the Internet.

So our efforts as an organization, engaging with governments, with local communities, etc. are of course an important tool to achieve this, so to speak, evangelization of the multi-stakeholder model and the Internet governance model. But nevertheless, we do have limits and there are some things that are definitely out of our reach. And I think that this question is exactly one example of something that falls outside the reach or the ability that we can have towards a national sovereign country to establish an Internet governance system so to speak.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, León. I see many questions related to the fellowship program. I am not asking those questions for now and I will be happy to respond to those questions after this call. I'm collecting all the questions. But I will ask to our speakers the questions which relate to the Board or the ICANN Org mainly.

So there is a question from Makory, an ICANN fellow. "I am Jade Makory, an ICANN72 Fellow. Thank you very much for taking the time to share your experiences with us. My question is: How does ICANN ensure that its Board is diverse, also considering gender, geographical location, expertise etc.?" Maarten, please.

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**MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:** Yes. Basically, partly, this is ensured in our bylaws. There are certain requirements to diversity. Other than that, we have a Nominating Committee and we have the constituencies that make their choices and they take these aspects into account. The Board itself doesn't appoint its members, yet together, we do pay a lot of attention on ICANN to be a welcoming environment and to value diversity because we need diversity to be able to serve a world that is diverse in nature. So in that respect, I think you'll find that there's a lot of stimulus to make sure the Board is diverse, community is listening to diverse voices. It's in our DNA, I would say, and we need to continue to pay attention to it.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you. Anyone would like to add? If not, then I will read the next question.

**GÖRAN MARBY:** Can I add one thing to the previous questions, from our friend, I think, in China? The intention is not to provide Internet to most. The intention of ICANN is to provide Internet to everybody. For some reason, I forgot to say that comment before. Sorry.

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, Göran. The next question is from Sai who is a NextGen@ICANN program participant. “We have a large number of internet users in the developing world, especially in Asia. How does ICANN plan to reach out to developing world?”

GÖRAN MARBY: May I?

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Yes, please.

GÖRAN MARBY: We’re not planning, we are doing. But I would agree that we can always do better. So in Asia, we have one of our regional offices in Asia which operates out of Singapore, and it’s a very important part of what we do. And as well as we have the same thing for the Africa, Arabic part of the world as well as Europe and the US.

But I want to take a step back—and we do capacity trainings, we work with governments, we do all of those things all the time. We made a major investment in Asia a while back when we actually built a new datacenter in Singapore, the first one really outside the US.

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But I think that the next round is very important for me personally, and I think also for the Internet. I sometimes even call it a sort of Internet 2.0 in that sense. So we have about 5 billion Internet users around the world right now, but only about 1600 ways to identify yourself on the Internet, what we call top-level domains.

Many of them are in practically in Latin script and many in English. I think that one of the big things we need to do with the next round—and I know that we even have one of the leaders in that work on this call from the community which we call the next round—is to make sure we can provide identifiers in other languages, in other scripts so people around the world—they should not need to have Latin script and English or French or anything else to be able to have their own identifiers on the Internet. So people can build their own local communities, their own business models using their own keyboards, their own narrative, their own scripts.

That is something we need to do better going forward. We can't do it only by ourselves, and part of that is the work we do with what we call IDNs—we love acronyms, I'm not supposed to use them—where we talk about making sure that there is a better understanding of the technical way how the Internet deals with language and scripts.

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But the important thing is that I think the ICANN community, the ICANN world has realized that we have to do more. And I don't always like to call it developing or underserved countries. Countries that we now have to—it's really about together, because it's not like we're going to go there and tell how to do it. But with the next round, we have the opportunity to maybe right a wrong when it comes to the inclusiveness and diversity of the Internet itself in its identifiers. I hope that answered your question. And thank you, Cheryl, for helping me with acronyms.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, Göran. The next question is from Martin Traore, an ICANN 72 fellow. "I'm Martin Traore from Burkina Faso. You didn't know how you comforted in my situation. Being in an African country where the Internet is often a luxury, I am really happy. My question is, what is the dynamic and intellectual ability it takes to be at such a high level of decision-making?"

**GÖRAN MARBY:** When it comes to intellectual capacity, I will lead over to León and Maarten, I think.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Please do.

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MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Well, I guess basically, it's an interest. And you guys are demonstrating this interest already. So with interest and with paying attention and time to it, you get a better and better feel of what it's really about and what comes about. So I think you're embarking on a journey that will take you a long way.

The good news about getting engaged in what it takes to make the Internet work in any ICANN position, whether it's a constituency or the Board, it gives you the opportunity to see things in a bigger context. And from in the bigger context, you can have a specific contribution. Even technical Internet governance is not a disciplinary activity. Just paying attention to it, diving in, dedicating your time and your interest will get you a long way.

Mind you, nobody can do this alone. Not even the brightest person in the world. And that's not me for sure. So please, this is your first step, and all it takes is dedication, interest going forward. And if you want to improve on that, León, please do.

LEÓN SANCHEZ: No, I'm [bright,] as you can see here, but that's a different question. So I have nothing to add, Maarten.

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**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, bright people. The next question is from Shah Rahman from Bangladesh. “Does ICANN think its capacity building should be reaching to every corner of the world to make Internet ecosystem understood by all? If so, how? Because majority of peoples stay rural still and not aware of ICANN but some of them are very talent who can contribute for betterment of Internet like DNS.”

**LEÓN SANCHEZ:** This is where I might come with my advertising of the At-Large community. The At-Large community is formed by ALSes, At-Large Structures we call them. Basically, they are the ones that have this task along with the Global Stakeholder Engagement team to engage with the communities at a local level. And if we work together—the Org with the GSE, the Global Stakeholder Engagement team and the ALSes that are locally on the ground—I think we can achieve this goal of trying to cover as many people as possible in creating awareness, creating capacities, building capacities and trying to tell people about the Internet governance ecosystem, the multi-stakeholder model. And for that, if there is no ALS in your country, just give that step forward and create an ALS and affiliate that ALS to the At-Large community and help us contribute with your part in building this Internet governance ecosystem. That’s my advertising. Sorry.

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SIRANUSH VARDANYAN: Thank you, León. We have a couple of minutes to go, so I will take the opportunity to take several more questions. The question is from Samwel Kariuki, an ICANN 72 fellow. “What challenges do you face while working with people of different caliber and how do you overcome these challenges and bring all these people together?”

GÖRAN MARBY: May I start before Maarten jumps?

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Oh, sure.

GÖRAN MARBY: It’s not a challenge. It is the model. So I'm blessed. I'm not the ICANN CEO, I'm the ICANN Org president and CEO. In my team, I have people who sit physically in 35 countries. We speak 55 languages fluently inside our organization. That’s only ICANN Org. The fact that people come into ICANN with different perspective, different parts of life, different background, different experience, different languages, it is what makes this model so absolutely fantastic.



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I enjoy myself having the opportunity to physically or through Zoom or anything else, every day almost, speak to people who can teach me something. I gave a lecture yesterday and I got the question, “Can you tell me one more institution in the world that looks like ICANN?” And we started talking about it. One hour later, we couldn’t actually find one. It’s the only system in the world where you can actually have an opinion, walk into a room, that opinion can make a decision that makes the world change. It’s unique.

So twist the question around. Without this multitude of people around the world, the fact that we have people from hundreds of countries coming to ICANN meetings with different perspectives, that is what makes this model so valuable and positive. And that’s why the multi-stakeholder model according to the ICANN world actually works so well.

You might think it’s [inaudible] a lot of discussions. I think it’s beautiful. So thank you for asking the question.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: It’s a perfect answer, Göran. I’d turn it around. If we were all the same, we couldn’t make this happen. So it’s a necessity by outset to have these different qualities, these different insights, these different cultures together. And bridging it does require

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something. It requires the preparedness to listen to each other, not to jump to conclusions but to think, is this really what I understand? And in that way, it's personal development as well. You realize that maybe the person that you don't understand might be right. And that preparedness is something you learn very quickly when you're in such a rich international environment with so many disciplines of people speaking so many languages. So 55 in the organization, I don't know how many in the Board, but at least more than a dozen. You find a lot of people here who are eager to learn from each other and are prepared to listen. So that helps.

We do pay attention to also roles as chair of constituencies or working groups, etc. to facilitate these discussions and different opinions to come together. So you will find that even in ICANN-specific trainings are set up to get the most out of this diversity, to make sure that we can really understand each other and get the most out of it.

**SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:** Thank you, Maarten. I know if we even have a three-hour session, there will be questions coming and coming. But I would like to ask the last question and then request our speakers to say the final word to all our participants.

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The question is from Ben Rachad Sanoussi. “Thank you for this session. I'm enjoying it. I have a question. Speaking of digital rights, what are the big challenges ICANN is facing or working on, especially when it comes to DNS abuse and freedom of expression online?”

LEÓN SANCHEZ:

I might get a little bit technical here. And sorry if I burst your bubble, but there is no such thing as digital rights. We have rights, and we may exercise them through digital means or physical means.

Now, in terms of challenges that we see, of course, the organization does an excellent job and very hard work in engaging with decision makers and lawmakers and governments all around the world to try to inform them about how best the regulations and the laws can be shaped in order to not cause harm or major harm to the Internet infrastructure and the domain name system.

We may not always be successful in conveying the message, but nevertheless, we keep trying and we have an outstanding team of people working in engaging with governments all around the world to create these capacities to build these information

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initiatives and to try to keep the Internet open, undivided, single Internet and accessible to as many people as possible.

GÖRAN MARBY:

May I add something very short on León's? And especially the discussion of the digital rights. One thing that's important to realize when you walk into ICANN—and you all know this, but I'm going to report it just to sound intelligent saying something you already know—when we talk about the Internet in our space, we talk about the identifiers and the protocols that make your computers, mobile phones and everything else so it actually can connect to it.

And if you want to dive in, there is a fantastic technology behind it. It includes things like root servers, key holders, we have acronyms like DNSSEC and KINDNS and all of those things that ICANN operationally do. And that is the core of what I sometimes call the plumbers of the Internet, which always makes my Board unhappy with me, but it's actually ...

[What it's not] are the applications that you use on top of them. The platform companies like the social media companies, when you use an app or social media company, you're actually leaving the Internet. You're walking into someone else's computer. You use the Internet to get into that platform but it's not the Internet.

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And walking in here—and that goes for all the e-mail, the servers, the content and everything else—that is something that people utilize the identifiers to do. ICANN is there to provide a service to the world with the help of you and everybody else in this ecosystem. We don't do it all. By doing this together, we provide the opportunity that every time you go online, you connect to something and then you get information.

ICANN is not part of that [part] but we are together with our partners, the RIRs, the IETF and others, we make sure that that connection actually is there, that it finds its way on this Internet. Thank you very much.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: I'll just finish very short. One thing. If you would focus on everything, we could get nothing done. We are to focus on this unique mission that we have, connecting things via the unique identifier system. So we shouldn't be distracted from that.

Now, taking forward that there's a lot of talk about how to deal with DNS abuse. You'll find more discussions this week. Basically, the question to you is also, think of what ICANN's role in this is, because fake news is a bad thing. Freedom of expression is important. But that is not what ICANN is about. ICANN is about

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making sure that DNS security issues don't lead to new abuse opportunities.

So I invite you to chew on this and look at it this week. And I really welcome you, again, very welcome here at ICANN. And please do find your way. I'm sure you'll get very excited about it and we might see and meet again somewhere in the future. Don't hesitate to ask questions at any point in time to anyone that you see online or wherever you are. Thank you.

SIRANUSH VARDANYAN:

Thank you, Maarten, thank you, León, and thank you, Göran. I appreciate your time joining to the session, and I also thank all the participants for their interesting questions. My apologies again for having no time to answer to all the questions. I also would like to thank the interpreters and the tech support for the session.

And with that, we'll meet again with the fellows during the prep week, but for now, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you again for your participation. Bye for now.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**